



## We live in a community that dares to dream - and turns dreams into reality.

It's this "let's do it" attitude that has made Mecklenburg County one of the country's fastest-growing metropolitan areas and the headquarters for global companies, professional sports teams, and world-class museums and attractions.

Our dream for Charlotte is that we become the most literate city in America. And the foundation to do that is already in place.

Since 1903, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library has been a trusted community anchor with a mission to improve lives and build a stronger community. Now, your Library is preparing for the next generation, and we invite you to participate.

This year at *Verse & Vino*, your Library Foundation launched The CommonSpark, a public-private partnership to infuse \$135 million into improving lives and building a stronger community through a new Main Library and much more. It is our honor to be a part of this campaign, as campaign co-chairs and as donors. Our Library belongs to us all, and it is the key to opportunity for this community we share.

**Please reach out to us at [foundation@cmlibrary.org](mailto:foundation@cmlibrary.org) to learn how to become involved and join us in igniting The CommonSpark.**



**Charles Bowman**  
Bank of America



**Rob Harrington**  
Robinson Bradshaw



**Holly Welch Stubbing**  
Foundation For The Carolinas

### Rendering of new Main Library, anticipated opening 2024

#### Project Team:

Mecklenburg County Asset and Facility Management  
Snøhetta  
Clark Nexsen  
Rodgers | Leeper





## Lead Public Partner: Mecklenburg County

# PARTNERS



**Dena Diorio**  
County Manager

Mecklenburg County has always been a critical partner to Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. In addition to significant annual operating support, the County has funded recent Library renovations and upgrades to the Morrison and North County Regional locations, the relocation and rebranding of the former Scaleybark to the larger South Boulevard location, and renovations underway at South County Regional.



**George Dunlap,**  
Chair, Board of County  
Commissioners

Mecklenburg County's investment in The CommonSpark includes a \$50 million allocation to the construction of your new Main Library, and \$15 million to upfit a new Support Services Center.

County Manager Dena Diorio and Chair of the Board of County Commissioners George Dunlap explain why the County has invested:

### What does a new Main Library bring to County residents?

**DD:** So much! The Library provides access to information, to education, to opportunities. A modern library is a cultural asset, providing experiences that aren't available anywhere else in the community. It's an incredibly exciting project for the County to be involved in.

**GD:** I agree, and I think it says something important about Charlotte. In every major city, there's a signature

library downtown that everyone recognizes and everyone uses. This will be a landmark for Charlotte.

### What is the County's role?

**DD:** Obviously we're a primary funder, and our board is incredibly committed to what the Library is doing. We hope to provide some programming, to work together on what it will look like, and to be partners in helping develop this project.

**GD:** As a controller of public assets, we have a responsibility to ensure resources are accessible to everyone in the County. The Main Library is centrally located, on transit and bus lines. So for me, funding Main Library in particular is important because of that universal access.

### What are you most excited about?

**DD:** The vision. It's just incredible what libraries are being used for today - there's such exciting technology, opportunities for community collaboration, experiential learning - while books are always going to be a part of a great library, a true 21st century library is something we haven't yet seen in Mecklenburg County.

**GD:** The Library for me is a great equalizer. Everyone has access to the same world of information at the Library.

**DD:** I remember as a kid feeling so special in a library, like there was something inside that was mine to learn. That feeling stays with you, and I'm really excited about what the next chapter for Charlotte Mecklenburg Library will be for this community.

## What's Inside?

Your new Main Library will be an architecturally distinctive, state-of-the-art, technologically-advanced knowledge center. This 115,000 square foot facility is designed to welcome and celebrate the Charlotte Mecklenburg community, and it will feature indoor/outdoor spaces over five themed floors spiraling up to a skylight and rooftop terrace.

### Throughout:

Books, technology, digital resources, comfortable seating, meeting rooms

### Lower Level: Multipurpose

Flexible space for programs and events, accommodates up to 300 people

### Level 1: Community

Dynamic grand lobby named Knight Hall, programming forum, popular collection, immersive theater, café

### Level 2: Opportunity and Innovation

Opportunity and career center, innovation lab, technology help center, new resident welcome

center, community media studio, digital visualization lab, multipurpose classroom, outdoor terrace

### Level 3: Research and Reference

Collections, soft seating, study carrels, meeting rooms, reference hub, community "living room"

### Level 4: History and Genealogy

Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, immersive theater, two-story sunroom

### Level 5: Readers and Writers

Destination reading room, studio for writers and authors, large meeting room and balcony, outdoor terrace



## Lead Private Partner: Knight Foundation



Since 2002, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation has invested \$1.5 million in Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, funding the Library's efforts to reach families for whom English is a second language, to advance economic mobility through the Job Help Center, and to envision a 21st century library for uptown Charlotte.

