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Dear Canal Winchester Community,

Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) is committed to delivering a new, world-class library to you. Canal Winchester is one of eight branch library projects that comprise Phase II of our current capital program, and we believe the time is now to move the Canal Winchester Branch project forward.

On Monday, Jan. 8, CML will go before the Canal Winchester Planning and Zoning Commission for critical final approvals that will determine if we move forward

with a new library for Canal Winchester. CML has prepared this extensive briefing to inform you of the project and the process.

Eight years ago, we gathered to cut the ribbon on Canal Winchester's first CML branch, located within the gymnasium of the historic high school. In the time since, two things have been made clear to us: Canal Winchester residents love their library, and they need a larger one. In early conversations with city officials, we discussed building this new library within the municipal building on East Waterloo St. However, after further consideration, we concluded that a better long-term solution would be to build a standalone library for your growing community.

With a proposed \$24 million investment by CML for a new Canal Winchester Branch, this project represents a substantial investment of public funds. We believe it is prudent to provide you with a detailed status report of the project given the wide range of comments received about the proposed design – both positive and negative.

CML identified a site in the fall of 2021 and worked with city development staff to ensure the site was suitable for building a public library with enough land for ample public parking. The development staff assured CML we would be granted “conditional use” approval on the Groveport Road parcel. No land is currently zoned in Canal Winchester for a public library, so “conditional use approval” was an assurance CML counted on when moving forward to purchase the land in December 2021.

Last summer, CML hosted then-Mayor Michael Ebert, members of City Council and city development staff on a bus tour, showing them our new Gahanna Branch and Whitehall Branch and the construction progress of our new Reynoldsburg Branch, which will open later this spring. The goal of this tour was to familiarize them with our 21st century libraries and how design reflects our brand and our focus on forward-thinking services.

The city's recently approved Community Plan includes reference to a standalone library. While we are pleased that the city considers the library an important part of its future, these plans were developed without any CML input or knowledge of the process and includes a description and image of our 21-year-old New Albany Branch. Columbus Metropolitan Library is mentioned on page 105 of the Community Plan. Just two pages later is the following quote: **“Continue to embrace the creative development proposals that have the potential to become tomorrow's cultural assets.”** CML's building plan is rooted in a desire to deliver tomorrow's cultural asset and serves as a representation of a cultural aspiration for Canal Winchester.

Since formally presenting the design concept to the Canal Winchester Planning and Zoning Commission, we have worked to balance feedback with moving forward on a project that we believe successfully accomplishes both ours and the city's goals. We have made some modifications as suggested by city staff, however the overall design of the building remains.

As with our previous building projects, we are required to meet zoning and building code regulations. In terms of architectural design requirements, our building design complies with the standards of zoning ordinance 1199.03. However, individual architectural design preferences are personal and range a wide spectrum of preferences, so it is impossible to design by committee or to only listen to the loudest voices. As with all of our building projects, we appreciate and respect that there will be some who will love the design and others who will not. We are confident that our building design will meet the needs of the expanding Canal Winchester community and appeal to the community at large – especially its young minds, who we hope to inspire.

Given our need and desire to keep the library project moving forward, we are asking the Canal Winchester Planning and Zoning Commission to review and approve our request to permit a public library on the site (granting conditional use status, approving a variance for side setbacks and site development plan approval). With each delay, CML faces significant escalation costs in this challenging construction environment. If we cannot move forward, while our commitment to Canal Winchester remains, we may need to defer this project until our next building cycle and apply these resources to other pressing capital needs within the CML system.

If you have yet to experience one of CML's newer branches, we encourage you to visit our new Gahanna Branch at 310 Granville St. Since its opening last March, there have been nearly 400,000 visits to this building, which is a 200% increase from 2022. But whether you visit Gahanna or any of our award-winning new buildings, what you will find is an iconic, 21st century library that exemplifies our purpose *to inspire reading, share resources and connect people.*

We invite you to attend the upcoming Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on Jan. 8 at 7 p.m. in City Council chambers at 45 E. Waterloo St. and share your thoughts about the proposed new library. We are proud of our design and believe it will serve as a crown jewel in this growing and evolving community for many years to come.

Patrick Pasindler *Catherine J. Strauss* *Sam Hoffmann*

New Canal Winchester Branch Project

The new Canal Winchester Branch will have:

- Approximately 30,000 sq. ft. of space (increased from 5,400 sq. ft.).
- Interactive Children's area with more space for programs and areas for children to read, study and use computers.
- Ready for Kindergarten area where preschoolers and their families can prepare for kindergarten.
- School Help Center where students can get free after-school help.
- Meeting and study rooms to gather and meet.
- Public computers for the community to reserve.
- A robust and much-expanded collection of library materials to meet the community's needs.



