

Scarborough City Centre Branch - Securing Site for New Library

Date:	March 25, 2008
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to obtain Toronto Public Library Board approval for the location of the new branch in the Scarborough City Centre area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. approves the location of the Scarborough City Centre Branch at 150 Borough Drive subject to the completion of a satisfactory agreement with the City of Toronto; and
2. requests the City of Toronto to continue to include the Toronto Public Library interest in the development plan of the McCowan Precinct until such time as the City Centre plan for the development of a Library at 150 Borough Drive is confirmed.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The project to construct a new 15,000 square foot library branch in the Scarborough City Centre area is budgeted to begin in 2009 for a total cost of \$7.5 million. As both properties covered in the recommendations are owned by the City, then there should be no charge to the Library to acquire either site.

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

BACKGROUND

As the Board is aware, plans have been underway to locate a branch in the Scarborough City Centre area for a number of years. In June 2004, the Board approved a strategy for branch development that called for two additional branches to provide service in growing areas of the city – the Scarborough City Centre and Waterfront areas. Since that time, staff has been working to find suitable sites for these branches, and both projects are included in the 2008-2012 capital budget.

COMMENTS

In the case of the Scarborough City Centre area, a number of city-owned properties were reviewed in consultation with city staff and the local Councillor. After many meetings and site visits with various concerned parties, a number of potential locations were identified and these have been narrowed down to two sites.

A preferred site fronting on 150 Borough Drive adjacent to the south-east corner of the Civic Centre has been identified that best meets the Library's requirements for situating a branch (Attachment 1). City planning staff and the local Councillor are enthusiastic about the potential for a library at this location. However, approvals and timing are contingent upon negotiations at the City with the Goldman Group regarding the possible purchase of the Scarborough Civic Centre parking garage and the building of a new below grade parking structure with the Library situated above.

A second site at the McCowan Precinct, has also been identified (Attachment 1). Toronto Community Housing Corporation had plans to build affordable housing units at a cost of over \$22 million, though no funds had been approved for this in their Capital Budget. The concept at this site would have the Library occupying the ground floor of a new affordable housing residential building; the building was to also include a community space on one or two floors directly above the library. Because of the absence of funding for the affordable housing component, this development has been delayed. While this second site presents a number of constraints and would not be optimum for locating a branch, the Library has expressed interest in the site and it is in the Library's best interest to continue to do so until such time as an agreement is reached to situate the Library at 150 Borough Drive as described above.

CONCLUSION

The Library's preferences for a site are, in order, first 150 Borough Drive adjacent to the south-east corner of the Civic Centre and second, the McCowan Precinct. Continuing to include the Library's interest in the development plan for the McCowan Precinct is recommended until agreements are secured to locate the Library at 150 Borough Drive.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Josephine Bryant
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Toronto Public Library – Scarborough City Centre Map –
 150 Borough Dr. and McCowan Precinct