

Bookmark the Core's reaction to the Ottawa Public Library's recommendations for a new central facility, released on Dec. 15, 2016:

The recommended site at 557 Wellington Street (at Albert and Commissioner Streets, west of Bronson) is not within the downtown core, nor is it suitable. The OPL staff have recommended a city-owned site on LeBreton Flats, outside the downtown core.

- *So the property's hemmed in by a bluff, a moat, an interchange and a cleared field between two arterial roads. It'll be highly defensible in the zombie apocalypse. But we aren't building a fort – David Reevely, [Ottawa Citizen, Dec 16/16 p. A3](#)*

Why does this site and project raise serious concerns?

- **Size:** Even with the potential benefits of a federal partnership, the proposed size is too small. The city's portion of the proposed library (133,000 square feet) is not much bigger than what currently exists (106,200 square feet **built 44 years ago**) or what other Canadian cities offer. **Shouldn't we be building for the future and for the needs that modern libraries now must meet?**
 - **Halifax Public Library** is 120,000 square feet, serving a population only 40% the size of Ottawa
 - **Edmonton Public Library**, cited in the OPL's documents, is 244,000 square feet
 - **Calgary's new library** will be 245,000 square feet.
- A joint OPL-LAC facility is still only proposed to be 216,000 square feet in total.
- **Public will:** A total of 16 community associations have endorsed our mission of locating the new central library in the downtown core (and not on LeBreton Flats)
 - **Citizen needs:** A new central library must be a readily accessible destination for all and meet the needs of those who work and live in the downtown core.
 - **Population projections:** The Wellington/Commissioner site is not an evidence-based decision, according to [demographic data](#) analysis by Councillor Tobi Nussbaum. According to Statistics Canada data in 2011, Centretown had 102

persons/hectare and LeBreton Flats had 4. By 2036, the respective numbers will be 150 and 104. Location decisions should be made using comprehensive population figures.

- **Accessibility for the disabled:** For those who live daily with physical and visual disabilities, this is not a location for them.
- **Accessibility for the voiceless:** New central libraries are “community living rooms” – welcoming spaces offering a range of services. There are segments of Ottawa’s population who will be vulnerable to the displacement of this most public of public institutions.
- **Sustainability:** The recommended site is unacceptable because it is not the sustainable choice. A downtown core site would mean more people will be able to walk and bike to the library, and it would be more accessible via all public transit routes.
- **An exciting destination:** The new Ottawa central library should be a destination in the core of the city, close to Parliament Hill, City Hall, the Shaw Conference Centre, ByWard Market and, yes, the Rideau Centre, attracting visitors to the city.
- In summary, Bookmark the Core seeks citizens’ support with regard to:
 - **Site:** Write to the Mayor, Councillors, and copy Catherine McKenna, MP, and Yasir Naqvi, MPP, for a reconsideration of the site. Urge them to revisit site #6 with sites #4 and #5 also being possibilities; all are in the [downtown core](#)
 - **Size:** A reconsideration of the size of the City’s **component** of the library; even if it proceeds with the Library and Archives Canada partnership
 - **Community engagement:** Participation and/or representation at the public meeting to be hosted by Councillor McKenney and four other Councillors on Jan. 18 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at City Hall.

Speak out!