



Centretown Citizens  
Community Association

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Tomas Whillans  
CCCA President

February 7, 2017

Mayor Jim Watson  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa K1P 1J1

Dear Mayor Watson,

Re: CCCA Position of the New Central Library

The Centretown Citizens Community Association (CCCA) strongly supports the City's plan to build a new Central Library and we believe that the best location for the new Library is in Centretown (between Bronson, the Ottawa River, the Rideau Canal and the Queensway) and not in LeBreton Flats.

There are compelling public policy reasons for a Centretown location and we would like to highlight some of the key considerations supporting our position.

**The Vulnerable and Disadvantaged**

Centretown is home to thousands of vulnerable and disadvantaged citizens who benefit significantly from library services. The location of the new Central Library should not pose impediments to their use of the Library. The Library must be accessible for:

- the vulnerable, including many of the 53% of Centretown seniors who live alone, people who are homeless and the almost 50% of Centretown children who struggle to be ready for school.
- the financially disadvantaged, including nearly 30% of the population whose after-tax incomes are less than \$20,000 per year and those who live in Centretown's 2,600 social and affordable housing units; neither may be able to afford the costs associated with getting to the proposed location via public transportation.
- those with disabilities, whose numbers are increasing with an aging population. For them, travelling to LeBreton Flats by the new Light Rail Transit (LRT) system will almost certainly pose challenges. Even though the LRT stations will have access provisions for those with disabilities, the considerations of cost and additional time will present a significant disincentive for this user group if the Library is located in LeBreton Flats. The alternative of providing some form of pedestrian access would presumably represent a significant additional cost to the project while still representing a disincentive in terms of time and effort.

**Population and Density**

Centretown is the densest neighbourhood of the City, boasts a large population (25,660 according to the 2011 census) and is growing rapidly. It will be decades, if ever, before LeBreton Flats will reach these numbers even if the current development proposal is approved. 584,650 people visited the Main Branch Library in 2015: 1,670 per day. The number of Main Branch Library users from Centretown itself is significantly increased by many of the 115,000 people who work in Centretown and commute from their homes across the City.



### Accessibility

Centretown is accessible by walking, biking and transit and will have two LRT stations (the same number as LeBreton Flats). Increasing the distance between the library and central business district will likely deter many of the users who work in Centretown as any increase in travel time will further reduce the likelihood of visiting over scheduled work breaks.

For many of the hundreds of elementary children who attend Centretown schools and for their teachers organizing group visits to the Library, a LeBreton Flats location would present a major disincentive. The library is a critical service to the children of Centretown and essential to the success of many at-risk youth or children.

Given good access by bus and/or the future LRT, there would be little difference between a Centretown and a LeBreton Flats location for potential users from more distant areas of the city. For pedestrians and cyclists in the communities east and south of Centretown, existing and planned infrastructure (Corktown Bridge, Laurier/O'Connor bike lanes and the planned pedestrian bridge at fifth Avenue) makes Centretown more accessible throughout much of the urban core.

### Site 6

Of the five Centretown sites of the original 12 proposed by Library staff, the CCCA has declared support for site 6. Site 6 is between Slater, Albert, Bay and Lyon and was ranked in ranking. Site 6 is:

- More walkable than LeBreton Flats for the majority of Centretowners
- One block from the Laurier Avenue segregated bike lane.
- In close proximity to the central business district and more walkable for downtown workers downtown.
- First choice during a previously completed site review.
- Closer to the existing Library and Archives Canada buildings

Sincerely,

Tomas Whillans  
President  
Centretown Citizens Community Association

CC:

- Ottawa City Council
- CCCA Board of Directors
- Co-Chairs of CCCA Special New Library Committee