

# Summary Document

## Opinions on a new downtown Central Library

*submitted by Nanos Research to Ottawa Public Library, December 2015*



# 1.0 Who shared their views

Nanos Research, on behalf of the Ottawa Public Library, conducted a multi-phase research initiative as part of a planning process for a future downtown Central Library.

**131** Main Branch customers shared their views on site with Nanos

**94** Library users and Ottawa residents took time from their busy schedules to share their views in a 90 minute focus group discussion on a future downtown Central Library

**557** Library card holders shared their thoughts on a new downtown Central Library

**700** Residents of Ottawa including **200** in the catchment area of the Main Branch told Nanos what was important in shaping the future of the Central Library.

## 2.0 At a glance

If one were to attempt to sum up the views from library card holders and residents it would look like this:

*Ottawa's new Central Library needs to have great access to public transit, be bright with natural and good lighting inside and have great lines of sight to make one feel comfortable and safe. A showcase and symbol for our City and the Nation's Capital, it should be a place that not only encourages reading and thought, but which attracts young and old, and a diversity of residents that make up our City.*

# 3.0 Methodology

- **Intercept** – Nanos conducted an intercept survey at the Ottawa Public Library's Main Branch on September 27 and 28, 2015 to engage with library customers on library services in Ottawa's downtown as part of the planning process for a Central Library. Visitors to the Main Branch of the Library were randomly recruited by Nanos interceptors and administered a survey, either online or on paper.
- **Focus Groups** – Twelve focus groups were conducted in Ottawa to gather participants' impressions on factors they thought would be important to help with decision-making related to a new downtown Central Library on October 4, 7 and 8, 2015. The groups were divided into five streams of participants, as follows: residents of Catchment who have used the Main Branch in the last year (two groups); Residents of Catchment who have library cards but have not used the Main Branch in the last year (two groups); Residents not in Catchment who have used the Main Branch in the last year (two groups); Residents not in Catchment who have library cards but have not used the Main Branch in the last year (two groups); and Residents from the general population who would consider using the Central Library (two English and two French groups).
- **Users** – Nanos conducted an online survey of 557 cardholders of the Ottawa Public Library, 18 years of age or older who have selected the Main branch as their home branch and who live in the catchment area between October 30 and November 7, 2015. Participants were contacted by the Ottawa Public Library and chose to opt-in to the survey. Nanos then contacted individuals who had opted-in and administered an online survey. All those who opted-in were invited to complete the survey.
- **General Population** – Nanos conducted an RDD dual frame (land- and cell-lines) hybrid telephone and online random survey of 700 residents of the City of Ottawa, 18 years of age or older between November 6 and 13, 2015. Participants were randomly recruited by telephone using live agents and administered a survey online. The sample included both land- and cell-lines across the City of Ottawa. An oversample of 200 was conducted in the catchment area of the Main branch (see Section 8.0 for map). The margin of error for a survey of 700 residents of Ottawa is  $\pm 4.4$ , nineteen times out of twenty.

# 4.0 Views on location

Willingness to Travel to a Central Library (minutes)	Mean Response* (minutes)				
	Intercept (n=131)	Focus Groups (n=94)	User (n=557)	Gen Pop – CA** (n=200)	Gen Pop - Non-CA** (n=500)
By public transit	22.8	15-24	14.6	17.6	23.8
On foot	20.0	15-24	21.6	22.2	16.7
By car	14.6	15-24	10.4	10.4	19.8

Where do they come from?	Intercept (n=131)	User (n=557)	Gen Pop - Catchment (n=143)	Gen Pop – Non Catchment (n=132)
Home	63.4%	68.4%	66.9%	57.6%
Work	23.7%	28.9%	28.8%	34.5%
School	5.3%	1.6%	3.8%	1.5%
Other	2.3%	1.2%	0.6%	6.3%

\*Focus groups did not have means calculated, the above range received the most mentions by participants

\*\* Please note that “CA” refers to the catchment area

Method of getting to the Library	Intercept (n=131)	User (n=557)	Gen Pop - CA (n=143)	Gen Pop – Non CA (n=141)
On foot	55.0%	81.3%	68.4%	24.3%
Public transit	34.4%	7.0%	16.6%	34.4%
By bicycle	5.3%	8.4%	5.5%	1.1%
By car	4.6%	3.1%	4.9%	31.9%

Method of getting to work or school	Intercept (n=38)	User (n=162)	Gen Pop - CA (n=29)	Gen Pop – Non CA (n=51)
On foot	55.3%	74.7%	53.1%	48.1%
Public transit	31.6%	14.8%	25.3%	31.4%
By bicycle	5.3%	1.2%	1.5%	2.0%
By car	7.9%	8.6%	7.1%	15.7%



# 4.0 Views on location

**Convenience of location** - A location for the Central Library that is convenient, meaning one that has easy access to residents, was given high importance by those who were intercepted at the Main branch and by the focus group participants (mean scores of 9.1 and 9.0 out of 10 respectively). Based on the focus group research, convenience of location for residents in the catchment area generally meant easily accessible by transit or easy to walk to. For those who live outside of the catchment area, it generally meant having parking available.

