

Testimony of the Friends of the DC Archives  
Before the National Capital Planning Commission  
Re: Martin Luther King, Jr. Library Renovation  
January 7, 2016

Good day, I am Bill Rice, here on behalf of the Friends of the DC Archives (FDCA) about the renovation and rehabilitation of the Martin Luther King Memorial Library, 901 G Street, NW. FDCA is a group of archival professionals and others who are interested in, and who advocate for, the Office of Public Records/DC Archives and good record management in the District Government. We support the preservation, accessibility and proper management of the DC's historic and contemporary records, in all formats, including most specifically the replacement of the current substandard Naylor Court facility.

One of FDCA's main activities is working with the Secretary of the District and the Department of General Services on a new state-of-the-art building. We recently reviewed a comprehensive examination by DGS of the District's records storage and space requirements for the new facility. We anticipate that DGS will shortly release a draft for public comment.

We are testifying here because of the ongoing discussions, including active interest by Mayor Bowser, in the potential synergies between DCPL and OPR, including the sharing of some physical space, as well as administrative functions. FDCA believes that many functions of the Washingtoniana Division of MLK's Special Collections *could* be shared with the Archives, namely appropriate public, "front-end" activities. This could also involve other activities and groups in a MLK DC history center, as Library Director Richard Reyes-Gavilan has mentioned.

However, it is clear that the renovated MLK cannot accommodate a full-service, state-of-the-art archival facility. Indeed, almost 370,000 cubic feet will be needed in such a facility--for archival and current permanent records, as well as for temporary records, plus work space for staff, according to the DGS report by Hartman Cox/EYP on the new facility. We therefore urge that a strategic planning effort be undertaken to study potential synergies between DCPL and OPR, including the possibility of shared physical space, as well as combined administrative functions. This was our recommendation in our comments on the DGS report.

FDCA is anxious to work with the Library and all other parties on exploring these options, starting with the recommended study.

Thank you for this opportunity. We are ready to answer any questions.

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