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Christa McAuliffe branch library has received LEED Silver Certification - designed by Finegold Alexander Architects

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Christa McAuliffe branch library - Framingham, MA

Framingham, MA According to Finegold Alexander Architects (FAA) and the town of Framingham, the new Christa McAuliffe branch library has received LEED Silver Certification.

Named for the Framingham native and late astronaut/teacher who died in the 1986 Challenger space shuttle explosion, the newly opened 17,000 s/f branch library fully embraces contemporary sustainable design.

LEED-certified buildings achieve quantifiable energy and resource efficiency and contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, while providing cost-savings to the building owner. The guidelines and standards for certification are established by the U.S. Green Building Council.

“The design team approached the project holistically to create a library that is beautiful, functional, and sustainable and that reflects the spirit of Christa McAuliffe. The building features a soaring roof in the shape of a wing lifting over the main reading areas,” said Ruth Winett, library trustee and president, Framingham Public Library Foundation. “The contemporary interiors capture elements inspired by space travel and with 5,200 s/f of windows maximizes the use of natural light, a key feature of the sustainable measures achieved.”

“The sustainable design effort was considered from an aspirational and technical perspective with sensitivity to cost at the initial investment as well as positioning the building for the future,” said Tony Hsiao, principal and director of design at FAA, “The windows serve a dual purpose as a design element while also providing natural daylight to offset energy demands for lighting. The roof is set up for photovoltaics when funds become available which will add to the building’s energy efficiency in the future.”

Key program features include the main adult reading room, a dedicated children’s library, a meeting and program room with a capacity of 50 people, 21 Internet-enabled computer stations, two study rooms, and on-site parking. In addition, the library is located at the high point of its natural wooded

site offering a garden area that is connected to a Minuteman Bikeway.

Key sustainable design elements include the following: • 21% reduction of overall energy use; • 26% reduction in potable water use via water-efficient landscaping; • 78% of regularly occupied areas provide natural daylight; • 49% of site is open space without including off-site reserve; • 90% of storm water runoff from the average annual rainfall is captured and treated, includes a detention and infiltration system to reduce quantity, and improve quality of runoff from site; • 94% of construction waste was diverted from landfill; • 97% of wood value is FSC Certified; • Alternative transportation-public transportation access, easy access to bus stop with two different routes; • Walkable distance to school, restaurants, retail, senior center, and 6 other community services, and near a future “rail trail” for bikers and walkers; and • Green housekeeping program.

Finegold Alexander Architects create imaginative, inspired and transformative architecture. Architecture established by a collective sense of what is possible. Architecture built on client and community needs and values. Architecture derived from a comprehensive knowledge founded on 50 years of experience. They thrive on the complex. They seek exciting and innovative solutions. They delight in the recognition that something worthwhile has been created.

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