

Maplewood Memorial Library's Historic \$24 Million Rebuild Marks New Era of Access, Innovation and Sustainability

New Jersey's first LEED Gold-certified library serves as a model for modern public spaces, as cultural institutions nationwide face challenges

MAPLEWOOD, NJ, UNITED STATES, July 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Maplewood Library Board of Trustees and the Maplewood Library Foundation today announced the grand reopening of the [Maplewood Memorial Library](#) at 51 Baker Street. Now 33% larger, the 32,000-square-foot building reflects the community's commitment to investment in civic infrastructure. It will be the first New Jersey library to earn LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold certification.

“

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Sarah Lester, Maplewood Memorial Library director

[A public celebration and ribbon cutting will be held Saturday, July 5](#), at 11 a.m.

The library transformation is more than a rebuild; it's a reinvention. The previous building, constructed in 1955 and expanded in 1969, was 24,000 square feet, with about half of that space underground. The light-filled, 21st-century facility reinforces the library as a vibrant space for all ages and backgrounds to gain knowledge and explore ideas.

“This isn't just the end of a decade-long journey, it's the beginning of a new chapter for Maplewood,” said Sarah Lester, Maplewood Memorial Library director. “This inspiring building represents who we are: open, forward-thinking, collaborative, rooted in community. It's the kind of library a 'reading town' like ours deserves.”

The \$24 million project was made possible through a mix of state, local and private funding. The state contributed \$8.3 million through the Library Construction Bond Act; the municipality contributed \$12 million, exceeding the 50% match requirement; and the Maplewood Library Foundation raised more than \$2 million from donors.

Designed by New York City-based Sage and Coombe Architects, the library honors the historic footprint while infusing sustainable, contemporary design. The project was shaped with community input through surveys, community forums and interviews.

As an all-electric building, it features solar roof panels (offsetting 58% of energy use), a green roof, bird-friendly fritted glass, daylight sensors, water-saving fixtures, native plantings and energy-efficient climate controls. A patio and reading terrace overlooking the park strengthen the connection to the outdoors. A fully accessible entrance at ground level and gently sloped ramp remove physical barriers.



Maplewood Memorial Library's \$24M rebuild makes it 33% larger, expanding to 32,000 sq. ft. and adding a floor. It will be New Jersey's first Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Gold library. Photo credit: Mason Levinson

"The genesis of our new, more resilient library building stems from two climate-related events that deeply impacted our community," said Vic De Luca, Maplewood Township Committee member and library trustee. "During Hurricane Sandy, the library retained power and became a beacon of safety and comfort in the days that followed. Then, just as we were preparing to begin new construction in 2021, Hurricane Ida flooded the basement with seven feet of water. We needed a building designed not just for today, but for the future."

Highlights of the new Maplewood Memorial Library include:

- Teen Room with floor-to-ceiling park views
- Children's Room celebrating early learning
- Community Room with separate entrance for after-hours use
- Maker Space with 3D printers and work benches
- Local History Room housing historic Maplewood materials and boardroom seating
- The Forum, a stepped seating area connecting floors for informal events
- 10 Quiet Study Rooms for individuals and small groups

"At a time when many public libraries face book bans, budget cuts and ideological scrutiny, Maplewood has made a bold statement," said Lester. "This community invested in a space where diversity of thought and access to information are not only protected, but celebrated."

For more information about the Maplewood Memorial Library and the grand opening, visit <https://www.maplewoodlibrary.org/>.

About Maplewood Memorial Library

Founded in 1913, the Maplewood Memorial Library is a cornerstone of civic life in Maplewood, New Jersey. Dedicated to the principle of being "Open for All," the library fosters lifelong learning, cultural engagement and community connection through its inclusive programs, collections and spaces.

About the Maplewood Library Foundation

The Maplewood Library Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the Maplewood Memorial Library and ensuring its continued growth, accessibility and innovation. Through fundraising and community engagement, the Foundation helps advance the library's mission of being Open for All, providing resources that empower learning, creativity and connection for all members of the community.

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