

TO: Mayor Patrick Brown
Brampton City Council

CC: President Mohamed Lachemi
Board of Toronto Metropolitan University

On behalf of the Brampton Library Board, I am writing to express our deep concern over the eviction of the Chinguacousy Branch to make way for the new Toronto Metropolitan University medical school. The Chinguacousy Branch is the face of Brampton Library and an integral part of that neighbourhood for over 50 years. The community response to hearing of this unexpected branch closing has been met with great frustration and disappointment as an institution that has been part of their daily lives as an accessible, walkable, transit-oriented centre of a dense, high-needs community. They feel that their access to computers, technology help, study space, early literacy, seniors programming, and career and educational resources is being taken away.

The Chinguacousy Branch is the largest library in Brampton with the most programming, borrowing and foot traffic. 28% of households in the census tracts closest to the branch have at least one active cardholder, and every month the branch sees about 20,000 visitors, 28,000 loans of books and other items, and about 2500 uses of its computers.

Although we are in support of increasing postsecondary access and medical training in Brampton, we believe that due consideration was not given to the effects this move will have and the significant negative impact on our library system, our staff, and the community.

Among our concerns:

- The financial cost of relocation. Although the City has identified temporary locations in the form of the Chinguacousy Park Ski Chalet and 129 Glidden Road for the library's use, the only provision for the costs associated with renovating and moving has been the use of the Library's own reserves as well as a possible rent rebate on the new leases. These costs are estimated to be at least \$500,000. The Library has also been told that it may be responsible for costs associated with restoring the Ski Chalet when it moves out, costs not covered in the Library's existing budgets.
- Increased costs for operations. The relocation of the Chinguacousy Branch will require that Brampton Library operate multiple, smaller locations as no single location is available to replace it. This approach will result in increased operational costs as services once consolidated in a single location will need to be duplicated across multiple branches. This additional cost for resources and staffing is projected to run \$260,000 annually, an amount not currently in the library's operating budget.
- The shrinking of our library system. As shared many times with City Council over the years, Brampton Library is the smallest urban library system in Canada, with a square footage of 0.29 per capita, well below the average among our GTA neighbours of 0.57. The shrinking of the system at a time that the city's population continues to grow will only result in this situation worsening. Further, this loss of our largest branch will result in a loss of 28,000 square feet of library space, even after the proposed temporary locations, denying the community access to safe, free space to gather, study, attend programming and access resources. In addition, this

reduction in square footage will cost the Library and the City as much as \$2 million in reduced Development Charges over the next decade.

- The proposed temporary locations are not well served by transit. Whereas the Chinguacousy Branch is located next to a major transit hub, whether it be patrons accessing the Ski Chalet or staff going to work at the Glidden location, travelling to Brampton Library will become more difficult and may result in a reduction in visits, a loss of staff, and will encourage more automobile use in the city. Given that the library is a key community resource for students, the elderly, newcomers, and others that rely on transit this is unacceptable.
- The loss of important community resources. The Chinguacousy Branch is a unique facility that in addition to collection features community rooms, abundant study space, our largest maker space, a recording studio, settlement services and community art. This branch is also a critical space for marginalized and low-income individuals and families that rely on the library for access to technology and the internet. The loss of the branch will impact not only Brampton Library, but also the other partners in our community we collaborate with to provide educational, cultural, and social supports.

Given the above we respectfully request that the Brampton City Council takes the following actions:

1. Commission a review of Brampton Library's space needs by an independent consultant to determine the appropriate amount of space and locations required to meet the community's needs. This may be done as an update to the recent Brampton Library Facilities Master Plan.
2. Commit to paying for the costs associated with the move, including leasehold improvements in any new locations.
3. Review the annual budget of Brampton Library and adjust for additional operating costs.
4. Ensure that the relocation to the Chinguacousy Ski Lodge is temporary and that there is a commitment in the form of a council motion to securing appropriate, permanent space that allows Brampton Library to fulfil its mission.

We believe that these actions are necessary to ensure that our library system remains a vital resource for our community and look forward to working with you toward a constructive resolution.

Sincerely,

Jaipaul Massey-Singh
Board Chair