



Ottawa Public Library Board Meeting
READ Rosemount
Presentation
Monday, September 6, 2016
(Checked against delivery)

First Speaker: RICHARD VAN LOON, Chair

- My name is Richard Van Loon and I am chair of the Rosemount library Expansion and Development coalition - READ for short. First, thank you on behalf of READ for this opportunity to address the board.
- We hope and trust that today will see a resolution of a longstanding concern of our Rosemount library user community as represented by READ - concerns also reflected in the consultations which our Councillor has described and as reflected in the four years the Rosemount branch has spent at the top of the Library Board's facilities renewal list.
- Our concern, by now familiar to the Ottawa Library Board, is that our branch, heavily used and much loved, is **badly overcrowded** and **essentially obsolete**. Utilization figures presented by others will support this. Our public consultations, our own deliberations, and discussions with library board staff all lead to just one conclusion. To provide what is needed, **the Rosemount library needs to move**.
- READ was formed by a constellation of Rosemount users and the 13 community associations in the catchment area. READ has met monthly for almost two years and has both advocated itself, and instigated and ensured broad community consultation, to make sure that our branch receives the attention it requires. [map of catchment area attached]
- During this process, we've had the great good fortune to have formed a productive alliance with Kitchissippi Councillor Leiper, so we are delighted to appear together today. Most importantly, our councillor has provided financial assistance for the most recent and largest round of consultations; this was a process involving more than 200 active participants over four sessions in March and April.
- Councillor Leiper and several of the READ's most active members also participated in all those sessions. In addition, I would like to acknowledge that Councillor Tierney and his wife and the Library's CEO Danielle McDonald, were kind enough to join us for part of one of our sessions. That was much appreciated by the participants and by READ. I can't speak for what Mr Tierney and Ms McDonald may have heard but READ members and Councillor Leiper all heard the same things, as did the neutral facilitator/rapporteur, who ran the process. The report was posted on the READ website in June and was made available to OPL. No doubt, you have spent your summer reading it!
- But just in case you did not, **it came down to this**: everyone loves the staff and the historic 98 year old building, but we recognize (and have been advised by OLB staff) that the current building just can't support what is needed to provide the best practicable facilities and programming for our community. So, to repeat for emphasis,

Rosemount needs to move.

- Hence we recommend:
That the Ottawa Public Library commence work as soon as possible and in partnership with the local councillor, READ, and the community at large, have in place a greatly expanded new facility within five years: a new library that provides modern library services to the Rosemount catchment area.

READ Rosemount recommande que la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa lance le plus rapidement possible les travaux, en partenariat avec le conseiller municipal du quartier, READ et l'ensemble de la collectivité, afin de bénéficier d'ici cinq ans d'une succursale Rosemount considérablement agrandie qui offre des services de bibliothèque modernes dans le secteur de rayonnement de cette installation.

The branch should be located very near to the current site and should take into consideration recommendations from the community consultation. However, given the community's expressed love for the current building and its historical significance, READ also recommends that if at all possible, the current building be repurposed for another public, community use.

READ also asks that:

Consistent with the approach mandated by the Library Facilities Framework and Investment and Growth Planning Study Report (OPLB-2016-0181), section C. Renewal Projects, the OLB direct its staff to develop a business case for the relocation of the Rosemount library to a new location in the near vicinity of the current branch.

Corollary to this we ask that: the business case be completed within one year; the capital funds presently reserved/requested for Rosemount branch improvement/expansion be incorporated into the larger building initiative; the \$100k planning money (currently available) be used for the development of the business case and, if at all possible, that to reflect the views of the community, the current building be repurposed to retain its heritage significance (the only remaining Carnegie library in Ottawa) and the new Rosemount library branch building incorporate some of the heritage aspects of the current facility.

- READ has the endorsement of 9 of the 13 community associations in and around the Rosemount library catchment area. We are confident that we will have endorsement from most if not all the rest very soon.

