

Urban Affairs Library Relocation and Alternative Service Plan

Date:	June 7, 2011
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

As part of the 2011 approved budget, the Urban Affairs Library (UAL) will close at the end of the summer and relocate its research collections and services to the Toronto Reference Library (TRL). Previously, the Board received information on the establishment of a bookmobile stop and the expansion of service hours at City Hall Branch as possible mitigating strategies for community users until the Fort York/Bathurst Branch opens in 2014.

For research users, the Urban Affairs collections and services will be relocated to the TRL as described in previous reports to the Board.

For community users, a bookmobile stop at Metro Hall can be accommodated within the current resources and schedule, and is recommended by staff. Given the current Core Service Review, the expansion of service hours at City Hall is not being recommended at this time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. adds a bookmobile stop in the Metro Hall area when the Urban Affairs Library closes to relocate to the Toronto Reference Library, and until such time as the Fort York/Bathurst Branch opens.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

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

DECISION HISTORY

The 2011 Operating Budget Update – Budget Committee report to the Board on February 2, 2011 provided the Board with some suggested alternative service options that could be implemented with the closure of UAL. At that time, the Board's decision was to receive the information on alternative service arrangements. The March 1, 2011 Operating Budget Adoption report to the Board indicated that alternative service recommendations would be brought subsequently to the Board for approval.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

UAL will close at the end of the summer and its collections will no longer be available to researchers in that location. In recent years, local residents and business people have used UAL to access some branch services such as holds and access to circulating collections. Efforts to mitigate the impact on both research and community users are desirable.

COMMENTS

For urban affairs research users, collections, services and current staff will relocate to the second floor at TRL within the Humanities and Social Sciences Department that houses many related and complementary subjects. Researchers will have access to the full range of UAL services in that location.

Local residents and business people will be redirected to a number of local district and neighbourhood branches in the area to access the full range of branch services. However, it is also possible to implement alternative service arrangements to offset, in part, the closure of UAL at Metro Hall until the new Fort York/Bathurst Branch opens, currently projected for 2014. The alternative services presented earlier to the Board included implementing a bookmobile stop at Metro Hall and/or expanding the hours of service at the closest library, City Hall Branch at a distance of 1.1 kilometres from Metro Hall.

Bookmobile Service

For those using Urban Affairs for branch services such as holds pick-up and access to circulating collections, a weekday daytime bookmobile stop could be implemented at Metro Hall. With the recently discontinued Cedarbrae stop, there is flexibility in the schedule to provide a weekly stop on Thursdays from 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm at no additional cost. The exact location for a bookmobile stop at Metro Hall has not yet been determined. A bookmobile stop at Metro Hall would be discontinued when the Fort York/Bathurst Branch opens.

Branch Service

Until the new Fort York/Bathurst Branch opens in 2014, local residents will have access to the full range of neighbourhood and district library services available at other nearby branches, including City Hall, St. Lawrence, Sanderson and Lillian H. Smith – all within a 2.2 kilometre range. This is similar to what occurs in other areas when a branch closes for renovations; for example, during the current closure of the Brentwood Branch for renovations.

While service hours at City Hall could be expanded in the fall of 2011 at no net cost to TPL by redirecting efficiencies gained from TPL's capital project to implement self-service check-out at busy locations, no increase in open hours is recommended at this time. Since this possibility was raised in February 2011, the City has initiated service reviews, including service levels and efficiency studies. All service hours may be impacted by these reviews, and therefore it is not recommended that the Library proceed with a change of hours at one location only at this time.

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SIGNATURE

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