

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



COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS,  
LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS  
JOINTLY WITH THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON 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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1  
2 libraries and of course the centrality of the New  
3 York Public Library and it's two remarkable  
4 structures, the Mid Manhattan Library and of course  
5 the Schwarzman Building. To Midtown Manhattan, to  
6 all of the City of New York and there has been a  
7 worthwhile and unprecedented investment in these  
8 projects. They have changed a little bit over the  
9 years, they have meandered but we have reached a  
10 critical point where the New York Public Library is  
11 ready with some very exciting and dramatic plans to  
12 move forward in both completely renovating the Mid  
13 Manhattan branch but also continuing the process of  
14 further democratizing and opening up the Schwarzman  
15 Building and, and improving and increasing public  
16 access to that remarkable building which is so very  
17 much at the core of what we all believe in. so it  
18 is appropriate that we have an oversight hearing to  
19 get the latest to take a look at how this funding  
20 is going to be spent, when it's going to be spent  
21 and all of the related issues with, with the  
22 various parts and moving parts that will go into  
23 making what will at the end of the day from the  
24 renderings that I've seen and what we see in front  
25 of us, a truly remarkable building and, and an

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1  
2 incredibly exciting library. So, with that I will  
3 ask Council Member King to say a few words and then  
4 I think we will hear from New York Public Library  
5 before we take questions.

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

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

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

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

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1  
2 the street library will continue its commitment to  
3 New Yorkers. The project includes the creation of  
4 more library space at the Schwarzman Building and  
5 major renovation at the Mid Manhattan Library  
6 branch which contains the New York Public Libraries  
7 largest circulating collections. Eventually the  
8 renovation... the renovated Manhattan branch where I  
9 hear is going to have 35 percent more public space  
10 and currently... than it currently does now with the  
11 capacity for about 400,000 books and other  
12 materials. It will also feature five floors open  
13 for... of open browsable book stacks and two floors  
14 of meeting rooms and an appointment skill center  
15 and an area for job search help and small business  
16 support. A full floor dedicated to separate  
17 libraries for children and teens, over 11,000  
18 square feet of multi-purpose space, 100 more seats  
19 than the current branch and last but not least and  
20 the only publicly accessible roof terrace in  
21 Midtown Manhattan, let the sun shine on in. These  
22 current changes directly address the needs of the  
23 immigrant and low income communities, the new  
24 campus will provide more public library space than  
25 is currently available to Midtown with longer hours

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1  
2 and enhanced libraries to library collections,  
3 technology and staff expertise. As these  
4 improvements are implemented these libraries will  
5 therefore be... [clears throat] excuse me... these  
6 libraries will be there for patrons when they need  
7 them the most. I am proud to be Chairing the  
8 Subcommittee on Libraries during the time of  
9 expansion and to be doing so alongside a tireless  
10 advocate for the library sense of our majority  
11 leader, Jimmy Van Bramer. So again I'm looking  
12 forward to hearing more about these renovations,  
13 how money's being spent, how President Mark is  
14 going to paint here and paint there, put a nail to  
15 the hammer there and do what we got to do to make  
16 sure that today is a success and just want to thank  
17 again my legislative director Michael Armstrong as  
18 well as the Subcommittee staff, Counsel Aminta  
19 Kilawan, policy, policy analyst Chloe Rivera and  
20 all the finance staff and the finance... and the  
21 finance... and I'll state it again, and the finance  
22 analyst, Aliya Ali. So, thank you again Mr. Chair.

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

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1  
2 being spent correctly we don't want Tony Marx  
3 painting, let's just be very clear about that. So,  
4 with that special introduction whoever would like  
5 to begin for New York Public Library.

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

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1  
2 been eager to get to because it is the central  
3 branch library that needs to be the great central  
4 branch library that this great city deserves and  
5 has not had in Manhattan. In preparing for this  
6 renovation through a process which Chair Van Bramer  
7 described as complex we have learned to listen to  
8 our communities and to our users and to engage with  
9 experts this is the culmination of a process of  
10 many multiple public meetings, surveys, we got over  
11 65,000 responses, we've met with 70 organizations  
12 and of course engaged the expertise of our library  
13 colleagues and we learned that we... that everyone  
14 agrees we need to provide New Yorkers with a world  
15 class central circulating library, that we need to  
16 increase public library space specifically program  
17 space that expands the opportunities for learning  
18 and that we need to ensure enough flexibility to  
19 prepare for the future. We engaged with a world  
20 class team of architects who are prepared to  
21 deliver on those requirements and to create a  
22 central circulating library that will be a partner  
23 and as inspiring and as used and beloved as the  
24 Schwarzman Building across the street. Let me just  
25 highlight a few points which you will see as Iris