**Proximity to Transit** - The ease with which residents both inside and outside the catchment area can access public transit from the Library and vice versa is also very important. Residents and cardholders both inside and outside the catchment area gave this a mean importance score of 8.0 to 8.9, with those outside of the catchment area giving it the lowest score of 8.0 and focus group participants giving the highest score of 8.9. Focus group participants discussed the reliance that many students have on public transit, as well as limited parking downtown generally making transit an easier option for most – especially those from outside of the catchment area and further away. Residents who live in the catchment area are also more likely to view the proximity of the Central Library to a future LRT station as important (7.7 out of 10), while those who were intercepted at the Main branch gave this a 6.5 on a scale of importance. In general however, participants in the focus groups discussed a lack of current knowledge about the LRT and the impact it will have on transit in the city.

**Travelling to a Central Library** - People are generally willing to travel for about 15 to 25 minutes to a Central Library, whether by public transit, on foot or by car. However, overall there is more willingness to travel further by public transit or on foot to a Central Library than there is to travel by car. The average time range for those inside and outside the catchment area is 15 to 24 minutes by public transit or on foot, and about 10 to 20 minutes by car. Residents who live outside of the catchment area are generally less willing to travel very far to a Central Library on foot, and more willing to travel further by car than those who reside in the catchment area.

# 4.0 Views on location

- **Public Transit** – Those inside and outside the catchment area are generally willing to travel for approximately 15 to 25 minutes by public transit to a Central Library. Those who visited the Main branch and those residing outside of the catchment area are generally willing to travel slightly farther by public transit, with mean responses of 22.8 minutes and 23.8 minutes respectively. Residents in the catchment area are generally willing to travel an average of 17.6 minutes, but cardholders in the catchment area are willing to travel marginally less with a mean response of 14.6 minutes.
- **On foot** – All residents are willing to travel about 17 to 22 minutes on foot, but those who live in the catchment area or who were intercepted at the Main branch are willing to walk slightly further (20 to 22 minutes) than residents outside of the catchment area (17 minutes on average).
- **By car** – Residents are willing to travel anywhere from 10 to 20 minutes by car to a Central Library, however cardholders and residents inside the catchment area are willing to drive much less farther (10 minutes respectively) than those outside of the catchment area (20 minutes on average)

# 5.0 Important characteristics

Item	Mean Score (out of 10)				
	Intercept	Focus Groups	Cardholders	Gen Pop - Catchment	Gen Pop – Non-Catchment
Convenience of location	9.1	9.0	—	—	—
Having good lighting inside	—	—	9.0	8.9	8.5
Being a place you feel safe*	8.7	8.4	8.9	8.4	8.4
Being a place you feel welcome*			8.8	8.4	8.1
Access to public transit	8.6	8.9	8.4	8.5	8.0
Distance from a new LRT station	6.5	7.6	7.0	7.7	6.8
Having open spaces for gathering	6.2	7.5	6.7	7.1	6.2
Having unique architecture	—	—	6.1	6.9	5.4

\*Please note that for the Intercept and focus groups being a place you feel welcome and/or safe was one combined characteristic with one mean score.



# 5.0 Important characteristics

**What's important** – The ease with which transit can be accessed and the Library can be reached is generally very important to residents and cardholders both inside and outside of the catchment area when thinking of a future downtown Central Library. However, there are also a variety of other potential characteristics of the Central Library that are just as important to residents, if not more important to some.

In order to get a better sense of the priorities for residents, they were asked to give each possible characteristic a score from 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all important to them and 10 is very important. Each category was then given a mean score (the typical response given by those participants) which gave a better idea of importance. Both the intercept and focus group research cited convenience in terms of location as the most important characteristic of a Central Library (mean score of 9.1 and 9.0 respectively). This characteristic was not included in the user or general population surveys, and having good lighting was given the highest scores of importance overall by those participants instead (mean score of 9.0 and 8.9 respectively).

