

Provision of Telecommunication Services

Date:	November 24, 2008
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

City Council, at its July 15, 16 and 17, 2008 meeting, adopted several motions in regards to the *Agreement between Toronto Hydro Telecom Inc. and the City of Toronto for the Provision of Telecommunication Services and use of City proceeds from Sale of Toronto Hydro Telecom Inc.* Of interest to the Library is the City Council authorization for City staff to negotiate and finalize a lit fibre data services agreement with Toronto Hydro Telecom Inc. Now that the sale of Toronto Hydro Telecom Inc. is complete, the City is negotiating with the new owner, Cogeco Data Services. City staff have negotiated favourable terms and conditions which address the lit data services offer. These terms and conditions are available to the City's agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs). Library staff have been in discussions with City staff and Cogeco Data Services about the lit data services offer.

The lit data services offer would provide the Library with greatly improved network capacity at lower total annual operating costs. The improved network capacity would have a significant public service benefit. It would improve performance for public access to the Internet and allow the Library to consider delivery of services over the Internet that are now not possible because of network capacity constraints.

Library staff recommend that the Board participate in the lit data services offer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. authorizes Library staff to participate, as one of the City's agencies, boards and commissions, in the Lit Fibre Data Services Agreement between the City of Toronto and Cogeco Data Services, based on the anticipated financial impact outlined in the Confidential Attachment, and
2. authorizes Library staff to negotiate the schedules to the agreement that detail the Board's participation, and

3. directs that the information in the Confidential Attachment not be disclosed, in order to protect the financial interests and competitive position of the City and the Library in future negotiations.

Implementation Points

Implementation is planned to begin in early 2009, with completion at the end of two years.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The one-time costs to the Library for the implementation of the Lit data services will be covered by the existing capital budget for the Technology Asset Management Program, within the portion allocated for data communication upgrades. The transition costs from the existing network data service to the Cogeco lit data services in years 2009 and 2010 will be managed within the operating budget allocation for data communications.

There is no anticipated impact on the operating or capital budgets in 2009 or 2010.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this Financial Impact Statement and is in agreement with it.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its July 15, 16 and 17, 2008 meeting, adopted several motions arising from the agreement between Toronto Hydro Telecom Inc. and the City of Toronto for the provision of telecommunication services and use of City proceeds from the sale of Toronto Hydro Telecom Inc. City Council authorized City staff to negotiate, among others, a Lit Fibre Data Services Agreement with Toronto Hydro Telecom Inc. Since the sale of Toronto Hydro Telecom Inc. to Cogeco Data Services has been completed, the negotiations continue with Cogeco Data Services.

The Library, as one of the agencies, boards and commissions of the City, has been invited to participate in the Lit Fibre Data Services Agreement.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The issue of bandwidth capacity is a significant one for the Library. Ever increasing demand, the delivery of Library services through the Internet and the changing nature of Internet service (more graphics, videos, interactive sites) have created challenges for the Library. To keep pace with the demand for bandwidth capacity, the Library is constantly upgrading its network and Internet service. In the last four years, the Library has increased its Internet service bandwidth annually. The bandwidth capacity for communication links from the branches to the Library's central computing site has been doubled, for 48 branches, in the past year, 2007.

Working within the current data network configuration and vendor contracts, the cost of bandwidth is a constraint on the development of new Library services delivered through the Internet and the expansion of public Internet access. The Library's goal is to remove that constraint. A related issue for the Library is that many of its branches are in residential areas, distant from the high speed fibre networks in the downtown and commercial and industrial areas.

COMMENTS

Cogeco Data Services is offering the City and its ABCs a favourable competitive rate for lit fibre data services based on Cogeco Data Services securing a contract with both the Toronto Catholic and Toronto District School Boards. The large number of installations in school, civic and library locations make it viable to provide high speed fibre connectivity throughout the City.

Lit data services are defined as the high speed fibre network and network management services provided by Cogeco. In very practical terms, for the Library, lit data services will provide the data communication network between the Library computing centre and the branches. The word "lit" identifies that Cogeco is managing the network, not just providing the physical fibre network.

The Library has identified the goal of fibre connectivity to all its locations, in order to remove the constraints of bandwidth capacity. With the Lit Data Services agreement, the Library would have fibre connectivity to each branch and would increase its bandwidth capacity from 10 times to 100 times existing capacity (current capacity varies by branch) with a decrease in total annual operating costs. As reported to the Board at its October 20, 2008 meeting, the 2009 strategic plan work plan includes a project to develop a comprehensive plan to expand wireless and increase bandwidth, under the theme: expanding access to technology and online services. This initiative positions the Library to achieve this objective.

The increased capacity would allow the Library to keep pace with growing demand for Internet services that have a multi-media component. It would allow the Library to grow its delivery of text, spoken word, music and video through the Internet instead of in physical formats. The decrease in total annual operating costs would allow the Library to increase the size of its connection to the Internet. The increased capacity would also allow the Library to expand its provision of wireless Internet access from the current 33 locations. As the City of Toronto and the provincial and federal governments deliver more services through the Internet, it becomes even more important that the Library builds the network capacity to ensure citizen access to those services. Fibre connectivity will make it possible to consider video conferencing and other interactive communications to link various Library locations for public forums and other forms of civic engagement.

This agreement would provide high speed fibre connectivity between the branch and the Library's computer centre. It does not provide for increased capacity for the link from

the computer centre to the Internet. That is a separate agreement, which expires in July 2009. The Library will be issuing a separate RFP for Internet services in 2009.

CONTACT

Ron Dyck; Director, Information Technology & Facilities; Tel: 416-393-7104;
Fax: 416-393-7083; E-mail: rdyck@torontopubliclibrary.ca

SIGNATURE

Jane Pyper
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Confidential Attachment 1: TPL Branch – Network Cost Comparison