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

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

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

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1  
2 after tactile analysis and consideration that MML  
3 needed to move in an accelerated design path due to  
4 a number of factors which we will go into. As such  
5 today's presentation will focus on the Mid  
6 Manhattan Library. SASB or the Schwarzman Building  
7 we have committed to keeping that open during the  
8 renovation, it's our own complex project and will  
9 be coming back at the appropriate time to go into  
10 great detail with the council about our plans for  
11 the Schwarzman Building. So, what you're seeing now  
12 is a cross section of, of the, of the proposed  
13 building. Patrons will enter the building from 5th  
14 Avenue which they do now, the ground floor will  
15 feature grab and go, an area to browse periodicals  
16 and to pick up holds in the central service desk.  
17 Going down the building will have as Tony noted a  
18 dedicated library for children and for teens and by  
19 creating this space we're going to be utilizing the  
20 lower level which currently is non-public space and  
21 this design brings light from the street level down  
22 to the, the ground... what we call the ground level  
23 now. Moving up the floors we have two through four  
24 which will have three floors of a multi-purpose  
25 space for reading and researching and working as

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1 well as Tony noted, five stories of book stacks and  
2 then all of the, the, the space is flexible meaning  
3 that as we move into the future this space can then  
4 be adapted to what we sort of envision in the  
5 future or quite don't know what we'll envision in  
6 the future. Above these floors is a learning center  
7 for adults, one of the largest free learning  
8 centers in the city adjacent to a business library,  
9 one floor above to provide a seamless continuum of  
10 learning for people here in the city of New York.  
11 That business library a whole floor will  
12 incorporate the services and classes currently at  
13 the Science Industry and Business Library. On top  
14 is a new rooftop programming space featuring two  
15 large room and an outdoor terrace which will have  
16 use of the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building and of  
17 Midtown. So, the next slide will show you a  
18 rendering of what Tony referred to as the long  
19 room, we're now looking of a close up, we asked our  
20 design team to find a way to accommodate the same  
21 size collection in the new MML as we currently  
22 have, 400,000 books and materials and they did that  
23 by making use of unique... the unique shape of the  
24 building. MML has a narrow arm that spans from 40th  
25

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1  
2 Street to 39th Street and they use the space to  
3 create a book stack area calling it the long room  
4 which because it, it runs the entire length of the  
5 building it will hold the majority of MML's  
6 collections while the remainder will be spread out  
7 on the floors throughout the building. The design  
8 also offers increased lighting and open space, the  
9 books are concentrated in the long room  
10 prioritizing floor space for people and for  
11 programs. The next slide shows you a rendering of  
12 the public roof terrace, this is the 7th floor  
13 addition which offers large multi-purpose spaces  
14 and outdoor terrace space supporting a wide variety  
15 of programming needs and the next slide shows you  
16 the current façade of the MML, the Mid, Mid  
17 Manhattan Library and it's now going to morph into  
18 what we believe will be the future façade of the  
19 building and while the rooftop is the only  
20 significant change to the exterior of the building  
21 the building will receive a façade restoration  
22 including cleaning and the replacement of the  
23 windows. The rooftop is unique to MML but the  
24 material used mirrors that of the buildings in the  
25 surrounding area that are also from the same period

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of the Beaux Arts style. And if I might Mr.

3

Chairman we'd like to run through a video that the

4

architects have prepared so the, the council can

5

get a true feeling for what it's like to walk

6

through this truly remarkable building.

7

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Absolutely,

8

there's also one behind you just so... if you know...

9

we're looking...

10

IRIS WEINSHALL: Oh great...

11

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

12

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

13

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...too...

14

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...know...

15

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...that's

16

alright...

17

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...great... I, I was

18

wondering why you were all looking at me...

19

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...it's right

20

above your head so yeah...

21

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...oh okay, great,

22

terrific.

23

ANTHONY MARX: It's a little out of

24

focus.

25

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

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Alright.

3

IRIS WEINSHALL: Yes, we're good.

4

5

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

6

7

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

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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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1  
2 sense than where you started its self help on the  
3 left so as you walk in you can do things for  
4 yourself until you get to the help desk at the back  
5 there. Now we're in glass fronted elevators, we're  
6 going downstairs into the separate, separate kids  
7 and teens area, lots of soundproofing here. There's  
8 a large programs space. There's a surprising number  
9 of schools I'm sure Councilman Garodnick knows this  
10 within proximity of this... of this Midtown location.  
11 So now we have a dedicated children's and teens  
12 area and program space for them, strollers of  
13 course. Now we're up in the long room, we're going  
14 from the second floor up through the third and  
15 fourth floor, you see the atrium and the stack of  
16 books so five stories of books on the left, three  
17 stories of library on the right, every level  
18 connected of course for ADA and for east of, of  
19 grabbing books and, and, and taking them out or, or  
20 using them in, in house. So, you can... sorry. Here's  
21 another image that will no doubt be the iconic  
22 image of this amazing library, every area where  
23 there's... looking onto an atrium or a, a void as the  
24 architects call it has bars of computer users,  
25 people love to sit and look while they're working