**Having natural and good lighting inside the building** – The future downtown Central Library having natural and good lighting inside the building was ranked slightly higher on average than being a welcoming and safe place (mean scores from 8.5 to 9.0 out of 10). When intercepted, visitors at the Main branch cited having good lighting inside the building as one of the most important physical features they would like to see in a new Central Library (receiving 12% of the total mentions). Focus group participants mentioned having good lighting as an additional characteristic that they feel should be considered in the planning process as well (eight percent of mentions), and noted that a well-lit library would also feel more welcoming and safe, especially if it meant an absence of dark corners; and, that lighting helps contribute to the overall atmosphere of the space.

**Being a welcoming and safe place** – Having a safe and welcoming space is important to residents and cardholders both inside and outside of the catchment area, ranging from 8.1 out of 10 (residents outside of the catchment area) to 8.9 out of 10 (cardholders in the catchment area) in importance. In the focus groups where participants were able to discuss the reason for their opinions, many said that a library should strive to be a safe and welcoming place at all times. When describing what welcoming would mean to them in terms of the physical space for the library, participants noted things such as keeping the interior well-maintained, having friendly staff, and being more accessible for all groups and individuals. In terms of what would help make the library a safe space, focus group participants mentioned better lighting and lines of sight, as well as security in the form of cameras and patrols, but noted that measures should be subtle so as not to feel they were being constantly supervised.

# 5.0 Important characteristics

**Architecture of the building** – While not seen to be as important as access to transit, lighting or safety, having a Central Library that is architecturally unique is still important to residents. It was the most mentioned characteristic by focus groups that was not included on the list provided to them (20% of total mentions) and given a mean score of 6.1 out of 10 by cardholders in the catchment area, and a 6.9 for residents in the catchment area. Focus group participants mentioned that the Central Library building should fit in with the aesthetic of the City of Ottawa, something that could become a symbol for Ottawa, and have an interior that would be appealing to current customers as well as attractive to potential customers.

**Creating accessibility** – Residents and cardholders both inside and outside the catchment area mentioned the need for the Central Library to be accessible and friendly to persons with disabilities, with many noting the lack of accessibility at the current Main branch. Cardholders in the catchment area mentioned accessibility as a characteristic they feel is important for a Central Library (18% of total mentions), while five percent of residents both inside and outside the catchment area mentioned it as well. Focus group participants discussed the Central Library being accessible in terms of elevators, signage, door size and operation, as well as general spacing throughout the library, and reiterated the need for adequate parking as it relates to the ease of accessibility for persons with disabilities.

**Creating open spaces**– Having open spaces in the Central Library where people could gather and events could be held is fairly important to cardholders and residents inside and outside the catchment area. Library card holders in the catchment area and residents outside of catchment area gave similar scores of importance (6.7 and 6.2 respectively), while residents from inside the catchment area gave it a higher score of 7.1 out of 10. Focus group participants gave this a mean score of 7.5 out of 10, and discussed the potential for such a space to make a Central Library more inviting and make the library more of a community space or destination for reading and book-related activities.

**What's less of a priority** – Generally people found characteristics such as having nice views of the outside, distance from shops, restaurants, museums and other cultural institutions to be less important overall than things such as access to transit and interior lighting – but not unimportant. Residents and cardholders both inside and outside the catchment area generally gave these mean scores ranging from four to five out of 10. Residents in the catchment area found the distance of a Central Library from shops and restaurants to be slightly more important than residents outside of the catchment area. Focus group participants generally felt that while these things would be nice to have, they should not be considered very important factors when considering a physical location for a future Central Library because a downtown location would likely be near shops and restaurants.

# 6.0 *What people want to know*

One of the objectives of the research was to identify other issues relevant to the proposed project raised by cardholders and residents. The following issues and opinions are ones that the Ottawa Public Library should be prepared to address.

- 1. Function of the Central Library** – During the course of the focus group discussions a number of participants wanted to know what the function of the Central Library would be vis-à-vis branches throughout the City. Many of the comments were couched in terms of wondering whether the location would just be a branch or have a special function within the library system in Ottawa as a whole. Linked to these comments were observations that the function of the Central Library would have a significant influence over the form of the building.
- 2. Location of the Central Library** – The discussion on the location of the Central Library was also framed within the location of the LRT and specifically LRT stations, with a number of participants noting that in the ideal world the Central Library would be attached or within one block of a new LRT station. Concerns were expressed about locating the Central Library at ‘one-end’ of the downtown area and the impact on walk-in traffic. Participants from outside the catchment area noted that it was unlikely to find a new location in the downtown core that could accommodate parking.
- 3. Cost of a Central Library** – Participants were torn on the cost of the project. On the one hand, they were interested in details related to the cost and feasibility of renovating the existing location. On the other hand, comments were made that the City needed to invest in a Central Library that would meet the long term needs of the City. Concerns were also expressed about the vulnerability of long term funding for a Central Library because of pressure on City finances.
- 4. Vision for the Central Library** – Through the discussion, participants shared the view that often the vision for a project in terms of look, feel and function as initially presented to the public did not translate into reality when a project was completed. The sub-text was one of cynicism – that proponents for projects sometimes over-promised and under-delivered.