Second Speaker: EMILY ADDISON, vice-chair

- Hello. My name is **Emily Addison**. I am a resident in the Rosemount library area and a frequent user of the branch especially with my 2 year old son and my husband. I am also a member of READ and I participated in the community consultations which led to further research on my part. Today I am speaking as a concerned resident and I'd like to pass on some of *my* thoughts and information I learned regarding the future of "our"

library.

- It has become extremely clear that the Rosemount branch needs to be **greatly expanded**. While I don't have access to all the data that the OPL would use for assessing the demands on a library branch, this is some of what I do know.
- First, according to OPL's own statistics (2014): Rosemount Library has the **2nd highest circulation per square foot** of all the OPL's 33 branches including the main branch; in fact, at **42.19 items/square foot**, our library's circulation is more than **DOUBLE-double** the average. All other branches except one, have much lower circulations/SF, in the teens or 20s/SF. Basically this statistic means Rosemount desperately needs more room.
- Second, from OPL's stats, it's clear that residents like me keep our outstanding library staff incredibly busy. Of the 33 OPL branches, ours is only 20th in terms of size 19 others are bigger. So our library is fairly small compared to many. Despite this, Rosemount has the **4th highest number of reference questions**. Again, 20th in terms of size but 4th in reference questions. So for a small branch, this indicates that Rosemount is really punching above its weight in the information department.
- That kind of stat may also tell us something about the people who use Rosemount library. You hear people say that Rosemount serves a diverse community. What do we mean? Well, for sure there are many school children, but also many older residents who use our library every day. Come to Rosemount and you will hear people speaking English and French as well as Chinese, Arabic, indigenous, and other languages. We have a wide range of types of housing in the catchment area too, which includes lots of affordable housing, private low rent, new immigrant housing, etc. In other words, many of the folks who depend on Rosemount library need assistance in learning how to take advantage of all that the library has to offer.
- These are only **two** metrics of library usage but I think they are very powerful. Related to this, I am very curious to know how Rosemount is doing in OPL's new measurement framework including: public computer use; wifi use, program attendance and % meeting rooms available hours booked. So the public really needs more information from the OPL to learn more about how Rosemount is functioning.
- Moving beyond OPL's data, we see further evidence that Rosemount is much too small. Rosemount's current population of more than **43,000** is beginning to explode. The City of Ottawa's projected population growth for Rosemount's catchment area (in the eight years, 2015-2023) is **10.4%** to **47,500**. Within 16 years (2015 to 2031), the City of Ottawa projects the Rosemount catchment population will increase **22.3%** taking it to **52,600**. We are talking major intensification with lots of condos, apartments, and other infill projects in addition to massive developments such as thousands of housing units going in on federal lands at Tunney's pasture. [map of catchment area attached]
- I know that the City of Ottawa development goals want to ensure that areas of intensification continue to be friendly to walkers, bikers and to users of public transit. However, I have talked to some in our area who are DRIVING to other branches like Carlingwood and Sunnyside because Rosemount just isn't able to provide services that other branches do. And I sometimes do this myself.

Even the simplest of things like table space and plugs for personal computers are difficult to access at Rosemount. I travel to other branches for toddler board books as Rosemount has a small collection compared to other branches. And, by the way, the City's own stats tell us that we have a very significant number of people in our area who walk, bicycle, and use public transit to get to work and to get around.

- How does having people leave our local area to use other branches serve the city well? And what about people like our youth, too young to take transit but who can walk in a group of friends to the local library, OR low-income residents who can't afford a bus ticket but can cycle to their local Rosemount library? These folks don't have access to the same services seen in many of the other libraries. How do they get the services they need?
- We know the library is too small for the current population – a simple renovation won't do. And how can Rosemount be a viable library for the next 30+years with so much intensification in the surrounding area. There are no options for Rosemount to expand at its current location now or later – it is too small and it needs to greatly expanded on another site close by.