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1  
2 on their computers. Similarly, the windows that are  
3 being replaced will have those. Now we're giving  
4 you a sense of what the other side from the atrium  
5 will look like in this case the fourth floor you'll  
6 notice that the architect has integrated the  
7 columns which are necessary to hold the building up  
8 so they are now part of the furniture in this case  
9 the long table which I suppose matches the long  
10 room. Again, you'll see there's lots of circulating  
11 books out on the floor but unlike today, today  
12 they're in high shelves blocking all the light from  
13 the windows instead we are bringing the light into  
14 this building. We are now on the fifth floor so  
15 this is the education center, all the spaces behind  
16 the space you're in are the classroom spaces  
17 particularly English language, citizenship, lots of  
18 immigrant folks coming through this part of town  
19 eager for those services as well as tech-connect so  
20 teaching computer skills, coding all kinds of  
21 things that people need to move ahead in this city  
22 of opportunity. So now we're back again over the  
23 long room this time it's a two story tall atrium  
24 which physically connects as I mentioned the  
25 education center, get your skills would go upstairs

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1  
2 to the business library and figure out how to apply  
3 those skills. So now we're on the business library  
4 side in... on these floors the long room instead of  
5 housing books houses consultation rooms so the tax  
6 preparation services described etcetera are right  
7 there. Again, the books, books for the... from Sybil  
8 are here, there's a more office feeling to this  
9 floor as people are preparing for... looking for work  
10 or starting businesses but... and lots of  
11 consultation space, lots of communal work space.  
12 Again, notice all the windows are, are accessible  
13 and the light is flowing in instead of being  
14 blocked as it has been. Sorry, reference books in  
15 that case on the floor. Now we're on the floor... on  
16 the roof which obviously now is just utilities. So,  
17 this will be probably one of the great program  
18 spaces in New York, it has two spaces which  
19 combined can house 250 people, there's a café up  
20 here. We can have author talks, programs, events  
21 and all of those glass walls are sliding so as the  
22 weather changes you can take advantage of that or  
23 not. There's an overhand of the roof so that if  
24 it's raining you can be outside and still... and not  
25 get wet and the roof... the level of the roof itself

1  
2 is raised so that you can see over the parapet to  
3 the Schwarzman Building, there's another little  
4 garden in the back there, we call that the secret  
5 garden, it has to be there because of the  
6 agreements with the... with the neighbors but it's a  
7 great nother [phonetic] outdoor space. Here you get  
8 a sense of the whole; we're now walking along 40th  
9 Street to see the length of the roof pavilion and  
10 the garden and terrace. Again, you know the fact  
11 that New Yorkers don't have a free public roof  
12 terrace to enjoy this great city is sort of amazing  
13 and now they will and a café and a vent space. This  
14 is really a, a strong statement of the values of  
15 this institution to say everyone in New York and I...  
16 the writers and the researchers god bless have the  
17 Schwarzman Building that is the focus of our  
18 research efforts but every New Yorker who uses the  
19 library should have an amazing facility and that's  
20 what we hope we've presented to you today. Why  
21 don't I turn then... sorry, that's the last image of  
22 the roof terrace overlooking the, the building and  
23 I will now turn it to our Chief Branch Library  
24 Officer Christopher Platt who's going to describe  
25 the process by which we get to this.

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

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23

1  
2 The children's room will continue to be where it is  
3 and then as you step to the left you'll see kind of  
4 a dark red room there that will be program space,  
5 we'll continue to offer some of the most robust...

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

8 CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...thank you...

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

11 CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...Tony...

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...know.

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

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24

1  
2 the building as well as browsable book stacks there  
3 that people will be oriented towards the windows  
4 and the books oriented towards the inside wall and  
5 then as well as you step to the rest of the orange  
6 space we will have ample provision for pc's and  
7 laptops which is one of the important services that  
8 we offer today. The green spaces that you see in  
9 the center there are staff spaces, that yellow  
10 hallway across the, the middle there is the real  
11 connector between those, those spaces and then it's  
12 important to note you see a little blue there in  
13 the middle we are constructing new restrooms on  
14 that level, we know that's very important when we  
15 have that many users coming into the library. We  
16 will have as many books as we can out browsable and  
17 then those that we can not fit in the browsing  
18 shelves we will put into that first level stack  
19 which is the light blue area at the top and they  
20 will be pagable by library staff so most of what  
21 the program and service at Mid Manhattan will go  
22 into the Schwarzman Building. It is important to  
23 note though that we will be leveraging the other  
24 spaces that we have in Midtown so for instance in  
25 the Sybil Library we will move our tech-connect,

