



Friends of the Regina Public Library

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2042 Garnet St., Regina, SK S4T 2Z6

May 19, 2026

Regina Public Library Board
2311 12th Avenue
Regina SK S4P 0N3

Re: RPL Board May 26, 2026 meeting

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 May 26, 2026 meeting, to make a presentation, and to have this letter included in the official public record.

We are disappointed that the RPL Board will not be discussing Central Library in the open public portion of the May 26 meeting. What options is the RPL considering?

Could you respond re the accuracy of the following options for RPL? Options include presenting a request for funds that would go into the City budget planning process for 2027, that will occur this Fall. In the future, debt room could become available if the City has: a reduction in costs, e.g. savings related to the sale of several facilities in the REAL District to the Brandt Group; or receives federal Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund money, or applies to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board (SMB) again and is allowed to have additional debt room. So, if and whenever cost savings occur or SMB approval is obtained, the City could go ahead and allow the RPL to incur its debt.

On March 25, 2026 City Council passed the following motion.

At its meeting on March 25, 2026, City Council considered report *CM26-2 Debt, Other Capital Funding Considerations, and Opportunities for Central Library Renewal* and adopted the following resolution:

That City Council affirm the following definition clarifies the intent of its July 9, 2024 decision pertaining to item *CR24-74 Central Library Renewal Project Debt Financing Report*:

“A Council commitment to debt fund a project is an indication that Council is generally supportive of the type of project presented. It does not bind the City or Administration to the project or the related assumed debt until such time as the project and funding source are approved during budget deliberations. As commitments do not bind the City in any way, it would be possible for Council to commit to more projects than there is currently debt room available. Commitments will be tracked by Administration and reported annually in the debt report.”

“At this time, Council recognizes there is currently not enough debt room to proceed with the Central Library Renewal Project. The Regina Public Library can consider the options presented in this report (CM26-2) and return during future budget deliberations.”

The need for asset management planning was raised by Council. As FRPL has been saying for years, a plan for all branches should have been done ahead of the plans for Central. The RPL will finally be completing the Service Points Master Plan soon.

While things are on hold now, the RPL claimed that all options are open, but it only allowed people with access to the SaskTenders site to see the Fall of 2025 Request for Qualifications for Central "development". The RFQ contained extensive details about plans for Central, and many librarian desires for the many new services and spaces they say they need, leading to a supposition of a need for a much larger building. The RPL should make the Fall 2025 RFQ more publicly available.

Previous studies for the RPL have indicated the possibilities of renovation and expansion, rather than a new building. A plan was actually made in 1993 for an expansion of the building, available from the Saskatchewan Archives. (Arnott Kelley O'Connor & Associates Ltd., Architects, Engineers, Planners. This was the successor firm of Izumi Arnott and Sugiyama, who were the original architects and repository of knowledge about the building.)

Renovation of the current heritage building would cost much less than demolition and replacement. Even with putting on additional storeys, the cost would be less. See the Deloitte report Central Library Business Case <https://central.reginalibrary.ca/assets/2017051.pdf> , pages 1-2, 26-27.

The RPL Board was wrong to neglect needed repairs for so many years [decades !], which it openly admitted, proving how unseriously they actually take this consideration.

Central Library, built of the highest quality durable materials for less than \$1 million in 1962, is a quality Heritage Building worthy of protection and preservation.

It would make the most economic sense to rehabilitate our Modernist Central Library, acknowledged to be a structurally sound building, and preserve our cultural architectural heritage. When funds become available, a sensitively designed west-side addition to Central Library, on the RPL-owned land facing Smith Street, could be built.

The RPL should stop adding on new services that require extra space.

The RPL should rent space nearby in the downtown for needed services, in partnership with other socially minded organizations.

Library patrons love our Modernist Central Library, and see no need to demolish it. Central Library is already a hub for downtown, and provides great services. Making the downtown more safe means everyone addressing social issues. Making the downtown more attractive to visitors requires businesses and organizations working together. A big new library is not a solution. Preserve our Modernist heritage library and contribute to the diversity that will make the downtown attractive.

Sincerely,
Joanne Havelock, Chairperson
Jim Elliott, Board member
Friends of the Regina Public Library