



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**June 26, 2020**

**Joliet Public Library Selected for State Capital Appropriation Bill, Funding for Project Burnham**

JOLIET — The Joliet Public Library is excited to announce that Project Burnham, the library’s plan for the renovation of the interior of its Ottawa Street Branch at 150 North Ottawa Street, will be funded through library reserves and new state capital funding.

In collaboration with State Senator Pat McGuire and the Rebuild Illinois Community Development Initiative, the bulk of the renovations will be paid through a state grant and not Joliet property taxes. Though the City will need to sell bonds to pay for upfront construction costs, these will be paid off by State funds as they become available through the grant program. The rest of the funding will come from \$4 million in library reserves, for a total project cost of \$10.5 million.

Executive Director of the Joliet Public Library, Megan Millen, said the library will work with the City of Joliet and State of Illinois officials to plan the details of the grant and funding and steps going forward.

“We will be working on a dialog and determining a timeline going forward,” said Millen. “We are grateful to Senator McGuire, a longtime friend of the Joliet Public Library and booster of public libraries in general, for supporting our mission and thinking of us for this initiative.”

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the library project is still proceeding nearly on schedule. Construction is expected to start in 2021. The library is planning to keep its doors open during construction unless it becomes an issue of public/staff safety or access.

The focus of the renovation is to provide the Joliet community with updated library spaces and improved access to library resources:

- Adding a discovery zone destination for children to encourage creative play and learning
- Creating individual or collaborative study spaces. Currently the Ottawa Street Branch has no private study rooms or designated quiet areas.
- Explore and improve digital media and maker capacities as our services (such as 3D printing, T-shirt printing and technology classes) continue to grow

- Creating better access to technology and resources, including adding more power outlets and space for new technologies
- Opening up the Chicago Street Entrance for convenient public access

The current Ottawa Street Branch was built in 1903 and designed by renowned Chicago architect Daniel Burnham. Over the years, Joliet families have enjoyed the building's marble walls, limestone exterior, and arched windows. In 1991, a 49,000 square foot extension was built to accommodate Joliet's growing population and complement the design of the original building. The addition was constructed to replicate the original building's exterior.

In 2019, the Joliet Public Library provided over 2,400 free programs for adults, children and young adults at both of their locations, welcoming over 93,000 attendees. The Library has a collection of 245,331 printed materials and over 57,000 e-books. The Ottawa Street Branch welcomed about 163,000 visitors last year.

For more information, visit our website at [jolietlibrary.org](http://jolietlibrary.org) or join our mailing list.

#### **About the Joliet Public Library**

The Joliet Public Library is committed to being a resource for the community to read, explore, ask and discover. For more information, visit [jolietlibrary.org](http://jolietlibrary.org) or call 815-740-2660.

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