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25

1  
2 tech training and other computer training courses  
3 to their labs down there as well as bolstering more  
4 popular collection and places to pick up your,  
5 your, your reserves and what have you from Sybil  
6 and as well the Grand Central Branch which we.. as  
7 you know we renewed the, the lease on recently, we  
8 will move.. again not just bolster those collections  
9 and, and a spot to pick up reserves but as well  
10 move our community partnership programs there so  
11 IDNYC, Single Stop, and the NY Citizenship Program  
12 will be moved to that location for the duration and  
13 then as well through all of these sites including  
14 the new 53rd Street Library we will leverage  
15 programming space where we can and again bolster  
16 those collections. We have a state of the art  
17 programming space at 53rd Street and we, we  
18 definitely want to make sure that we're helping  
19 address the program needs during this time. Again,  
20 so we don't want to alienate people for two years,  
21 we really want to continue to offer the robust  
22 library services that come on to rely on from us  
23 and so that when we reopen the renovated building  
24 we don't necessarily have to lure them back, they

25

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26

1  
2 are already still part of our family so to speak.

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

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

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27

1  
2 in addition to improving the visitor experience and  
3 we will be back to the council some time in the  
4 late fall to go through our further plans for the  
5 Schwarzman Building. In terms of community  
6 engagement we have been incredibly involved with  
7 meeting with folks and telling them what is going  
8 on so beginning in 2014 the library we've met with  
9 other cultural institutions, we've conducted as  
10 Tone noted public surveys, we met with key  
11 stakeholders and we have held several public  
12 meetings including a major town hall meeting in  
13 March of 2015 and we just had a meeting yesterday  
14 to go over this Mid Manhattan plan. So we have  
15 solicited key feedback and we've ensured that all  
16 the voices have been heard and in terms of next  
17 steps let me just say that we're very excited about  
18 moving ahead, we plan on opening the swing space in  
19 the Schwarzman Building in the fall of 2017, we've  
20 started the early work there already. Construction  
21 will last around two years and we will have a new  
22 Mid Manhattan branch by early 2020. and now I'd  
23 like to turn it back over to President Mark.

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

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1  
2 and enhance the research libraries that's why we've  
3 spent about 75 million dollars just in the  
4 Schwarzman Building, massive renovation of the  
5 Schomburg going on right now which just there two  
6 days ago as well as great work at LPA and we will  
7 have a new Sybil but I think this project, the Mid  
8 Manhattan project that we're focusing on today  
9 should be seeing literally and figuratively as the  
10 center piece of a reinvestment by this institution,  
11 by this city council, by this city in it's branch  
12 libraries and the crucial role they play as  
13 Councilman King said all the more in this  
14 particular environment. So, I just want to make  
15 that very clear that this is a pattern that goes  
16 way beyond and must go way beyond the Mid  
17 Manhattan, we aim to offer inspiring, safe and, and  
18 great spaces and services throughout the  
19 neighborhoods. We've been able to make great  
20 progress on that again with huge thanks to the  
21 leadership certainly Council Member Van Bramer's  
22 been in the lead on libraries for oh so long and it  
23 shows so our smallest branch, Macombs Bridge in  
24 Harlem after decades is finally going to move to a  
25 space five times it's size across the street. We're

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1  
2 creating larger facilities, that was Christopher  
3 clapping over here... we're going to create larger  
4 facilities and we're... new facilities in Roosevelt  
5 Island, Woodlawn and Westchester Square, there's a  
6 new branch being built in Charleston, we're... with  
7 the city's increased investment through the ten  
8 year capital plan we're going to gut, renovate five  
9 Carnegie libraries and made them absolutely  
10 fantastic. All told today we have 545 million  
11 dollars worth of improvements going including the  
12 upcoming Mid Manhattan Library project. Public  
13 funding has allowed us to leverage private dollars,  
14 the library itself is investing in these projects  
15 in partnership with the city council and with the  
16 mayor and with the city at large and we know these  
17 improvements make a difference. In Stapleton for  
18 instance a high needs area of Staten Island fully  
19 renovated in 2014 we saw a 33 percent increase in  
20 visits over it's last full year open prior to that  
21 renovation. Similarly, in the Kingsbridge Library  
22 close to where I grew up. After moving to a new  
23 larger modern space in 2011 an 80 percent increase  
24 in visits during it's first full year. When you  
25 build great new spaces the people come because they

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30

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

1  
2 he became the first person in his family to  
3 graduate from high school, to graduate from  
4 college, he ended up an administrator and by the  
5 time he was ready to retire he had built that boat  
6 and he navigated by the stars. We want everyone to  
7 have that kind of life changing experience. Thank  
8 you all for making that possible.

