



# Friends of the Regina Public Library

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2042 Garnet St., Regina, SK S4T 2Z6

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

Re: City Council March 25, 2026 Meeting item CM26-2 Debt, Other Capital Funding Considerations, and Opportunities for Central Library Renewal Project

The Friends of the Regina Public Library has over its recent years has been advocating for the following:

- 1) Retain the current heritage Central Branch and look at renovations and expansion to the west, if necessary, within the confines of the heritage designation.
- 2) Maintain all the various locations and services across the city to adequately support the public in its needs for knowledge, resources and opportunities.
- 3) Adequately provide long-term financial stability through an ongoing assessment of the needs.
- 4) Engage the public in all the long-term planning of the system, whether local or at the city level.

We, along with the public, have advocated for a strong library governance model that must include a regular dialogue and engagement process with the patrons of this library.

As it relates to the current state of affairs, we feel that a renovation and/or expansion of the current Central Branch is the best option for the following reasons:

- 1) It is likely to be the least costly alternative and thus reduces the burden on the taxpayers of this city

- 2) It will retain the embedded energy that is currently in the building thus reducing the overall carbon footprint of the rejuvenation of the Central Branch
- 3) It will retain the heritage integrity of the building and thus the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District
- 4) It should reduce the anxiety of the overall capital planning in the city by reducing the need for debt borrowing and therefore allow for more of the capital deficit to be removed

Because the needs as explained below may not have been strongly supported by the current Request for Qualifications or its applicants, the RFQ may need to be reissued so as to bring in the required skills and resources. Further, the scope of the project may need to be redone so as to fit the scope suggested below.

Under the current state of affairs, as explained in the report, the Friends of the Regina Public Library, given the needs explained above, would recommend that Regina City Council support:

*Option 1 c) submit capital plans to renovate its existing main library building using current reserve (\$18.5 million) and the funds generated from the dedicated 5.5 % library mill rate to date.*

For the renovation, if needed, follow Option 1a) continuing the 5.5% dedicated mill rate or Option 1 b) increasing the dedicated mill rate to 10% or 20%.

If a long-term expansion is seen as needed by the Regina citizens, apply:

*Option 1.d) include a limit of \$51.2 million .... total project costs (estimated cash savings through dedicated mill rates plus RPL's reserve) in its Request For Proposal (RFP).*

The RPL claims that all options are open (to retain and renovate the current building, put on an addition, rent and renovate an existing building, or build elsewhere) but it only allowed people with access to the SaskTenders site to see the Fall of 2025 Request for Qualifications for Central. 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.

The RPL should also publicly list who it has selected to invite to its Request for Proposals and the basic outline of what they are proposing, which was

part of the Request for Qualifications. The public and City Council need more information on what the RPL hopes they will support to make choices on what the public wants to support.

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.

The RPL's Service Points Mater Plan for library locations and services throughout Regina should have been done before big plans were made for Central Library, since there will be costs associated with providing library services in older and newer neighbourhoods. A draft of the plan is apparently hoped to go to the RPL Board this Spring and be publicly available in the latter half of 2026.

Library patrons love the Central Library building and see no reason to demolish it. Central Library is already a hub of downtown, providing 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 heritage library building and contribute to the variety that will make the downtown attractive. Don't spend a lot of money on one building when there are needs in other branches serving neighbourhoods across the city.

Sincerely,

Joanne Havelock  
Friends of the Regina Public Library