



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

## Legislators Announce State Construction Grant for the New Rochelle Public Library

SHELLEY B. MAYER September 6, 2018

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Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-35 SD), Senator Shelley Mayer (D-37 SD), Assemblywoman Amy Paulin (D-88 AD) and Assemblyman Steve Otis (D-91 AD) are pleased to announce an important state construction grant award for the New Rochelle Public Library. The grant is part of a \$24 million capital fund appropriation for public library construction in the 2017 state budget.

The New Rochelle Public Library has been awarded \$276,363 to expand the entryway of the library with a re-designed circulation desk that will include an ADA compliant counter and children's height counters to make the library more accessible. The project will also include self-checkout kiosks, an updated security system equipped with computer monitors and a backroom workspace for processing intra-library loan items.

"This is a major announcement for the New Rochelle Public Library," said Tom Geoffino, Director of the New Rochelle Public Library. "We are thrilled to learn that this significant modernization project can move ahead. The interior entryway of our library has not been updated since the building was completed in 1979. With the State Construction Grant funds, and additional financial support of the New Rochelle Public Library Foundation, the major improvements will allow the library to serve the community more efficiently and more effectively."

"Libraries are indispensable to our educational system and public life, and they should be accessible to everyone," said Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins. "This grant will be used to build an ADA accessible entranceway to the New Rochelle Public Library and improve the facility's security features. The funding will effectively modernize the building and enhance the quality of patrons' visits. I am pleased the library will receive these funds and I am confident the residents of New Rochelle will be well-served by the library's improvements. I will continue to work hard alongside Assemblyman Otis, Assemblymember Paulin and Senator Mayer to secure important resources that can be used to provide quality services to our community.

"I am thrilled for the New Rochelle Public Library to receive this \$276,000 grant for major improvements including ADA accessibility and an updated security system," said State Senator Shelley Mayer. "This funding will go a long way toward modernization so that the library may better serve the residents of New Rochelle. Public libraries are very important to

the communities they serve, and I will continue to work hard to deliver additional funding and resources.”

“I am thrilled that New Rochelle Public Library will be supported by this much-needed construction grant, in recognition of the vital and central role they play for city residents,” said Assemblymember Amy Paulin. “This project will produce a more secure, more efficient, and accessible entranceway for library patrons. I have always been an advocate for state investment in our local libraries, and grateful for the mission-driven services they provide each and every day.”

Assemblyman Otis who serves on the Assembly Libraries and Education Technology Committee, stated: “This grant will help to modernize and enhance the New Rochelle library to best suit the needs of the community, making the library more welcoming, functional and enjoyable for all residents. Today we celebrate the award of this grant to New Rochelle and the large increase we enacted in this year’s state budget for the Library Capital Grants program which is very important to libraries throughout Westchester County.”

“Once again, our State delegation has delivered for New Rochelle, providing valuable resources to our Public Library and helping to make a great and vital institution even better,” said Mayor Noam Bramson. I extend thanks to our Assembly and Senate representatives and look forward to the improvements that this funding will make possible.

New York’s public libraries throughout the state are in urgent need of renovation and upgrading. A recent survey documented public library construction and renovation project needs totaling more than \$1.7 billion. More than 51% of the 1,000+ public library buildings in communities across New York are over 60 years old. Another 33% are more than three decades old. Many of New York’s local public libraries are unable to accommodate users with disabilities, are energy inefficient, cannot provide computer and internet access to users

because of outdated or inadequate electrical wiring, and do not have sufficient space to house the library's expanding collection or accommodate meeting room needs.

“As libraries transition from being a place for books to enter for community activity,” said Terry Kirchner, WLS Executive Director, “the projects supported by the NYS public library construction aide grant program—such as New Rochelle Public Library’s—are an excellent investment in our libraries’ infrastructure that will create inviting, safe spaces for children, teens, and adults throughout the County.”

“Libraries provide critical access to information for all residents and help to bridge the digital divide for economically disadvantaged students, job seekers and seniors,” observed Stewart-Cousins and Mayer. “They are the very heart of the civic and cultural life of the communities we represent. We are pleased to announce this important library construction award and will continue to push for increased library funding in future years,” commented Paulin and Otis.

Earlier this year, the Legislature approved \$34 million in the 2018-19 state budget for library construction projects that will be announced in the spring of 2019.