



For immediate release  
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## **Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Call on Council for Vision and Planning NOT Cuts and Crumbling Buildings.**

**Ottawa, Ontario** – Members of the Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Association (Friends) addressed the Ottawa City Council Committee of the Whole today, calling for an end to the pattern of budget cuts that have been so damaging to the city's library system.

In response to the massive outpouring of public concern over proposed cuts that would close community branches, City Council passed a motion to reduce the cuts. However, the new proposal would still see important library services for youth, seniors, new immigrants and small businesses cut or reduced and it would prevent or delay the replacement of the crumbling and partially closed main branch with a new, safe, and effective building. The motion also spoke only to the 2008 budget and did not offer community branches any protection in future years.

"Library funding has been too long neglected. Now the main branch is actually crumbling around us. You can see the library floor sinking," says Lori Nash, President of the Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Association. "It's not enough to simply stop branches from shutting their doors completely. The doors must be open when and where families need their library. And the doors must open onto well-staffed and well-stocked libraries in safe and structurally sound buildings."

In her presentation Ms. Nash called on Council to step up and offer a vision for long-term, stable, and strong library services and to commit to end library budget cuts. "We need more books, more Internet terminals and more librarians because we need more of the opportunities they bring us. We can accept no more threats of closure. No more crumbling buildings. No more cuts," Ms. Nash told City Council.

Ms. Nash's ongoing message not to cut library services has been backed by massive community support in the form of SOS Ottawa Public Library postcards, emails and letters to City Councillors, petitions, newspaper coverage and letters to the editor, and concerned residents attending the meeting in SOS campaign t-shirts or buttons and addressing Council to advocate for library services.

"Ottawa residents who value our libraries as safe places to gather, learn and build the collective knowledge and prosperity of our city will not be complacent and will not accept any more cuts," concerned resident and Friends volunteer Karen Luttrell told Council.

Details about the SOS Ottawa Public Library campaign are available at the Friends website, including information to help residents tell City Hall they want to keep libraries open and strong this year, next year, and every year. Please see [www.ottawapubliclibraryfriends.ca](http://www.ottawapubliclibraryfriends.ca) for details.

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