

# Jersey City Looks to Advance Plan for New Library Branch

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The ground floor of a new residential building at 295 Johnston Avenue in Bergen-Lafayette could be home to a new Free Public Library. Photo via Google Maps/Street View.

After months of preparation, a city-funded project that could bring a new library to a neighborhood just outside of both Downtown and Liberty State Park could advance later this week.

During their June 16 meeting, Jersey City's council will be voting on a resolution regarding space at 295 Johnston Avenue. Home to the recently completed 295J apartment complex, the block-long building has an 8,000-square-foot ground-floor space that the city has acquired the rights to via a redevelopment deal.

Officials envision the property as the future home for the Free Public Library's Johnston Avenue Branch. The council's resolution looks to hire FC3 Architecture + Design under a contract not to exceed \$164,750 to draw up plans for the space, which fronts a street corner and sports large windows.

The Hamburg, New Jersey-based firm is run by Frank Cunha III and they have designed notable buildings like the Babbio Center at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken. FC3 also worked on several facilities within the campus of Montclair State University.

The Jersey City property is located just a block from the Liberty State Light Rail Station and preliminary plans for the space were presented to the council during a caucus meeting last summer. Components of the library branch outlined in the proposal included a community room, computer areas, a web design studio, a "maker space," gaming room, and an acoustically treated recording studio.

The council's potential approval of the resolution would see finalized plans drawn up for the library, which would complement the nearby Lafayette Branch along Pacific Avenue. The endeavor marks the second significant public investment in the neighborhood, as Jersey City is additionally planning a new fire station in the community.

This stretch of Bergen-Lafayette has been booming over the last few years, with developments like the Garabrant and Solaris Lofts adding hundreds of new residents. Other proposals continue to emerge and the city's planning board recently green-lit a 24-story tower just a block away from the potential future library site.