



# Friends of the Regina Public Library

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2042 Garnet St., Regina, SK S4T 2Z6

Dec 11, 2025

Mayor and Councillors  
City of Regina  
Regina, SK, S4P 3C8

Re: City Council Budget Dec 15-19, 2025 Meeting item CM25-3 2025  
Proposed Budget - Regina Public Library budget

Friends of the Regina Public Library continues to espouse the value of libraries, which are well supported by Regina citizens and provide many excellent services.

This year the Regina Public Library (RPL) is asking for a 4.33% increase for general operations and 5.5% for Central Library "renewal".

In 2026, \$14.3 million will be taken from the Central Library Development Reserve. But the RPL does not indicate what funds are currently in the Central Library Development Reserve, the Branch Development Reserve or other reserves. Usually, some version of a Balance Sheet would provide this type of information.

"Client Services" are being reduced by \$129,978 in 2026 – what does this entail? Administration costs are being increased by \$78,040.

The RPL staff are near completion of contract negotiations, one year overdue. Staff are the heart and driver of the great services at the city libraries.

RPL is going ahead with planning for Central "renewal". The RPL has labelled this as "renewal" while its aims from the beginning were to have many services to which the RPL aspired, while the underlying assumption was the desire to rid itself of the current Central Library building.

RPL recently posted a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to create a shortlist of entities to be invited to submit design proposals. This RFQ was for the "shell"

of the building. Designing the interior will be a separate contract process - a curious division of the work.

But this RFQ was not truly publicly available. It was on the SaskTenders site which requires a complicated sign in process. The problem is that the RFQ contains information that would be beneficial for the general public to see, such as the goals of the project and very specific details about what space would be needed for specific parts of the library. The RFQ should have been posted in full on the RPL website. And can be done now.

The RPL continues to say all options are open but does not specifically ask for the preservation of the Izumi designed iconic Central Library, a heritage building, part of the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District. Using and updating the current building would be a more environmentally sensitive approach.

The RPL continues to paint the building as not built to last, but reports have indicated it is structurally sound. Problems can be fixed.

The RPL wants many additional services, but is that feasible in a renovated or expanded building? Is the RPL pre-empting a new building? Could the current building be expanded with additional services nearby, such as the apparently now unused Revenue Canada Building?

People are concerned about the future of spaces such as the Film Theatre, Dunlop Art Gallery, Outreach Services and the Prairie History Room. When will there be public consultation?

The RPL is nearing completion of Service Points Master Plan looking at services in all branches and across the city including underserved areas. Hopefully that will be available in 2026. This should have been done long ago, in advance of the push on Central Library. Where will the funds come from for needed improvements? Is the City charging enough to developers to pay for library services in new areas? The RPL's Branch Development Reserve added \$1M in 2025 and a planned \$1.13M in 2026 - is this on top of the previous \$3.1 million in the Reserve - what is the current total?

Many good services are provided by the Library, as seen in their Annual Report. Patrons should be informed in advance of changes and the reasons - such as the current major space rearrangement on Central Library's main floor.

Patrons miss the easy location of equipment at the closed Outreach Services room (now The Commons). The loss of dedicated Outreach staff means that while some librarians help out, they are not as familiar with the reading equipment or what people need. RPL was supposed to be putting some reading equipment in other branches and training staff. It would be good to find out how this has progressed.

Security is a concern for patrons and staff. Staff are supposed to be receiving training in de-escalation skills. Security has been added, providing some assurance for patrons, while others question the need and cost for security guards.

Concerns have been expressed about how RPL policies are carried out. The sleeping policy (requiring wake-up of people sleeping in the library or the Film Theatre) is seen as discriminating against unhoused people which is unfair because unhoused people may need a rest; the 30-day suspension for unsuitable behaviour being unfairly administered; the very loud playing of classical music outside Central from 5:05 pm to 7:30 am to discourage people gathering on the ramp to Central. Some patrons have seen kind treatment of unhoused people by staff and security in the library, but there have also been other situations where things could have been handled differently.

The need for security and other social concerns are issues that our community as a whole needs to address. Lack of publicly open space downtown is another challenge. The library must do its best possible to keep its space open and welcoming to everyone.

The RPL Board is not truly encouraging public discussion of issues, as seen by the lack of public access to the recent RFQ for Central, the lack of recent open public consultation and the brevity and lack of content in its public Board meetings. Response from City Council has been limited, emails being deferred to the RPL Administration. The citizens of Regina deserve more.

City Council has many important issues to address in its budget deliberations. Please pay attention to library issues.

Sincerely,

Joanne Havelock  
Jim Elliott  
Friends of the Regina Public Library