



**Bookmark  
the Core**

Citizens for a new central library  
in downtown Ottawa

## **Bookmark the Core Calls for Library Board and City to Inform the Public Which Sites are in Contention to be New Central Library Location**

*Citizens' group asks Ottawa's federal minister, the Hon. Catherine McKenna, to request the National Capital Commission assist the City with identification of sites in the downtown core for \$86 million public infrastructure project*

**OTTAWA, August 15, 2016** – Today, Bookmark the Core (BMC) called on the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) Board to inform the public which sites are in serious contention to be the location for the new central library. BMC is calling for public disclosure after the OPL Board meets “in camera” on August 16 to receive the rankings of the 12 candidate sites and decide which ones will move forward in its site selection process.

The OPL has indicated that public disclosure of the rankings could compromise the competitive process, but BMC argues that naming the finalist sites should not. Without public disclosure of the finalist sites, Ottawa citizens will be kept in the dark about where the Central Library may be located until City Council's decision is made public by the end of the year.

“Decisions will be taken behind closed doors, without the public knowing which sites are under serious consideration,” said Emilie Taman, spokesperson for Bookmark the Core. “The new Central Library is too important a public institution and too big a civic project for the Library and City to not inform the public.”

Based on the experience and decisions in major cities throughout North America, locating a central library in the downtown core is critical to its success. In Ottawa, of the 12 candidate [sites](#) under review, just five are located in the downtown core, east of Bronson and west of the Rideau Canal.

Bookmark the Core is concerned that although the five sites in the core were among the 12 evaluated, none of them may be in the finalist list, to be decided on August 16. “More publicly-owned sites in the downtown core should be considered by the OPL and the City,” said Taman. “They should have been more proactive in the identification of potential sites.”

For this reason, Bookmark the Core today also called on the federal Minister in Ottawa, the Hon. Catherine McKenna, to request the National Capital Commission assist the City with its identification of sites in the downtown core. Minister McKenna is the Member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre, where the new central library is likely to be built, and has assisted in a similar manner with the location process for the Ottawa Hospital project.

“The social and community role of a central library means it must be in the densely populated and highly visited downtown core,” said Taman. “To locate it on LeBreton Flats and risk it serving too few users would be a waste of a valuable public investment and result in a potential ‘white elephant.’”

### **BMC Finds Five Sites in Core Score Highly, Based on OPL Board Identified Criteria**

Using the site evaluation criteria approved by the Board in July, BMC undertook an assessment of the five [sites](#) in the core area. Sites numbered 3 (Slater, Laurier, Bank), 4 (Queen, Albert, Kent), 5 (Queen, Albert, Lyon), 6 (Albert, Slater, Lyon) and 7 (Slater, Laurier, Bronson, Bay) all scored very highly, with scores ranging from 175 to 180.5 points per site, out of a possible 200 points. All five sites were deemed to have many positive attributes as potential central library sites.

Additionally, the demographic analysis for the sites in the downtown core is very favourable as compared to the four sites to the west of the core, i.e. on LeBreton Flats. The density of residents and employees is significantly higher in 2016, and in the projections for 2036, for the downtown core sites relative to the four on LeBreton Flats, according a detailed [analysis](#) released in May 2016 by Rideau-Rockcliffe Councillor, Tobi Nussbaum.

The OPL Board moves “in camera” in its August 16 meeting “to consider a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the Board, with respect to the Results of the Central Library Site Evaluation Process,” according to the agenda. A total of \$26 million has been allocated within the City budget for land acquisition for a central library.

The mission of Bookmark the Core, including seeing the new central library built east of Bronson and west of the Canal, is endorsed by 16 community associations in the Ottawa neighbourhoods of Old Ottawa East, Old Ottawa South, the Glebe, Centretown, Dalhousie, Hintonburg, Wellington Village, Sandy Hill, Lowertown, Overbrook, Vanier, New Edinburgh, Lindenlea, Manor Park, Riverview Park and Rockcliffe Park. More information is available at [www.bookmarkthecore.ca](http://www.bookmarkthecore.ca)

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