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

1  
2 terrace which is spectacular and, and may in fact  
3 be the only one in Midtown, I believe there's a new  
4 library being built on the waterfront in Queens  
5 that will also have a free and accessible rooftop  
6 terrace...

7 ANTHONY MARX: And, and a beautiful...

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...so...

9 ANTHONY MARX: ...view.

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

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

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1  
2 campus renovation is about 265 million dollars. 151  
3 is city funds of which 125 million was appropriated  
4 by the mayor, 25 million by the city council and a  
5 million by the borough president of Manhattan. The  
6 remainder of the money is what we call private  
7 funds they are a mixture of proceeds that, that the  
8 library has as well as, as you know Mr. Chairman we  
9 did a bond financing a couple of years ago, we took  
10 some of that money and we applied it towards this  
11 project and the remainder of the money will come  
12 from fundraising activities by the library.

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

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

1  
2 a lot of estimating and based on the schematics  
3 which you've seen we feel pretty confident that we  
4 can build this building for 200 million dollars as  
5 well as we also with the elements that Tony  
6 described we're putting back all the books that  
7 were there before plus additional books because the  
8 children's library will now be going into the Mid  
9 Manhattan Library as well as books... some of the  
10 books from Sybil will be going into this branch. We  
11 will be increasing the seats available to people as  
12 well as computers available to people. So we feel  
13 that we have accomplished a lot with this plan and  
14 I know Tony wants to add to it.

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

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35

1  
2 we realized that actually that New Yorkers need  
3 more space for more library and more educational  
4 programs and more opportunities. This plan solves  
5 all those problems.

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

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1  
2           ANTHONY MARX: So we think those are  
3 all important, that's one of the powers of the  
4 library. We... we're delighted that we'll have 600  
5 more seats here, the library is the civic space in  
6 this town where everyone can come together and now  
7 we're going to have one where people are going to  
8 be delighted to come together in Midtown.  
9 Obviously, we need to give them computer access as  
10 we've all talked about; there are two or three  
11 million New Yorkers without broadband at home which  
12 is incredible in the 21st century in this city or  
13 anyplace else. And there's increasing amounts of  
14 information of ours particularly the Sybil  
15 collection is almost all used now on-line and  
16 that's been true for a decade which is a big change  
17 in how that library has been used. So, we have to  
18 do the seating, we have to do the computers, we  
19 have to have educational programs because we are  
20 the free provider cradle to grave of educational  
21 programs and we have really transformed the  
22 libraries in this city into those education  
23 providers again with the support and leadership and  
24 guidance of, of yourself and of the city council.  
25 Lastly, as for books if you walk into this library

1  
2 and you see a five story tall wall of books you're  
3 going to know right away the centrality of the book  
4 to the library and that's important, people come  
5 from all over the city as I did as a kid to use  
6 this collection because it's our largest  
7 collection, you will find things you didn't even  
8 know you were looking for, alright. E.L. Doctorow  
9 told me amazing stories about writing his books  
10 based on what he literally stumbled upon in this  
11 library. So, it's going to be very visible in a way  
12 that it hasn't been that the books are at the  
13 center but as Iris said that whole book stack is  
14 flexible use meaning if 40 years from now we don't  
15 need as many books as we have and therefore as much  
16 storage I hope that isn't the case but if it is  
17 that space can all become consulting room space,  
18 shared workspace, collaborative work space quite  
19 dramatically as well.

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

1  
2 continued to be so central to everything we believe  
3 is because they are flexible and meeting the needs  
4 of, of people where they are today. I wanted to  
5 talk a little bit about the swing space before we  
6 go over to my colleagues because obviously having  
7 worked for a library for 11 years swing spaces are  
8 challenging, they're disruptive, they're never  
9 everything that you had in the previous iteration  
10 and then there's the, the swing back to where you  
11 were in the Schwarzman Building so as you... as Tony  
12 was very, very helpfully pointing out all of those  
13 spaces that will be used for public service in  
14 Schwarzman as the swing I was thinking about what  
15 you're going to be doing with that space once MML  
16 reopens and, and, and, and what that's going to  
17 look like?

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

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure...

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

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1  
2 in commercial space on 39th Street where we added  
3 75,000 square feet so that we could serve the  
4 public more including particularly in the  
5 Schwarzman Building so the first big move of that  
6 by definition has to be the swing space. And we are  
7 going to fix that space up and invest probably 14  
8 million dollars or so in a way that will last past  
9 the swing space; it becomes permanent improvements  
10 to the Schwarzman Building. When, when MML swings  
11 back across the street we anticipate that that will  
12 become the central research library, education  
13 center and we aspire, we aspire to take our  
14 treasures out of the safes where they've been kept  
15 for 100 years, put them on display and welcome  
16 every school kid in this town in to see those  
17 treasures and then to spend time in our education  
18 center to learn what a research library can do and  
19 what primary documents can teach you, what real  
20 news rather than fake news actually looks like and  
21 so we look forward to a great future use of that  
22 for the public on the ground floor of the  
23 Schwarzman Building.