Third Speaker: JOSHUA NUTT, READ member

- Hello, my name is Josh Nutt and like Emily and Richard, I am a resident of the Kitchissippi area and a frequent user of the Rosemount Library. I have been interested in its future over the last two years. I have participated actively in public consultations and READ meetings. People who live in my community deserve to have the best library available. Here is something of what I have seen and heard.
- Rosemount is a busy community hub and this is something we celebrate. It provides incredible services to an extremely diverse population living in our community. However, while Rosemount is wonderfully busy, it is also vastly over-crowded and given its size, it cannot perform the role of a modern branch library.
- While attending the community consultations sponsored by READ and Councillor Leiper, I heard over and over again about the need for more space. Even when the consultant asked participants to focus on ideas for a renovation (without considering expansion) participants repeatedly talked about the need for more space.
- Some of their ideas included: more space to house a bigger collection; enhanced programs similar to other branches (e.g. teen programming); quiet study space, comfortable reading space and better community meeting space; technology such as more computer work stations; space to park strollers and bicycles; accessible washrooms.
 - *Upon a recent visit to the library I saw a mother prepping her child for the return to school; she was attempting to give this child a French lesson in a space so small the table was barely big enough to hold 2 coffee cups. Joshua Nutt*
- The initial idea put to the community during the consultations was the expansion of the current building. READ wanted to fully explore this option. READ knew that the

members of the community really love Rosemount and many affectionately consider it to be “their Carnegie library”. So the consultation participants were asked to share any ideas they had to expand Rosemount – and many ideas came forward. But the one theme, a kind of recurring refrain, that came up time and time again was that more space is needed.

- However, after consultation with the OPL staff, READ and many community members came to the shared realization that a significant expansion of the current building is simply not possible.
- This is why the consultation also explored the idea of a **new location**. Participants were open to the idea of a new location but with some conditions and concerns including: greatly increased useable space to meet the community’s current and future needs; being very close to the current location and central to the catchment area, and in particular close to the more vulnerable groups in our community who rely on the library’s services; proximity to bus lines, foot and bike traffic on Wellington.
- We know the current **site** is an ideal location. And we care deeply that any future site for our library be similarly well located – in the heart of our community, near other social and community organizations, good public transit, schools, government offices and close to where many people live.
- Moving forward in considering a new build, as the OPL business case is completed, we strongly recommend that the OPL consult with our local councillor Jeff Leiper, READ and the wider community on their needs and wishes.
- Finally, I want to leave you with two ideas to consider: the first is that in planning for what to do with the Rosemount library, we should all be **thinking long-term**. The Rosemount catchment area has a growing population. We know that there are going to be thousands of new residential units built in the area over the next 25 years. The second idea that I want to leave you with is the idea of **partnerships**. There are many great groups already offering fantastic services in the neighbourhood.
- It would be beneficial to leverage existing relationships with different city departments and community organizations to ensure the best services possible. This way, an expanded Rosemount library could be a hub for even more activity in the community. We know that Rosemount is located in a dense part of the city and that creative solutions are often needed to create success stories when land is not as readily available in other areas of the city. Therefore I am hoping that Rosemount could eventually be an example of how to provide great services to a dense, diverse urban community.
- The message here today is simple. Rosemount is vastly overused: we need a much bigger Rosemount library. The only way to accomplish this is for Rosemount to move to a new site.
- Thank you.

www.readrosemount.ca

readrosemount@gmail.com



Built: 1918 (Carnegie) Rosemount Exterior

Size: 6,089 SF
18 Rosemount Ave
Type: standalone
One meeting/work room
Circulation (2014): 256,882
Circulation/SF : 42.19



