



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

## New Brooklyn Heights Library Now Open

BRIAN KAVANAGH June 8, 2022



**Brooklyn, NY** — Today, Brooklyn Public Library celebrates the opening of the highly-anticipated Brooklyn Heights Library at 286 Cadman Plaza West. At over 26,000 square feet, Brooklyn Heights Library is now the second-largest library in the system after Central Library, BPL's headquarters. Key features of the library include a children's area, a teen library, a multipurpose room with a capacity of 225, public meeting rooms, and plenty of bright, airy spaces to browse, read, write, create, watch, and think.

“Today we celebrate a milestone, completing a vision to turn an outdated library into a bright and inspiring space for the 21st century,” said **Linda Johnson, President and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library**. “In so doing, not only are we delivering a beautiful new Brooklyn Heights Library, we have generated funds for the renovation of nine other branches, benefitting our patrons throughout the borough and marking the most important moment in rebuilding since the Library was founded 125 years ago.

“Congratulations to Brooklyn Public Library on the opening of Brooklyn Heights Library, delivering a modern new literary center and 114 units of affordable housing to Brooklynites,” said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. “As Brooklyn borough president, I was supportive of these plans and now New Yorkers will be able to utilize this beautiful space for an array of activities.” The new Brooklyn Heights Library is made possible by an innovative redevelopment project undertaken by BPL in collaboration with the New York City Economic Development Corporation that leveraged funds from a land sale to generate \$52 million in revenue for BPL, \$40 million of which has been apportioned to fund repairs and improvements at branches throughout the system and \$12 million allocated toward the fit-out of the interior of the Brooklyn Heights Library. The development also paid for the core and shell of the new library, a 9,000 square foot STEAM lab to be operated by the NYC Department of Education, and rent for an interim library throughout the construction period. In addition, the development included 114 affordable housing units in Brooklyn’s Community Board 2, located at 909 Atlantic Avenue and 1043 Fulton Street.

Library renovations funded by the Brooklyn Heights project proceeds include:

Sunset Park: \$11M for the fit-out of a new, larger branch in conjunction with an affordable housing project

Walt Whitman: \$6.5M for branch modernization and infrastructure upgrade

Washington Irving: \$6M for a branch modernization

Pacific: \$3.5M for a new ADA-compliant entry and other accessibility improvements

New Lots: \$3.3M for a branch overhaul

Leonard: \$3M for ADA accessibility

Canarsie: \$3M for a branch overhaul

Greenpoint: \$2.7M for a new library/environmental education center

Adams Street: \$1M for a new, approximately 6,500-square-foot library

Gensler served as the design architect of the library. Gensler worked with Marvel, the architect of the building, who also served as the architect of record for the library. Extensive public outreach, including public planning meetings and online surveys, and interviews with community members, librarians, and teens informed the components of the branch. The library features open, double-height ceilings with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the vibrant Cadman Plaza streetscape. The facilities within the branch also include a sunlit reading room and a Reading Circle, which are designed to meet the diverse needs of patrons of all ages and to provide spaces for programming that expands the library's role in the community far beyond traditional boundaries.

“Welcoming to readers of all kinds, the library is designed to support how people interact with books, technology, storytelling, and most importantly, each other,” said **Taryn Christoff, design director at Gensler**. “From the Reading Circle that invites connection around stories to the Main Hall that offers a multitude of spaces for individual study and group interactions, we are thrilled to help shape this community space for our neighbors in Brooklyn Heights and across the borough.”

“We have been delighted to work with the Brooklyn Public Library on the new Brooklyn Heights Branch in our One Clinton tower, located at the nexus of Brooklyn’s commercial, institutional and historic residential districts,” said **Jonathan Marvel, FAIA, Founding Principal, Marvel**. He continued, “With monumental windows on three sides, the double-height reading room is flooded with natural light during the day and becomes a glowing beacon for the neighborhood at night. We also found a way to integrate the beloved limestone bas reliefs from the former library into the new design so they can continue to be enjoyed by all. We are optimistic that this elegant design and its vibrant programs will be a coveted citywide resource for years to come.”

