

New Main Library Construction Project Frequently Asked Questions & Responses

October 8, 2021

rev. October 26, 2021

When will Main Library close? For how long?

Main Library will close to the public on Friday, October 29, 2021, at 5 p.m. It will be closed for approximately 48 months.

Why are you replacing the library?

Main Library has been the cornerstone of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library system and the Uptown community since the original Carnegie Library opened its doors in 1903. Since then, the original 1903 building was torn down and replaced in the 1950s, with a significant expansion/renovation in 1988.

Our decision to build a new library is in response to changes in how library programs and services are delivered, and to the changing ways our public and customers view and use the library. This project, designed with community input, gives us a chance to give our city and county a flagship library that creates more public spaces, houses our collections of materials and resources, provides places to gather and to partner with other community agencies to serve our public.

What can we expect from the new Main Library?

The new library will be totally reimagined to serve Uptown Charlotte and serve as the Main library for our system. With a North Tryon entrance, reimagined Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, welcoming engagement lobby, café and more, it is designed to provide flexible spaces to meet demand for print and digital information and reading materials. It will also serve the public with meeting and working spaces, and will become the perfect venue for event gatherings, and other public uses. The building is designed to be expansive and inviting, opening itself up to the surrounding city and offering a variety of integrated spaces that allow it to function as a place for learning, engagement and exchange.

To see how we envision the future of Main Library, visit cmlibrary.org/future-main-library

How will library services change for Main Library customers during the closure?

Accessing Materials: Although Main Library will be closed during construction, books and materials will continue to be available 24/7 online at cmlibrary.org. Customers will also have the option to visit two interim Uptown library locations: **CMLibrary @ Founders Hall** (100 North Tryon Street, suite 290) and **CMLibrary @ College Street** (406 N College Street).

CMLibrary @ Founders Hall, will be a hub for Library users to retrieve materials on hold, browse and check out materials from a select, popular collection, return materials,
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obtain Library cards and search the catalog. **CMLibrary @ College Street**, will provide Library users a space to study, converse, sit, read and more. This location will be equipped with publicly accessible Wi-Fi, Library-issued laptops, and will offer a variety of programs, resources and services including job help and career services, and printing, copying and faxing. As currently in practice, all 19 Charlotte Mecklenburg Library locations will accept return of materials from our other locations.

Before the closure, customers will be given options to manage their holds. Options will include the ability to select an alternate holds location most convenient to the customer. If a customer does not choose a pickup location, the default location for holds pick-up will become Plaza Midwood Library (1623 Central Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28205). *Please ensure you have an updated and current email in your Library account to receive all the latest information.*

Programs: Customers can still enjoy the same great access to Library programs in online and virtual formations. Since our initial March 2020 closure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, no Library location has returned to full in-person programming. Some branch locations offer select in-person, outdoor programs. Please visit our catalog online at cmlibrary.bibliocommons.com/events to find the most current programming schedule. You may also call your nearest Library branch location to inquire about programs, services or resources.

When will Main Library stop accepting donations?

Main Library will no longer accept donations after October 15, 2021.

Where can I donate books while Main Library is closed?

During the initial closure, the Library will be unable to accept donations. We will open donation acceptance after the new Library Administrative Center opens in the Spring and we will communicate as soon as branches begin accepting donations again.

What locations can I visit near Uptown while Main Library is closed?

There are other branch locations in proximity to the Uptown area that continue to offer a variety of online, virtual and limited outdoor programs, as well as access to extensive services and resources. We encourage Main Library customers to explore the option closest to them and to continue their library experiences at:

- Allegra Westbrooks Regional Library – 2412 Beatties Ford Road, Charlotte 28216 (704) 416-3000
- Myers Park Library – 1361 Queens Road, Charlotte 28207 (704) 416-5800
- Plaza Midwood Library – 1623 Central Avenue, Charlotte 28205 (704) 416-6200
- South Boulevard Library – 4429 South Boulevard, Charlotte 28209 (704) 416-6400
- Sugar Creek Library – 4045 North Tryon Street, Suite A, Charlotte 28206 (704)

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416-7000

- West Boulevard Library - 2157 West Boulevard, Charlotte 28208 (704) 416-7400

Where can I return books and materials while Main Library is closed?

Please note that on October 29, Main Library will **no longer accept book returns and the book drop return boxes** will be closed. Customers can drop off items at any of our other 19 Library locations, including at the nearby ImaginOn: The Joe & Joan Martin Center located at 300 East Seventh Street.

What will happen to those experiencing homelessness who rely on Main Library?

Several organizations throughout Mecklenburg County are intensely focused on the specific needs of our homeless population. The Library is staying up-to-date on community efforts and will continue to provide support and access to resources wherever possible.

What will happen to Main Library staff? Where are they going?

We appreciate your concern for Main Library staff. Main Library staff will be deployed to several assignments throughout the system to ensure Library services continue to run smoothly. Some staff will move to our Library Administration Center, others will staff the interim Uptown locations at Founders Hall and College Street, and others will be reassigned to Library locations throughout Mecklenburg County to support services across the system.

How do I get/renew a Library card?

Getting or renewing your Charlotte Mecklenburg Library card is easy. To apply for a Library card, adults ages 18+ must provide a valid photo ID and current proof of residency or property ownership in Mecklenburg County. Non-residents of Mecklenburg County can obtain a Charlotte Mecklenburg Library card for an annual fee, which is approximately equal to the annual property tax a Mecklenburg County resident pays to support the Library.

To get a card in person, you must visit any of our 19 branch locations. You can also sign up for a virtual card online. For more information or to sign up for a card, visit cmlibrary.org/getacard.

What will it cost to build the new library and what is the source of the funds?

Led by campaign chairs Charles Bowman, Rob Harrington and Holly Welch Stubbing, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation is leading the CommonSpark, a public-private partnership to infuse \$143 million into improving lives and building a stronger community via the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. As of October 2021, more than \$103 million (72%) has been committed towards the goal. Mecklenburg County generously invested \$65M and the Library Foundation is raising \$78 million in private support. To date, the campaign has raised \$48 million in private philanthropy with exciting announcements of new gifts to come. The support will create a new main library; a new library administration center to permanently house back-office operations;

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technology, innovation, and programming initiatives throughout the library system; an endowment for the future; and annual operating support. Learn more about the CommonSpark campaign [here](#).

Why will the branch be closed during construction?

Main Library will undergo a complete replacement. This means the entire building will be demolished and there will be no space at the current site for temporary services. We understand that a closure of approximately 48 months will be an inconvenience to our users, but the safety of our staff and the community is of utmost importance during the construction. We will provide access to two interim Uptown library locations at Founders Hall and on North College Street for those who call Main Library their home branch. We believe you will agree that the result will be well worth the temporary discomfort.

Where can I find the most current updates or keep up with the Main Library construction project?

For updates on the Main Library replacement as well as updates on any new Library real estate projects, please visit our Building Projects page at: <https://www.cmlibrary.org/about/building-projects>. We will keep this page updated in a timely manner with all public communications.

Where can I get my questions answered?

You can chat with our online reference support team during business hours from Monday-Friday. To access, click on “Ask Us” in the lower right corner of the Library’s website.

I still have questions regarding the replacement project. Who can I contact?

You can contact the Library’s Chief Library Services Officer, Caitlin Moen, at cmoen@cmlibrary.org.

To view images visit: cmlibrary.org and visit the building projects page.

For more information, please contact Asha Ellison, Interim Chief Marketing & Communications at (704) 416-0704.