



**Bookmark
TheCore.ca**

Citizens for a new central library
in downtown Ottawa

Speaking Notes

For Emilie Taman

on behalf of Bookmark the Core

at the Ottawa Public Library Board meeting

on Tue. July 12, 2016

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to address you this evening on behalf of Bookmark the Core.

I would like to open by thanking the Board for providing opportunities for the public to weigh in with their views on this exciting and important initiative.

Having reviewed the reports before you this evening, we do have some concerns regarding the criteria and, in particular the weighting of the criteria vis-à-vis the public input solicited on-line and in person.

As you know, Bookmark the Core has never agreed with the Board's definition of the central area, which extends west of Bronson to LeBreton Flats and all the way to Bayview Station. In the consultation documents, the term "central area" is often combined with "downtown," conflating two fundamentally different areas.

Of the two thousand, four hundred (2400) citizens who replied to the online survey when asked about their preference in terms of location, 50% of those who replied, responded "Downtown/Central" or "Downtown/central/ Not at LeBreton Flats," whereas only 1.8% of respondents agreed that "LeBreton Flats is fine/ideal."

In the PACE Report on the in-person consultation, the most prominent theme was reported to be "multi-modal access" including walkability from either a place of work, residence or transit station. The second most prominent theme was that

the Central Library needed to be located in a densely populated or frequented central area (i.e., 'in the heart of the city'; 'where people live, work and play').

And yet, there are several points which, in our view, may skew the outcome instead to favour LeBreton Flats.

For example, in the Nanos report on location criteria at p.5, ease of access by bus and LRT received a cumulative mean score of 17.6 and ease of access by walking or cycling scored 17.39 – I think you would agree with me, therefore, that these criteria were given essentially equal weight by the public. Yet, in the weighted criteria presented to the Board this evening, the accessibility criterion weights access by transit at 25 points and access by walking and cycling at only 15 points. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the weighting has been established to favour LRT accessible sites outside of the Core.

Bookmark the Core urges the Board to give greater weight to walkability and cycling to be consistent both with the results of the public consultations and with the City's stated commitment to make Ottawa a sustainable city, and employ best urban planning practices.

Because the new library is a city project, with a strong possibility of a partnership with Library and Archives Canada and/or federal government funding, Bookmark the Core will now be communicating its concerns directly to all local Members of Parliament, including the MP for Ottawa Centre, the Honourable Catherine McKenna.

Finally, we would like to express our concern with the appointment of a VP of Deloitte as the non-voting chair of the site evaluation committee. Deloitte is a firm that actively seeks clients involved in Public-Private Partnerships. The site evaluation process will possibly link sites to the "decision package" that will include which project delivery method to pursue. We are concerned that the process might thus skew in favour of a P3, an approach the Mayor has already indicated he favours, and which in our view would be problematic and contrary to the approach taken in other Cities.

More than 15 community associations, representing in excess of 145,000 residents, have now endorsed Bookmark the Core's goal to see the new library in heart of downtown as we define it. We are now supported by the Boards of local community associations in Wellington Village, Old Ottawa East, the Glebe, Old Ottawa South, Dalhousie, Hintonburg, Centretown, Sandy Hill, Lowertown, Overbrook, Vanier, New Edinburgh, Lindenlea, Manor Park, Riverview Park and Rockcliffe Park. I would note that many of these communities comprise populations of residents who live beyond the downtown core.

The new central library will be a critical piece of social infrastructure intended to serve the people of this great City. Its location should not be predicated on its development appeal. Rather, the overriding concern of the OPL and of the City should be that the central library be located where it will best fulfill its public mandate.

The guiding principle must be: "Are we building it where it will best serve people both today and into the future?" not "If we build it, will they come?"

Thank you.