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Rosemount Interior

6,089 SF on two levels

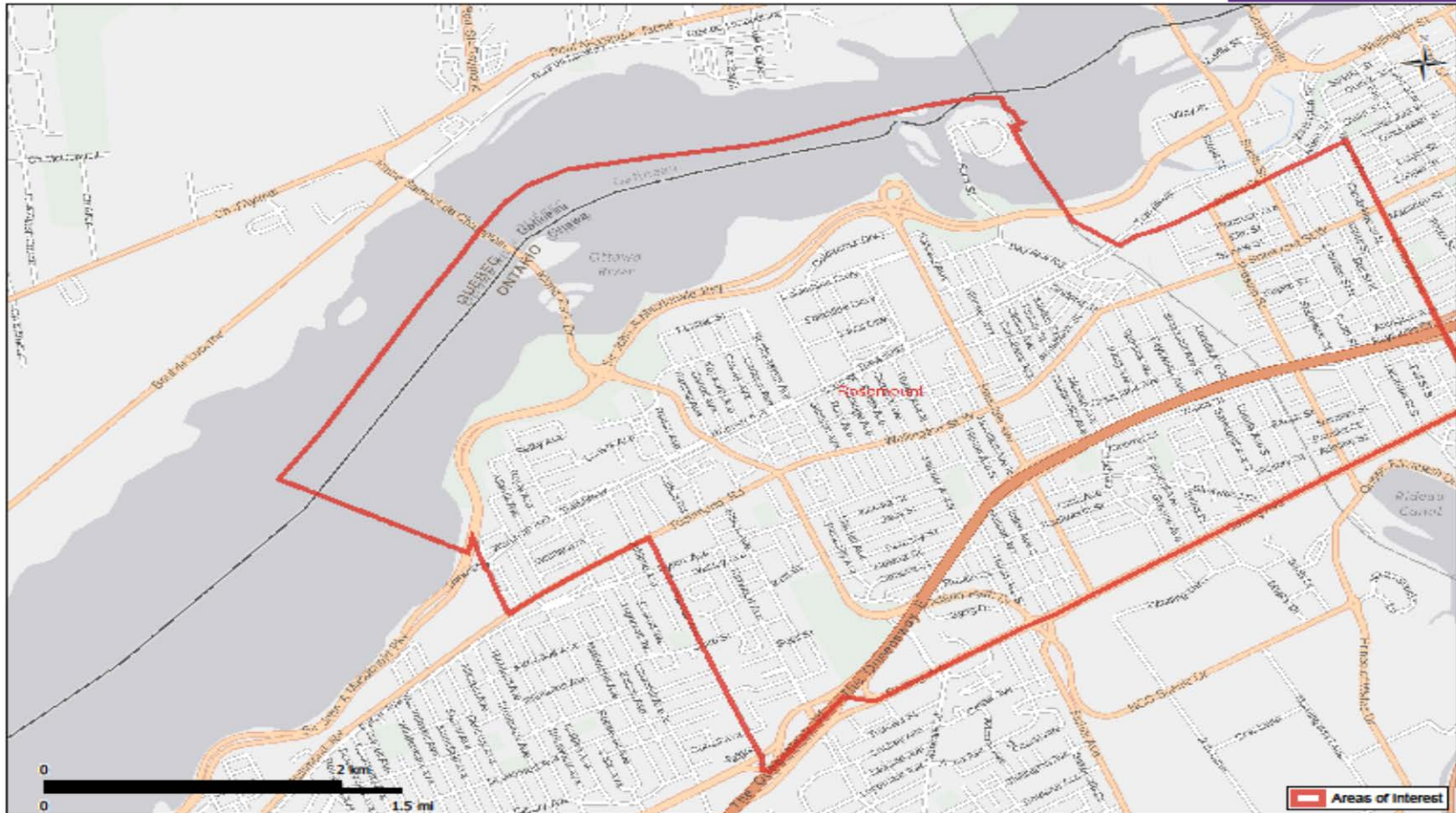


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Template
Rosemount

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Variable Description:
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Rosemount branch library catchment area bounded by the Ottawa River (north), Experimental Farm (south), Tweedsmuir (West) and Bronson (East).