



READ-Rosemount Expansion and Development group

August 22, 2017

Mayor Jim Watson
City of Ottawa - Mayor's Office
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1J1

Councillor Tim Tierney
2nd Floor – Councillors' Reception
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1J1

Dear Mayor Watson and Councillor Tierney:

RE: Redevelopment of the Rosemount Library

The Rosemount Library will celebrate its centennial next year after opening its doors in 1918. The branch was expanded in 1932 and received its last major renovation over 30 years ago in the 1980s. However, Rosemount remains a relatively small community branch at just over 6000 square feet, despite the fact that the community has continued to grow. Today Rosemount has the highest circulation in the city (42 items per square foot) and lacks many of the basic amenities that are available in other communities.

For years, Rosemount has been at the top of the OPL's priority list for capital renewals. Now is the time to look to the future and create a new Rosemount that will serve the next generation of library users in our community.

The Rosemount Expansion and Development Group (READ) was formed in 2015 when a number concerned residents and library users agreed that the citizens of Rosemount's catchment area deserved a modernized library that would serve the needs of the community for decades to come. READ has the support of hundreds of our neighbours and 13 community associations.

READ has thought long and hard about the future of Rosemount and about what services our community needs and deserves. In the spring of 2016, READ participated in professionally facilitated community consultations which were supported by Councillor Jeff Leiper. Those consultations led to the creation of the *Rosemount Library: The Next Chapter* report. The report demonstrates that residents love Rosemount and its dedicated staff who do fantastic work serving our diverse community. However, the participants in the consultation also recognized that the branch serves a large population despite its small space. The report showed that the community has a strong appetite for an expanded library. The lack of space was consistently ranked as the community's top priority. Residents explored a wide range of measures, from renovating the existing space with efficiency in mind, to expanding the existing building through

creative renovation, to moving the library to a nearby location and building a modern facility from the ground up.

The reality is that significant expansion of the existing building would present a difficult challenge. Therefore, having considered the consultation report, along with other feasibility studies conducted by the OPL, READ has come to the conclusion that Rosemount must be relocated and rebuilt to meet the community's needs. READ recommends that the Ottawa Public Library work in partnership with the local councillors, READ, and the community at large, to build a greatly expanded new facility within five years. READ believes that a new library with 12,000 square feet of usable space would allow the community to have access to modern library services.

A new Rosemount branch should be located very near to the current site, taking into consideration recommendations from the 2016 community consultation. Keeping a new Rosemount branch close to its present location would ensure the development of strong partnerships between the library and surrounding schools, social agencies, and residents. In particular, READ believes that the current site of the Hintonburg Community Centre presents a great opportunity for expansion and partnership with other services.

Given its popularity and lack of space, the branch is unable to provide the programming and services that are considered common across many of the other branches. An expanded space at a new location would allow for a greater number of activities, such as programs supporting literacy and learning (adult literacy programs, teen zones, homework help programs, school class visits, baby and preschool programs), meetings, group work, quiet reading, or computer use. These services are available in most other branches.

The numbers support the expansion of Rosemount. Rosemount continues to have high circulation and also has the third highest number of visits per square foot in the city. In the tight stacks at Rosemount, even browsing books can be uncomfortable. There is very little seating at Rosemount, while other comparable branches have two to three times more seats. Furthermore, Rosemount currently has zero bookable meeting spaces. The only other branches without meeting spaces are small rural branches. New technologies will continue to become a larger part of the library's services, but unfortunately our neighbours remain underserved. Moving to a new location would allow Rosemount to expand access to computers and other technology. Rosemount currently has half as many computers as comparable branches and has the fifth highest percentage of booked time for public access computers in the entire city. All said, the numbers demonstrate that our neighbours are being underserved. This is why READ is urging the OPL to expand Rosemount at a new location.

READ understands that there is limited city-owned land available in the catchment area. The fiscal reality is that there are competing priorities and our neighbourhood does not have access to the development charges available in other parts of the city. However, these should not be barriers to the residents of this area having access to high-quality library services which are already available in other areas of the city. READ urges the OPL and the city to think creatively, explore partnerships, and do right by those who live in the Rosemount catchment area. The

OPL and the city should commit to a plan that will lead to a new Rosemount library that meets the community's current and future needs.

READ appreciates all of the hard work done thus far. We appreciate the efforts of our local Councillors, Jeff Leiper and Catherine McKenney. We also appreciate the hardworking OPL staff who are examining options for Rosemount's future. And most of all, we appreciate the staff and patrons of Rosemount that make it such a wonderful part of our community. Rosemount is essential to the fabric of our community, but we want to make it even better. READ requests that the expansion and redevelopment of Rosemount at a new location be included in the 2018 OPL capital budget. Along with this commitment from the OPL, we expect an ongoing consultative process engaging the community and local branch staff. Finally, READ wants a well-designed, welcoming, efficient, and effective space that continues and expands Rosemount's role as a community hub and gathering place. With the continued hard work of those involved, we know that this dream can become a reality.

Kindly,



Joshua Nutt

Chair of the Rosemount Expansion and Development Group

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cc: Danielle MacDonald, OPL CEO
Monique Désormeaux, OPL Deputy CEO
Richard Stark, Manager of Facilities Planning and Development
Jeff Leiper, City Councillor
Catherine McKenney, City Councillor
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