Their most recent investment helps make that 21st century library a reality. This year at *Verse & Vino*, Knight Foundation's Charlotte Program Director and Charlotte Mecklenburg Library trustee Charles Thomas and Senior Vice President and Chief Program Officer Sam Gill announced Knight's largest investment in Charlotte, and their largest in a public library: a \$10 million lead gift to ignite The CommonSpark. Charles Thomas explains why:

### Why is Knight interested in Charlotte?

**CT:** Knight's commitment to the city started in 1955, when the Knight brothers purchased the *Charlotte Observer*. That was the start of a long tradition of investing locally in the arts, journalism and civic engagement, supporting Knight's mission of fostering more informed and engaged communities.

### Why is Knight investing in the Library?

**CT:** Knight's investment will help the Library transform to an iconic and inspiring space that becomes a 21st century public commons. It will feature a best-in-class technology infrastructure that improves the visitor experience, offering digitally streamlined social services, a community media lab, mobile access to information, and collaborative workspaces, among other features. We want to help move residents beyond access to information, to the opportunity to participate in and shape civic discourse.

### Why now?

**CT:** Charlotte is soaring, bringing in new people, ideas, investment and prosperity. It is also struggling with intensifying economic stratification and inconsistent opportunity.

In this vital time, the new Main Library can serve as a forum for Charlotteans to chart a course towards a more prosperous and equitable city. With technology at the forefront, this project will play a transformational role in the development of our city, while serving as a model for libraries of the future.

### This project is personal for you. Why?

**CT:** As a native Charlottean, the Library has played an important role throughout my life - from studying and checking out music to starting a business and taking my kids to the Library. I'm thrilled it will evolve to remain a transformative institution for generations to come.



**Alberto Ibarguen**  
Knight Foundation President and CEO



**Charles Thomas**  
Charlotte Program Director  
and Library trustee



**Sam Gill**  
Senior Vice President  
and Chief Program Officer

*"Informed and engaged communities are vital to healthy democracy, and libraries are vital to informed and engaged communities. The new Charlotte Mecklenburg Library will be open, inviting, and focused on digital - it will meet people where they are and be relevant to their lives."*

Alberto Ibarguen,  
Knight Foundation President and CEO



## What Does The CommonSpark Support?

**The CommonSpark is a public-private partnership to infuse \$135 million into improving lives and building a stronger community. The project includes:**

**New Main Library:** A tech-forward, civic destination equipped to meet evolving community needs. It will be a hub of activity and innovation for Mecklenburg County, and the gateway and heartbeat to a reimagined North Tryon Street corridor.

**Support Services Center:** To maximize public space in the new Main Library, many behind-the-scenes functions will move to an offsite service center.

**Technology, Innovation and Programming:** The CommonSpark supports initiatives throughout your Library system, including early literacy, digital literacy, community-wide programs, and branch-specific initiatives as designated by donors.

**Endowment for the Future:** Endowment funds generate a permanent source of revenue to meet your Library's evolving future needs.

**Annual Library Operating Support:** Contributions from your Library Foundation enhance key priorities, programs, services and outreach each year.

**Questions about The CommonSpark? Learn more at [foundation.cmlibrary.org](http://foundation.cmlibrary.org) or call Karen Beach, 704-416-0802.**



# The CommonSpark Campaign Committee

## Co-chairs:

**Charles Bowman**

*Bank of America*

**Rob Harrington\***

*Robinson Bradshaw*

**Holly Welch Stubbing\*\***

*Foundation For The Carolinas*

Jennifer Appleby\*

Ailen Arreaza\*

Chuck Barger

Alan Blumenthal

Twig Branch

Robin Branstrom

Ann Caulkins\*\*

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Tim Cheadle

Gene Cochrane\*\*

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Mary Ann Cross

Tracy Curtis

LeRoy Davis\*\*

Jennifer DeWitt\*\*

Pepper Dowd

Barb Ellis\*\*

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Darrel Williams

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Lauren Woodruff\*\*

Ricky Woods\*

Jim Woodward

*\*Library Trustee*

*\*\*Library Foundation Board*

## Foundation Staff

**Jenni Gaisbauer, CFRE**, *Executive Director*

**Karen Beach, CFRE**, *Deputy Director*

**Teleia White**, *Director of Individual Giving*

**Melanie Baron**, *Marketing and Communications Specialist*

CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG LIBRARY

# FOUNDATION

The Library Foundation exists to help Charlotte Mecklenburg Library improve lives and build a stronger community. The Foundation supports Library services, expands the Library's collection of print and digital materials, enhances programming for all ages, invests in innovative initiatives, and strives to grow its endowment for future generations.

Learn more at [foundation.cmlibrary.org](http://foundation.cmlibrary.org)



## Simple Ways to Get Involved

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1. Contact us to discuss how you can support the campaign. **Reach out to Karen Beach at [kbeach@cmlibrary.org](mailto:kbeach@cmlibrary.org) or 704-416-0802.**
2. Make a one-time, monthly or multi-year gift.
3. Leave a legacy gift as a member of the Dewey Circle.
4. Fundraise for Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation. Visit our website for more information.
5. Share your excitement about this project with others.
6. Attend a Library Foundation event.



[foundation.cmlibrary.org](http://foundation.cmlibrary.org)

[#commonsark](https://twitter.com/commonsark)

CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG LIBRARY

FOUNDATION

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