24

25

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40

1  
2           CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And we could  
3 of used that elimination of fake news a couple of  
4 months ago Tony honestly but...

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

7           CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...yeah...

8           ANTHONY MARX: Mr. Chairman.

9           CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's a,  
10 that's a tall order if you're going to fix that  
11 but... how, how, how are you going to keep this on  
12 time and, and make sure that... you know that, that  
13 legitimately disruptive period is, is kept to a, a  
14 minimum, we all know that, that library usage is,  
15 is, is very driven by habit and, and people go to  
16 the same place and, and the same time and then if  
17 something's not there maybe they, they stop going  
18 and then they have to get reacquainted so as little  
19 disruption as, as possible, I mean this is an  
20 important project and you need to do this but, but  
21 how, how hard will you drive and how assured can  
22 you be and ensure the committee that this is going  
23 to happen in the time lines that you've set it up  
24 for?  
25

1  
2           IRIS WEINSHALL: So, so let me just say  
3 that the swing space is just temporary; it's just  
4 temporary for the period of time that we are in  
5 construction. We are doing this project as... we, we  
6 aspire to do this project as a pass through so the  
7 library will be overseeing the construction of the  
8 project. This is why it's important that the  
9 library close during this construction period. Just  
10 imagine doing a renovation in your apartment while  
11 you're living there which is what I'm doing now  
12 which is a horror. So, we're going to close it,  
13 we're doing a lot of pre-investigation now so we  
14 don't open up a wall and oh my god this is what,  
15 what we found. So, we are keeping a very tight  
16 schedule in terms of like ordering the steel early  
17 on, making sure that we do the buys that we have to  
18 do before so you're not doing the demolition and  
19 then you have to wait to buy the steel and do all  
20 that. I'll let Christopher talk about educating the  
21 public in terms of how people will find their way  
22 there and then find their way back.

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

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1  
2 back and remind them there was a library here, we  
3 don't want to do that which is again part of the  
4 investment in the swing space itself but also a  
5 really robust marketing and communications plan  
6 that keeps people up to date building on the  
7 building for you the work that we've started with  
8 some of our branch renovations so that there's  
9 constant community conversation and updates of  
10 what's going on and you know we're meeting our  
11 deadlines and you can come and celebrate with us  
12 when we reopen this new building and remind them  
13 that this new building's also going to include the  
14 new children's center and the teen center and the  
15 adult learning center and, and the new components  
16 that weren't in that building when it closed.

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

23 CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...right...

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

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1  
2 branch but it's going to reopen and this is what's  
3 going on.

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

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

10 ANTHONY MARX: ...as well.

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

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

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

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1  
2 months from now and then 24 months after that we  
3 will reopen the Mid Manhattan so...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...so...

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

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

9 ANTHONY MARX: So it's...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...just...

11 ANTHONY MARX: The current project is  
12 265 but I am confident that the library it's  
13 private funds will be continuing to be past that  
14 particularly in the Schwarzman Building.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: How much of that  
16 265 is going to build the swing space?

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

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

1  
2 is... you have a Single Stop space there for people  
3 who come in for health insurance, SNAP and all of  
4 those programs and help the human component what  
5 happens to that program, how are you going to  
6 manage all of that during this transition?

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

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay...

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

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

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

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...right...

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

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

19 IRIS WEINSHALL: Yeah you know this is  
20 schematic and we're still working out with the HVAC  
21 consultant but you know we have to... we haven't  
22 gotten to that level of detail yet. Let me just say  
23 one other thing, I'm sorry. Yeah, this will be a  
24 lead certified building, it's always our aspiration  
25

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1  
2 to seek gold or platinum and so this will be a lead  
3 building.

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

8 IRIS WEINSHALL: ...yes...

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

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

1  
2 attention to it's central branch library and worked  
3 with the city to solve this. I think people  
4 understand that you can't solve a problem without  
5 you know having some disruption along the way and  
6 see that we are working very hard to minimize that  
7 disruption and meet needs in, in other ways. We  
8 are... we've heard... also hear... you know there are  
9 people who sort of have lived in that library for  
10 45 years and sort of got used to it and don't quite  
11 see why it's not good enough. I think generally  
12 people understand why it's not good enough and why  
13 we need to do much better and we're also getting  
14 suggestions. Yesterday we had a public meeting  
15 where people pointed out some places where there  
16 should be seating that there hadn't... we hadn't  
17 thought about, people talked about needing to make  
18 sure that glass walls in, in front of open space  
19 might need to be taller just for security reasons  
20 so the same issues around the windows actually has  
21 to be true internally as well so you know we're  
22 also learning as we go and I expect that will  
23 continue.