The new branch will also feature “Something Borrowed, Something New,” a commissioned installation by Brooklyn-based artist *Jean Shin* that marks the 125th anniversary of Brooklyn Public Library. The installation, shaped as an upside-down tree, acknowledges the library’s roots in the community and Brooklynites’ generations of shared history with the library and literature. “Something Borrowed, Something New” will be installed this Summer.

In an homage to the previous Brooklyn Heights Library, the new Library will house beloved bas-reliefs by *Clemente Spampinato* which adorned the exterior of the 1962 building. Four bas-reliefs will be installed in a new garden at Walt Whitman library as part of an upcoming \$6.5 million renovation funded in part by this redevelopment project and two are installed in the new Brooklyn Heights Library.

The Brooklyn Heights Library anchors One Clinton, a 38-story tower that houses 134 modern condominiums. Developed by The Hudson Companies and designed by Marvel, One Clinton was designed to integrate with its community, honoring the architectural fabric of New York City’s first landmark district featuring open layouts and inspired by pre-war architecture.

“I am pleased to see the new Brooklyn Heights library reopen to better meet the needs of its diverse community of patrons,” said **Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY)**. “In addition to fostering an improved and more usable space to meet 21st-century needs, this project has also helped to modernize and make libraries more accessible in my district spanning from Sunset Park to DUMBO, Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Greenpoint/Williamsburg, Bushwick and East New York. To help meet the crisis of housing costs facing our City, this project will also bring over a hundred much-needed units of affordable housing, making it a great investment for the economic, cultural and social fabric of our communities.”

“Creating spaces for communities, where they can spend constructive time and stay busy should be on every organization and agency’s priority list,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso**. “The new Brooklyn Heights Public Library branch will provide spaces for families not just to read, but to engage in new activities and give them access to critical resources. Congratulations on yet another success by our public library system.”

“Libraries are one of our greatest democratic institutions, and so I’m thrilled to celebrate the opening of the new Brooklyn Heights Library. This 21st century library will be a welcome asset and inspiration to the community for generations to come. Here, children, teens, and adults can explore free programs, build community, read and learn. The Brooklyn Public Library has long been a critical cultural and educational anchor for the borough’s residents,” said **Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon (AD 52)**.

“The new Brooklyn Heights Library is cause for celebration. The new branch will provide valuable programs and services to this vibrant community, including language, reading, and digital literacy classes, family programs, computer and wifi access, and business and career services,” said **State Senator Brian Kavanagh**, who represents Brooklyn Heights. “I look forward to seeing the many ways the community will enjoy the new library and I urge everyone to

make full use of this beautiful community space. I also want to acknowledge the important role the New York City Economic Development Corporation played in funding this project and the effort to ensure that funding is available for renovations at libraries serving many other communities. As chair of the Senate Housing Committee, I am especially pleased that funding from this deal is also supporting the development of more than 100 affordable apartments here in Brooklyn. I commend Mayor Eric Adams, Linda Johnson and everyone at BPL, the architects at Gensler, and all of those involved with the creation of this vital educational and cultural resource for this dynamic area of Brooklyn.”

I'm so thrilled to celebrate the reopening of the new Brooklyn Heights Library! This was my childhood library and the stunning, state-of-the-art facility is going to be an essential community hub for the Brooklyn Heights community for generations to come," said **Council Member Lincoln Restler**.

“The new Brooklyn Heights Library is a triumph – a shining example of the strength of public-private partnership to deliver for our city," said **Council Member Chi Ossé, Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations**. "Our libraries are among the most important institutions we have, and Brooklynites of all ages are blessed to count this branch among the places in which they can access books, programs, resources, gathering space, and more - all for free. That most of the revenue from the land sale that funded this project was distributed to the other branches for repairs and improvements demonstrates a powerful commitment to equity and sets an example for similar projects moving forward. With the opening of the new Brooklyn Heights Library, our borough becomes a better place for all.”

