BACKGROUND

The renovations and rebuilds of DC Public Library facilities have resulted in an impressive campus of technology-rich, neighborhood learning centers across the District of Columbia. Working within the capital budgets set forth by the Mayor and City Council, DCPL engages communities to participate in the design of neighborhood branch libraries that meet their specific programmatic requirements.

Depending on the scope of the renovation/rebuild, neighborhood libraries must close during the construction phase of the project for an unspecified period of time. Understanding the inconvenience caused by a library’s temporary closure, it is DCPL’s goal to minimize disruptions in service to the greatest extent possible. Since project budgets must cover all aspects of design, construction, and interim libraries, DCPL will work with the community and other local stakeholders to identify priorities for services throughout the period of construction.

Every library renovation/rebuild is different with its own set of challenges. One of the most important questions the Library must answer early in the planning process is whether it will provide an interim library facility during the construction phase of the project. Interim libraries are usually leased retail spaces or leased modular units that are approximately 3,000 square feet in size and offer core library services such as access to a small collection of books, technology, and a reading area.

GUIDELINES

The DCPL Board of Trustees will employ the following guidelines, equally and not in any specific order, to determine what interim services are necessary and whether it should identify an interim location for the period of construction:

- **EQUITABLE CONSIDERATION**: A factor in determining interim services is if other services are available in the community and there are no or few barriers to participation or access to these other services. Communities that have historically been underserved, where the only access point to services (such as meeting space, books, public access computers, and early literacy services) is the public library and it poses an undue hardship on community residents to access library services elsewhere, interim library services should be prioritized for provision – either with an interim location or interim services at location(s) in the community.
• **PROJECT BUDGET**: Understanding that the costs for an interim facility must be covered by project funds, the project budget largely dictates whether the Library will seek to provide an interim facility. The Library must ensure that project funds first cover all the costs of the renovation/rebuild. In some cases, especially with smaller renovations, the project’s allocated budget is not sufficient to cover the costs of an interim facility. If DCPL determines that an interim facility is warranted but not funded, it may elect to notify the city government that additional funding is required prior to moving forward with the project, and if necessary delay the start of the project until it is sufficiently funded.

• **PROJECT DURATION**: Typically, DCPL will look to provide an interim facility when a library will be closed for longer than one year. The shorter the project, the more difficult and expensive it is to identify an interim space to lease; therefore, the Library may elect to forgo an interim facility in short-term renovations.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

Once a project budget has been established and before the commencement of the architect selection process, the Library will, in consultation with the Library Board’s Facilities Committee, establish a preferred strategy for interim services.

The preferred strategy will be vetted with a number of stakeholders including the Ward councilmember and Friends president.

If there is lack of consensus over the preferred strategy, the Library will consider all opinions and a final decision will be made by the Library Executive Director in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Library Board.