

Humber Bay Branch Potential Expansion

Date:	August 21, 2014
To:	Budget Committee
From:	Acting City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the Toronto Public Library Board Budget Committee with information on costs and feasibility of expanding the Humber Bay Branch and adding it to the capital plan.

Humber Bay Branch is a small 2,400 square foot neighbourhood branch at 200 Park Lawn Road north of The Queensway. The current site owned by the Library could potentially accommodate a two-storey building of approximately 5,520 square foot. An opportunity to relocate the branch to a nearby site that has been sold for re-development is being explored and staff will report back as more information is available. The estimated cost of constructing a new 10,000 square foot branch is provided.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts from this report, which provides information about the potential to develop the Humber Bay Branch.

The Director, Finance and Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

DECISION HISTORY

At its July 28, 2014 meeting, the Budget Committee adopted the following motion:

“staff to report back to Budget Committee on a costs and feasibility analysis of expanding the Humber Bay Branch and adding it to the capital plan; and this analysis include an analysis of how development funding and co-locating could be utilized similar to the Fort York Branch, if possible.”

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Humber Bay Branch is a small neighbourhood branch located on Park Lawn Road north of The Queensway. The branch opened in 1951 and was the first branch of the Etobicoke Public Library Board. The branch is open 40 hours weekly from Tuesday to Saturday, and performance ranks in the fourth quartile of neighbourhood branches. Due to the small size of this facility, there is no meeting room, and study and reading spaces are limited. Services focus on circulation, in-branch study, reading and computer use, outreach and programs delivered in the community. Humber Bay Branch underwent a major renovation in 1997 and is being maintained in a state of good repair. An assessment of the Humber Bay location prior to the 1997 renovation indicated that the site was too small to expand the current building on grade. No suitable alternate locations were found for the branch at that time and after weighing various options, it was decided to renovate the existing building.

COMMENTS

A new assessment of the Humber Bay site indicates that it could potentially be redeveloped to accommodate a two-storey building of approximately 5,520 square foot. An application to the Committee of Adjustment requesting a parking variance would also be needed. Expanding the existing Humber Bay building to 5,520 square feet falls short of the minimum requirements for a neighbourhood branch.

Toronto Public Library's Service Delivery Model and Joint Facilities policy guide branch planning and development. Neighbourhood branches serve populations of 20,000 to 50,000 residents living within a 1.6 kilometre radius. Humber Bay Branch serves a population of 17,841. Humber Bay Branch at 2,400 square feet or at the expanded 5,520 square feet does not meet the current size requirements of 10,000 to 15,000 square feet for new neighbourhood branches.

There are four other library branches that overlap and extend within the 1.6 kilometre radius surrounding Humber Bay (Attachment 1). The District branch, Brentwood, recently underwent a significant renovation and expansion. Nearby Mimico Centennial Branch is 17,469 square feet and serves a population of 26,541. The majority of the development in the area falls within the Mimico Centennial Branch catchment with anticipated growth of approximately 9,550, bringing the population up to 34,523. In comparison, the Humber Bay catchment population is expected to grow by approximately 900, bringing the population up to 18,741. Mimico Centennial Branch is well sized to meet the needs of the growing population and requires significant investment to bring the infrastructure up-to-date, including improving barrier-free access and the addition of a KidsStop early literacy centre, digital innovation hub and computer learning centre. Mimico Centennial is currently in the 2015 to 2024 capital plan with design starting in 2020.

The cost for a new 10,000 square foot neighbourhood branch is approximately \$7M to \$8M with no budget included for acquiring land. The project would attract development charges of approximately \$4M to \$5M. No Section 37 funds to date have been directed to either Humber Bay or Mimico Centennial branches, and the city has been provided with

information about enhancement requirements for both of these branches in response to all development applications in the area. It should also be noted that the majority of the new development in the area is located in Ward 6. Humber Bay Branch is located in Ward 5. The development agreements originally used to acquire funding for the Fort York Branch are no longer available as they have been replaced by Section 37 funding agreements and the Development Charges By-law.

In September 2013, the local councillor asked Toronto Public Library to provide information about the possible relocation of the Humber Bay Branch to the site of the Stonegate Plaza, which had recently been sold to a developer. Relocation of Humber Bay to the Stonegate Plaza would shift the branch more to the northeast of its catchment area (Attachment 1). The current location on Park Lawn Road is visible and provides a direct link to the increasing condominium population on Lakeshore Blvd., many of whom use the branch. Access to Stonegate Plaza would be less convenient for Lakeshore community users. There is also public transit access nearby on both Park Lawn Road and The Queensway at the current location. At the same time, a larger building could attract more people given the ability to provide a full range of neighbourhood library programs and services not possible at the present location. If the new location at Stonegate Plaza provided good parking and 10,000 square feet for a branch, this would counterbalance the move northeast. There is public transit access to the plaza through a bus stop at Berry Rd. and Park Lawn Road.

All catchment schools and the Humber Bay area community centre would be located in closer proximity to the proposed Stonegate Plaza location. If the Stonegate Community Health Centre was also located at this site, there would be partnership opportunities and synergies for the Library.

Strong architectural elements would be required to enhance library visibility and access at the Stonegate Plaza location. As well, to provide an effective operation and establish an appropriate independent institutional identity as a significant public facility, any proposed housing above the library would need to be stepped back from the front elevation of the library.

A Stonegate Plaza Redevelopment Stakeholder Working Group was formed by the local councillor to review the proposal for redeveloping the plaza site. Meetings were held on December 11, 2013 and March 3, 2014. The concept of relocating the Humber Bay library to the redeveloped plaza was discussed at the December 2013 meeting, and the developer was provided with the requirements for a 10,000 square foot neighbourhood branch. At the March 2014 meeting the development design did not include space for the Humber Bay Branch. City staff recently reported that the development application will soon be circulated to the Library for comment. City staff also indicated that the developer has been asked to provide commercial space with residential space above it, and that this could potentially be used for a public space such as a library branch. Library staff continue to monitor this development and will review and report back on any opportunities that may arise. As well, a meeting with the new councillor will be scheduled after the upcoming municipal election.

It should be noted that adding another project with increased square footage to the capital plan poses challenges in terms of the funding envelope, especially given the declining debt target from 2019 to 2024. In addition, reallocating debt funding to this project could potentially impact the SOGR backlog. Annual operating impact would be approximately \$30K to \$40K, assuming no staffing increases and no lease costs.

Developments and opportunities for Humber Bay Branch will continue to be closely monitored in the coming months. Adding a project for Humber Bay Branch to the capital plan will be considered as more information becomes available.

CONTACT

Anne Bailey; Acting City Librarian; Tel: 416-393-7032;
E-mail: abailey@torontopubliclibrary.ca

Larry Hughsam, Director, Finance and Treasurer; Tel: 416-397-5946;
E-mail: lhughsam@torontopubliclibrary.ca

SIGNATURE

Anne Bailey
Acting City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Proposed and Recent Major Residential Development in Humber Bay Area