



Friends of the Regina Public Library

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March 19, 2024

Marj Gavigan
Chair, Regina Public Library Board
Regina Public Library
2311 12th Avenue
Regina SK S4P 0N3

Dear Ms. Gavigan:

Friends of the Regina Public Library (FRPL) would like to submit the following for the consideration of the Regina Public Library (RPL) Board at their March 26, 2024 meeting, to make a presentation, and to have this letter and its Appendices included in the official public record.

The RPL Board stated in a press release that they on March 7, 2024 posted an Expression of Interest regarding Central Library, closing April 5, 2024.

RPL is saying No to reinvigorating the current Central building. Previously the RPL Board had voted to stay on the current site (which by their statement would mean tearing down the current building). Now the Board is taking a different view and looking at alternate sites.

The EOI states that

“RPL will consider various deal structures, however RPL ownership of the library space is preferred. RPL is open to a redevelopment of the existing Central Library site or a different site located within the area defined in the EOI. Based on work done to date on the existing facility, the building is end of life and that it would not be economically viable to renovate the existing building.

RPL is open to various arrangements and opportunities for advancing this project. Therefore, we ask Respondents to consider the following options including, but not limited to:

- New construction in partnership with Respondent on RPL’s existing central location or another location within the geographic area defined;

- Renovation of an existing building within the geographic area defined;
or
- Purchase of land at another location within the geographic area defined, with subsequent renovation of an existing building under a lease or purchase."

FRPL has the following points to note.

- FRPL remains committed to the conservation approach of the existing main library, that would see it rehabilitated and expanded.
- This respects the City of Regina's own bylaws that designate this building as a municipal heritage property, within the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District.
- This is the most fiscally and environmentally sustainable approach for Regina.
- The recent projects of Darke Hall and Globe Theatre are examples of excellent heritage rehabilitation projects that address all code issues and ready these buildings for a new life cycle. Our own local architecture and engineering consultants are leading these projects.
- RPL and the City of Regina looking to a developer to building them a library is likely futile. It was tried once before in 2011-2012. The developer office market is now worse than it was then and this is unlikely to garner any interest.
- RPL's grand plans for a new library like Calgary's are not currently funded. Scaling back to repair and expand the existing library would be more in keeping with the resources of our small city.
- The cost estimates being put forward by the RPL Board on the new building are unlikely to hold. The City of Regina does not have a good track record on sticking to budgets in its building projects. The Victoria Park Plaza is one of the most obvious examples. 11th Ave rehabilitation is another where asphalt was substituted for the sidewalks!
- The RPL should be sharing with the public an updated functional program of services and space needed.
- There are hopes that a new library building would "revitalize" Regina's downtown. The current Central Library is already a focal point and

community hub. Building a larger library is not the silver bullet to making Regina's downtown more interactive and vibrant.

- Actions for creating additional public spaces, updating the safety image of downtown and addressing social issues are needed.
- The whole concept of public-private partnership in creating a new building is concerning.
- The RPL Board needs to be more transparent with information being shared with the public.
- There are questions whether the average person who uses the downtown library or nearby downtown residents really understand the implications of RPL's proposals.
- The RPL should undertake needed repairs that have been previously identified.
- The public needs to see accurate cost figures for repairs identified as needed for Central Library to ensure continuity of service.

Sincerely,

Joanne Havelock
Friends of the Regina Public Library