Project Process

We want to take a moment to outline the history of this project, as well as our partnership with the City of Canal Winchester.

Jan. 25, 2016

- CML joined with Mayor Ebert and city leaders to cut the ribbon on the first branch for Canal Winchester, a 5,400 sq. ft. express location within the former high school.

Late 2020 and through early 2021

- CML began looking at potential sites for a new branch, reviewing options with and seeking feedback from city staff.

December 2021

- CML entered into a purchase agreement for nearly nine acres on Groveport Road for the site of the new branch.

April 28, 2022

- CML's Board of Trustees approved Bostwick Design Partnership as architect for the new Canal Winchester Branch, after input from and consent of city leaders.

Dec. 12, 2022

- CML sent an email to Canal Winchester Branch cardholders seeking input about the design of the new branch and inviting them to attend a virtual public meeting on Jan. 10, 2023. We also displayed an easel sign in the branch, distributed fliers and sent a reminder email on Jan. 5, 2023.

Jan. 10, 2023

- CML engaged the community with a virtual public meeting to solicit design input. We also surveyed Canal Winchester Branch customers.

June 16, 2023

- CML hosted Mayor Ebert, members of City Council and city development staff on a bus tour to visit the new Gahanna Branch, Whitehall Branch and to see progress on the new Reynoldsburg Branch.

Budget Considerations

It is important to note that while the current building design has received cost estimates, the dynamic construction marketplace in central Ohio makes it impossible to know actual costs until design bidding is completed.

The library's budget for this building is \$24 million. With construction cost escalation estimated at \$270,000-\$290,000 per month, additional delays for this project only negatively affect CML's ability to produce the library envisioned for the Canal Winchester community.

Guiding Principles of Design

We identified guiding principles to define the design of our new libraries. Each one impacts decisions every step of the way. These principles were provided to all architects working on CML projects.

- **Transparency:** Open vistas throughout
- **Flexibility:** Open floor plans for future changes
- **Iconic Design:** Innovative and forward-thinking
- **Technology:** Creative applications for services
- **Innovative Programming:** Collaborations with others
- **Customer Experience:** World-class service
- **Young Minds:** Our top priority; buildings reflect commitment
- **Showcase Our Collection:** No longer hidden in shelves
- **Sustainability:** Purposeful/respectful

Our Award-Winning Architecture

Our new buildings have won several architectural awards over the last decade.

Driving Park Branch (opened in 2014)

- *Honor Award*, American Institute of Architects Ohio | 2015
- *James B. Recchie Design Award*, Columbus Landmarks Foundation | 2015
- *Innovations Award*, Contract Magazine | 2015

Dublin Branch (opened in 2019)

- *Columbus Interior Design Award – Public/Civic*, International Interior Design Association Columbus | 2019
- *Honor Award*, American Society of Landscape Architects | 2020
- *Achievement Award*, American Council of Engineering Companies | 2021

Gahanna Branch (opened in 2023)

- *Building Columbus Awards Honoree, Columbus Business First* | 2023
- *People's Choice*, American Institute of Architects Ohio | 2023

Hilliard Branch (opened in 2018)

- *Reconstruction Award*, Building Design + Construction | 2019

Karl Road Branch (opened in 2021)

- *Honor Award*, American Institute of Architects Ohio | 2022

Main Library (opened in 2016)

- *Harrison W. Smith Award*, Columbus Downtown Commission | 2016
- *James B. Recchie Design Award*, Columbus Landmarks Foundation | 2019
- *SOURCE Award* (for lighting), Eaton | 2017
- *James B. Recchie Design Award*, Columbus Landmarks Foundation | 2019

Martin Luther King Branch (opened in 2018)

- *Honor Award* (for yet-to-be-built projects), American Institute of Architects Ohio | 2018
- *Honor Award*, American Institute of Architects Columbus | 2019
- *Grand Prize*, Architectural Awards, *Learning By Design* | 2020
- *Honor Award*, National Organization of Minority Architects | 2020
- *Editors' Pick*, AN Best of Design Awards, *The Architect's Newspaper* | 2020

Northside Branch (opened in 2017)

- *Honor Award*, American Institute of Architects Columbus | 2017
- *Library Interior Design Award*, International Interior Design Association/American Library Association | 2018
- *James B. Recchie Design Award*, Columbus Landmarks Foundation | 2018

Parsons Branch (opened in 2016)

- *Design Citation*, National Organization of Minority Architects | 2017

Shepard Branch (opened in 2016)

- *Honor Award*, American Institute of Architects Ohio | 2018

Whitehall Branch (opened in 2015)

- *Building Award*, American Institute of Architects/American Library Association | 2017
- *Honor Award*, American Institute of Architects Ohio | 2017