



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 13, 2014

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR EMANUEL, CHINATOWN COMMUNITY BREAK GROUND ON NEW CHINATOWN
LIBRARY**

*Project will Bring World Class Library and Cultural Center to Vibrant Chinatown
Neighborhood*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Chicago Public Library Commissioner Brian Bannon, 25th Ward Alderman Danny Solis and members of Chicago's Chinatown community today broke ground on the new Chicago Public Library Chinatown Branch.

"This beautiful, modern design is a model for what a neighborhood library should be, and it is the latest success story in the new chapter we are writing at Chicago Public Library," said Mayor Emanuel. "Our libraries are anchors in our communities, and that is why we made a \$66 million investment to build, expand and modernize our library system."

The new branch will replace the current facility at 2353 South Wentworth Avenue, which is one of the busiest branches in the city serving 21,000 patrons a month. The approximately 16,000 square foot 2-story library will feature a large reading room, the 12th YOUmedia space for teens, an expanded community room, juvenile and children's reading room, flexible meeting space for community use, state of the art technology, Wi-Fi and be physically accessible throughout for people with disabilities.

"This new library continues to bring world-class design to Chicago's neighborhoods while creating a community-specific building," said Library Commissioner Bannon. "This new branch will serve as a gateway to Chinatown, linking the old with the new, and provide a building that serves the modern Chinese immigrant as well as the longtime Chicago resident."

The planning process for the new library included strong participation from the community, including a “visioning session” held in March 2013 where ideas were exchanged on what the community wanted for a new library. Working with key partners and stakeholders in the community, the Public Building Commission and the Library have kept residents and stakeholders well informed of the process and will continue this level of engagement as they work to promote awareness of the project and the important milestones.

“The new Chinatown Branch library represents a new opportunity to further invigorate the Chinatown community,” said Alderman Solis. “It will create a new civic, educational and social hub for Chinatown, providing a place of discovery and learning in our new digital age.”

Under the first-ever Design/Build Process for a neighborhood branch library, the Library and the Public Building Commission selected Skidmore Owings and Merrill to design a building that reflects the history and culture of this important Chicago neighborhood, while providing a state-of-the-art library space for residents.

“We involved the Chinatown community in this process from the very beginning,” said PBC Executive Director Erin Lavin Cabonargi. “We will continue to work with the community to ensure the design fully embodies the positive energy of the vibrant community it serves.”

The project is funded through the 24th/Michigan TIF District and is part of a larger effort to bring improvements to the Near South Side community. The library is expected to open in May of 2015.

The Chicago Public Library recently received the Social Innovator Award from Chicago Innovation Awards; a National Medal for Library Services from the Institute for Museum and Library Services and was ranked number one in the U.S. and third in the world by an international study of major urban libraries conducted by the Heinrich Heine University Dusseldorf in Germany. More information about the project can be found at www.pbcchicago.org and www.chipublib.org

###