As the public dialogue continues on a new Central Library, it will be very important for the Ottawa Public Library and the City of Ottawa to be able to respond to these issues.

# 7.0 Contact

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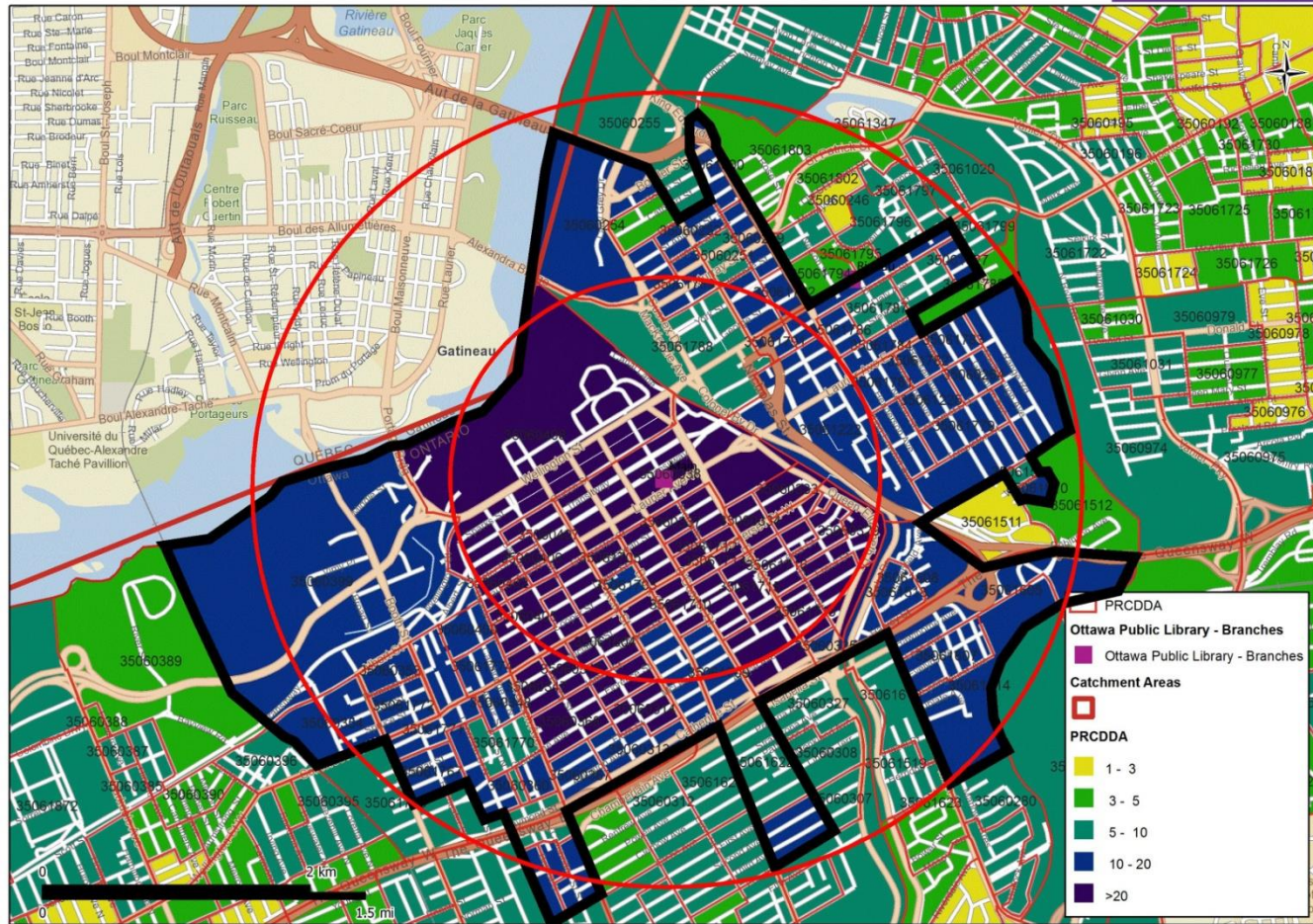




# 8.0 Map of the Main branch catchment area

12 Month Active Users MA Only 20150917 FBS-Record  
Ottawa (ON), CV (percentPenetration)

ENVIRONICS  
ANALYTICS



Variable Description: 12 Month Active Users MA Only 20150917 FBS-Record Count  
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\*The catchment area is contained within the black border