



# READ Rosemount

**Presentation to the Ottawa Public Library Board**

**by**

**Richard Van Loon, Chair READ Rosemount**

**December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Board once again about Rosemount Library. I'm here, again, as Chair of READ, the Rosemount Expansion and Development Group. If things go well today we should be able to leave you in peace for a few months...maybe an inducement?

"Going well" means that the Board votes to accept its staff recommendation to prepare a business case for construction of a new Rosemount branch at a location near the current one.

Since we have spoken with you often there is no need to describe READ once again. But we do want to remind you that, with the support of our Councillor, Jeff Leiper, we have conducted community consultations over the last year involving some 200 participants. We also have the explicit support of every one of the 10 Community Associations in our catchment area and two from nearby. And over the past year we have worked with OLB staff as we try to ensure that our branch finally will receive the work it needs to become a fully modern branch library equal to others serving similar sized populations.

What does that mean? Well, branches which are comparable to Rosemount in the populations they serve include Alta Vista, St Laurent and Carlingwood, each of which, including Rosemount, serve 4.6% of the total catchment area population or about 40,000 people.

But, while Alta Vista, St Laurent and Carlingwood have respectively 4.6, 4.1, and 6 percent of the total branch space in the system, Rosemount has only 1.7 percent. Those comparable branches have 13.5 to 20 thousand square feet of space. Rosemount has only 6,089 square feet, less than one half the space of those comparable branches. And this is in an area the population of which is expected to grow by 20% by 2031.

The result is that Rosemount has only 17 seats in the branch and none dedicated to either children or teens. The comparable branches have at least 85 seats and all have spaces especially for both children and teens. Rosemount has no meeting rooms. The comparables have at least one meeting room and each can accommodate at least 60 people.

So. Why does this matter?

Well, your forthcoming social benefits study, previewed at your last meeting, will focus on library branches as, to quote, "hubs and centres for creativity", something very hard to do with almost no seats or space for meetings or interaction. And at your last meeting your CEO, in reporting with justified pride on the Imagine campaign, noted, again I'm quoting, "people really valued our spaces".



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And if you have been listening to CBC Radio's Sunday Edition, ([Nov 27, 2016](#)) the last two weeks ([Dec 4, 2016 minute 49.37-57.20](#)) you will have heard the excellent focus on libraries. You will also have heard all of the many interviewees and correspondents emphasizing the importance of libraries as community hubs, gathering places and safe havens where people can gather, read and work. But Rosemount simply doesn't have the space to do that. It is not a community space in the same sense as the Alta Vista, Carlingwood or St Laurent branches or most other branches in Ottawa or in the same sense as our consultation participants want it to be. And at its current location hemmed in by condominiums it simply cannot be.

At your last meeting (November 2016), staff put forward two options: a renewal at the current site or the preparation of a business case for relocation, and they recommended the latter. It will be no surprise that we, supported by all the community associations in our area, heartily concur with the staff recommendation and we hope that you will vote to support it today. We cannot avoid the fact that no matter what improvements are made at the present site it just can't be made into a modern full service branch providing the economic and social benefits available in other parts of the city.

So. Please vote to support the staff recommendation for a business case for relocation. And next year when that case is presented, please support construction of the new branch in the near future. The 40,000 people in the Rosemount area will have waited long enough.

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