"Now, as the second-largest library after the Brooklyn Public Library's central branch, the opening of the Brooklyn Heights Library will serve as a cultural hub for all of Brooklyn and

an invaluable local resource to thousands of nearby residents,” said **Council Member Crystal Hudson**. “We must continue to expand the resources available to our libraries and cultural institutions and make access to a quality library the norm, not the exception. Libraries are true indicators of the health and safety of our communities and a critical component to the social fabric of our City. It is our responsibility to provide every New Yorker with the space to convene, browse, read, and write. Without these spaces, we’re failing our youth, our older adults, our artists, and our educators.”

“We are delighted to partner with Brooklyn Public Library on this important project that will provide critical resources for New Yorkers – including a modern new library for books, computers and classes – as well as over 100 units of affordable housing. For over 125 years, BPL has played an essential role in our city and the new Brooklyn Heights Library ensures it will do so for many more years to come,” said **Deputy Mayor for Economic & Workforce Development Maria Torres-Springer**.

“Brooklyn’s libraries are much-loved community institutions that offer learning opportunities, safe havens for after school enrichment, and critical resources for entrepreneurs and job seekers,” said **NYCEDC President and CEO Andrew Kimball**. “We are proud to have worked with Brooklyn Public Library to facilitate the land sale that provided funding for a newly renovated library in Brooklyn Heights and improvements to library branches throughout the entire BPL system for all New Yorkers to enjoy.”

"We are so proud to join Brooklyn Public Library today to mark this fantastic milestone for Brooklyn Heights and the borough," said **David Kramer, President of The Hudson Companies**. "This beautiful new space underscores the impact of a thoughtfully crafted public-private partnership and is a clear win not just for the community, but library lovers all over the city. Welcome to One Clinton!"

**Brooklyn Community Board 2 Chairperson Lenny H. Singletary III** said, "It's especially important to note that not only is Brooklyn Heights receiving a beautiful new library branch, but neighborhoods and residents across Community Board 2 are also benefiting from this project. Other branches, such as Walt Whitman, are receiving an infusion of capital funds and our CB2 neighbors have accessed more than 100 new units of desperately needed affordable housing. This is a big win-win for BPL and our community."

"Readers and residents of all ages will find something to celebrate in this new, state-of-the-art Brooklyn Heights branch. Not only will our community regain a critical link to all the wonderful things that the Brooklyn Public Library has to offer, but so many other communities across the borough will benefit as a result of funds generated by the Brooklyn Heights project," said **Lara Birnback, Executive Director of The Brooklyn Heights Association.**

"The Friends of Brooklyn Heights Library congratulate the Brooklyn Public Library on the opening of a beautiful big new branch facility," said **Deborah Hallen, President of the Friends of Brooklyn Heights Library** . "We are excited to resume our activities and sponsor the Chess Club, the Lego Club, author appearances, artistic events, and purchase books, games, audio tapes, and DVDs. We will continue to bring crucial library issues to the attention of the community and elected officials. We hope you will visit the new Brooklyn Heights Library and join the Friends."

"The new Brooklyn Heights Library will serve as an important resource for our neighborhood," said **Regina Myer, President of Downtown Brooklyn Partnership**. "This redevelopment project has not only provided BPL branches across the borough with essential funding to upgrade facilities, but also created new affordable housing -- two critical needs for our growing community."

ABOUT BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY



Brooklyn Public Library is one of the nation's largest library systems and among New York City's most democratic institutions. As a leader in developing modern 21st century libraries, we provide resources to support personal advancement, foster civic literacy, and strengthen the fabric of community among the more than 2.6 million individuals who call Brooklyn home. We provide nearly 65,000 free programs a year with writers, thinkers, artists, and educators—from around the corner and around the world. And we give patrons millions of opportunities to enjoy one of life's greatest satisfactions: the joy of a good book.