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

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

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

1  
2 said it's, it's... it will probably be an enormous  
3 undertaking for the library and one that we have to  
4 prioritize in terms of what we can afford and when  
5 we can afford to do the work.

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

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

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

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

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

24 IRIS WEINSHALL: ...yeah...

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1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...how is that  
3 evident...

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

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: You might...

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

25

1  
2 you know that location and our Bronx Library Center  
3 are where we...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...right...

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

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

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

1  
2 aren't, we aren't taking down the façade and I  
3 would just like to applaud you for that comment  
4 because this is a beautiful façade that can be  
5 reused into the new design of the building so thank  
6 you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: You're welcome.

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Great, well  
20 thank you to the... all the staff having worked in a  
21 library that was undergoing a significant  
22 renovation it's not easy but I appreciate  
23 everything that you all do. Council Member  
24 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

1  
2 circulating collection though that is diminished  
3 because so much of that work now happens online.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay, so  
5 400,000 items so that's books plus DVD's and  
6 everything else..

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

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ..okay. And  
10 the new Mid Manhattan Library will have those  
11 400,000 plus the children's library you said that's  
12 currently in the Schwarzman which is how many  
13 items?

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

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

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

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

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

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: And Sybil  
3 today versus what you will have in the new Mid  
4 Manhattan?

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

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

22 IRIS WEINSHALL: Okay...

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

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

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

1  
2 space during the time that Mid Manhattan is being  
3 done?

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

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

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

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

23 ANTHONY MARX: ...future location?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Current  
25 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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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: But your  
3 expectation here is you sell the current Sybil and...

4 ANTHONY MARX: ...those are...

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

7 ANTHONY MARX: ...resources...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ...plan...

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

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

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

1  
2 being restored to the public so it's not like we're  
3 taking anything away from the research library and  
4 in fact and we will come back to you in the, in the  
5 next calendar year we hope to move aggressively not  
6 only with this project but with opening more space  
7 for the research community in the Schwarzman  
8 Building and also do that in a way that is  
9 additive, right restoring space to the public and  
10 therefore not only not disruptive but should be  
11 welcomed. Again, but there is in any building of  
12 this age, you know there are inevitably whenever  
13 you're doing work there's going to be some level  
14 of... you know disruption and we'll try to keep that  
15 minimal. We're, we're committed to the Schwarzman  
16 Building staying open and you know people  
17 continuing to use it throughout this process.

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

20 ANTHONY MARX: ...certainly...

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

24 ANTHONY MARX: ...there is no...  
25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ...some  
3 discomfort...

4 ANTHONY MARX: ...question about...

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

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

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ...sail...

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

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Did you want  
21 to add anything?

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

1  
2 putting other people in the building and so it was  
3 a good learning lesson for us so when we do get to  
4 this point where we have swing and we have extra  
5 people coming into the building we sort of... it gave  
6 us a, a sense of what we could sort of expect in  
7 the building.

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

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

1  
2 and a closer adjacent seat to the other curatorial  
3 units where we know people use both so that would  
4 be a change and then I will also just remind that  
5 we do intend to bolster the circulating collections  
6 at the surrounding Midtown sites as well. Again, to  
7 just make it as easy as possible for people who  
8 need to get the books that they want to read during  
9 this time.

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

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

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

20 CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Correct.

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

1  
2 meeting room spaces which I think are very  
3 appealing in this context what more does the  
4 library anticipate doing to accommodate the  
5 increased demand for online material in that space?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1  
2 we are also as a system talking about how we make  
3 sure even our web access is as accessible to people  
4 with disabilities as well so we're... this is a, a  
5 subject we are very much focused on.

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

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Could you  
22 describe to me what a hearing loop will look like  
23 in this renovation, where will they be and what  
24 purpose will they serve?  
25

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

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

12 CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...right...

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

15 IRIS WEINSHALL: And we do at...

16 CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...right...

17 IRIS WEINSHALL: 53rd Street that...

18 ANTHONY MARX: We have that...

19 IRIS WEINSHALL: We already have it.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You do?

21 IRIS WEINSHALL: Yes.

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

1  
2 disabilities, I don't know if you've already done  
3 that but I would love to see a schematic that shows  
4 that if you could send that over without doing new  
5 work, something you already have and...

6 CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...of course...

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

9 CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Happy to.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you  
11 very much.

