

November 25, 2022

Ms. Florence Stratton
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Stratton,

RE: Delegation Submission of September 20, 2022

Thank you for the submission you provided to the RPL Board of Directors for their meeting on September 27, 2022.

We appreciate the passion you demonstrate about the current building and will consider it as we move forward. The public will be consulted at key points throughout the project.

You had some questions in your submission that I want to answer.

“What is going to happen to library services during the period following the demolition of the current building and the construction and opening of a new Central Library building?”

Library services will continue throughout the duration of the project. Yes, we will move services to a temporary location, but it will always be temporary, no matter how long the project takes. We will move back to a permanent location once we are able.

The Board’s preference for location is at the corner of 12th and Lorne, where we’ve been for over 110 years, however, the decision of where to build depends ultimately on City Council.

“If Central Library is replaced and a new central library developed, will it include the Dunlop Gallery, the Film Theatre, and Prairie History Room? I want concrete assurance!”

Yes, the discussion on the new Central Library includes the Dunlop Art Gallery, the RPL Film Theatre, and the Prairie History Room, as noted in the Needs Assessment and Project Plan (available online).

“... the Board claims the building is ‘Not Accessible.’ Central Library has a wheelchair accessible ramp up to the main door. Inside the building, it has an elevator going to all floors. What is not accessible about it?”

There are many ways in which this building is not accessible, the ramp being just one. You might have heard some of our examples at the Catalyst Committee public consultation session on Oct 20:

- There are lots of dark corners and dead ends which can be challenging for people with forms of dementia and those who live with visual impairment;
- The elevator and escalators often break down, and people with mobility issues can become stranded in the basement or the second floor;
- There is no washroom on the main floor so again, if people with mobility issues are stranded in the basement or on the second floor, there is no washroom for them to use (which is also a code violation);
- There is limited availability of low distraction, quiet environments for those who need them, such as people with forms of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or schizophrenia.
- Access to the children's area is inconvenient for strollers – you must come up the ramp to the first floor and then down the elevator to the basement.
- There is no independent access for people with mobility issues to after-hours film theatre screenings.

Our challenge is that, right now, not all people can access Central Library without intervention and that should not be the case for a free Central library.

“If more space is, indeed, required, then why not add on to the current building?”

We could add on to the current building. It's not ideal, because there are limits to what can be done.

The foundation is in very good shape and could sustain another floor, but the roof and interior of the building can't. We could build a superstructure around the building to support it, but it would then impact the historical features of the building.

We could add more strength by adding more interior pillars, but that would greatly compromise the public space.

In terms of building an addition, if we constructed an addition on the west side it would have to be 10 stories high to meet space requirements. That means no sun coming from the west into the current structure. Because the current building is not built on grade, any new addition would be off by about half a storey. That would cause more accessibility issues and workarounds to compensate.



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Regardless, the current building would still need to be restored, requiring us to tear it down to the concrete and rebuild, which also means the exterior façade would see a degree of change.

The Board has carefully weighed our options and has determined the best approach is to build new. I assure you that we will honour the current building and the Carnegie Building in a new build.

Ms. Stratton, I hope this answers the questions you raised in your submission. If you have more questions, let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Barber', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jeff Barber

Library Director & CEO, Regina Public Library