12 CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Thank you.

13 ANTHONY MARX: Thank you.

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

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

1  
2 question would be is you're adding on this new  
3 space for programming I'd like to know is there  
4 going to be like... you say new programming, I don't  
5 know exactly what that means, is that like programs  
6 already in existence and you're pulling out and  
7 putting back on the shelf or are you grabbing  
8 something that has never been done anywhere and  
9 this location is going to be the new model and is  
10 this when it's finished and said and done when we  
11 walk through there is this going to be the new  
12 model of libraries of how libraries are going to  
13 look in the future?

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

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

23 ANTHONY MARX: ...this...

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

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

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

10 CHRISTOPHER PLATT: A good example  
11 Council Member King is you know we'll have a state  
12 of the art media lab for the youth in that  
13 childrens and young adult level. There are.. it's  
14 not just open space for books and a community space  
15 to hold programs, there will also be small work  
16 spaces especially in the teen area where we know  
17 teens come together to learn to code, to tinker, to  
18 create, to create media and drawing a large part on  
19 some good.. for examples by peers across the country  
20 including Queens Library we know that they love to  
21 create audio, they love to create video and this is  
22 a, a flagship area where we want to blow up that  
23 programming and create real templates and, and  
24 innovative best practices that we can build across  
25 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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2 to be very, very special and unique so with that  
3 we'll say thank you...

4 ANTHONY MARX: Thank you...

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...and...

6 ANTHONY MARX: Mr. Chair...

7 CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Thank you Mr.  
8 Chair...

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

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

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

1  
2 heard Council... Councilman Garodnick answer some  
3 questions that were not quite these questions about  
4 the number of the books and I think he got more  
5 information, better answer than the public was  
6 given last night but these questions have to be  
7 asked, there's a drastic reduction of books and it  
8 results in the opportunity for surveillance. We  
9 also were told last night that the NYPL has stopped  
10 collecting science books, I mean we have a whole  
11 library that's called the science industry and  
12 business library and the reason was that they said  
13 people can just go to the internet well I know a  
14 lot of people who are studying climate science  
15 these days and they're reading a lot of books it's  
16 not available elsewhere and what we need to address  
17 what is going to potentially destroy our planet  
18 probably the greatest threat is for our population  
19 to understand climate science and to have access to  
20 the science that could create solutions. We can not  
21 be shrinking our libraries at this point.

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

1  
2 question and I think Chair King has a, a question  
3 as well. The Booz Allen Hamilton concern what  
4 exactly is your concern here, what, what are we...  
5 what are we concerned about, what are we alleging?

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

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

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

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

9 MICHAEL WHITE: ...I, I, I, I don't know  
10 for a fact and I don't know that it's not now the  
11 NYPL was... has not been willing to produce the  
12 contracts with Booz and we have foiled the  
13 contracts with Booz and company with the Brooklyn  
14 public library and they have been unwilling to  
15 produce them. Now the United States government has  
16 70 percent of it's surveillance through private  
17 firms of that 80 percent is with five firms, the  
18 top firm of those five firms is Booz Allen, their  
19 principle work is surveillance for the federal  
20 government...

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

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

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

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

25

1  
2 well, well earned reputation on the, on the part of  
3 all three of our library systems...

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

5                   CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...quite  
6 frankly...

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

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

1  
2 issues and then to connect it to NYPL's work with  
3 Booz Hamilton I think that's a stretch and I think  
4 that's what's not really resonating with me but I  
5 understand you have a position and, and, and I just  
6 want to you know finish that point by stating that  
7 the work, the body of work of this city's three  
8 public library systems protecting and really being  
9 the first line of defense for every New Yorker  
10 particularly for the undocumented is in my  
11 estimation unchallengeable and, and, and that  
12 commitment I know is shared by, by Tony and the  
13 three other.. and the two other library system head  
14 so you stated your position, your concern, I  
15 understand it, I disagree with it but, but it's  
16 been raised. I know Council Member King has a  
17 question.

18                   COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Good afternoon  
19 and again thank you for your testimony. Just a  
20 question you sat here through the testimony of  
21 President Marks and the New York Public Library was  
22 there anything that you agree with what they were  
23 saying or what they were doing, what their plans  
24 are?  
25

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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

1  
2 litigated against and helped to derail and if you  
3 have this kind of money to spend on this library  
4 particularly if you're willing to put more books in  
5 it so that we are... have books more like we used to  
6 have it... there are a lot of things that are good  
7 about this design.

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

12 MICHAEL WHITE: Well...

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

16 MICHAEL WHITE: ...okay...

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

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

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

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

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...okay...

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

4

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

6

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...

10

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

12

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

13

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

14

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

17

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay and number  
three?

19

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

21

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

23

MICHAEL WHITE: ...alright.

24

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

25

MICHAEL WHITE: ...alright...

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

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

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...okay..

12 MICHAEL WHITE: ...are concerned about.

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

17 MICHAEL WHITE: Thank you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Thank you.

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

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

12 [gavel]

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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