To: Toronto Public Library Board – November 19, 2001

From: City Librarian

Subject: **Technical Environment Review – Award of Request for Proposal**

Purpose:

To obtain Toronto Public Library Board approval for the award of contract for the Technical Environment Review Services for web-based Electronic Information Services.

Funding Implications and Impact Statement:

The purchase of Technical Environment Review services has been accommodated within the transition funding for Standardization of Electronic Information Services.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board approve that staff enter into contract negotiations with DMR for the Technical Environment Review services at a price not to exceed $193,029.

Background:

The delivery of information services over the Internet is central to the vision and strategic plan for the Library. In the next three years, the Library intends to extend its electronic services, programs and collections to innovative delivery modes. The plans include expansion of digital collections, offering library programs on the web, extended interactive reference desk service, electronic personalized services, customer/business transactions and more extensive multilingual service. The Virtual Reference Library will be enhanced by new gateway portals, a new user interface, more online learning opportunities, and use of multimedia.

The original web environment was established in 1998 and has had only minor revisions and changes to it since that time. As a result, the Library is dealing with a variety of issues that need to be addressed. (1) The Toronto Public Library's current technology platform presents several major concerns about support and integration. (2) The SiteSearch suite of tools currently used is proprietary and is based on a flat file system and development by the vendor will be discontinued in 2002. (3) The City of Toronto has adopted a standard platform/environment for Internet-based services. The TPL environment was established prior to the City's adoption. The Toronto Public Library desires to be compatible with the City's standards, wherever possible and

appropriate and to identify strong rationale for deviations from the standard where compatibility is an issue.

The Toronto Public Library requires an analysis and plan for migration to a new generation of technology that will support these services over the next 3-5 years. The technology will include hardware platform, software applications and web & content development tools. The results of the analysis will determine the upgrade path for the VRL, which is part of the proposed 2002 capital and operating budget submission. The quality of the analysis and the migration plan will be critical to the stability and reliability of existing services and the development of new services.

The Library issued a Request for Proposal, which was also advertised in the Daily Commercial News, inviting proposals from firms with technical expertise in the delivery of web-based information services. When the RFP closed on September 27, 2001, the Library received two responses. One response was declared invalid, because it did not meet mandatory Purchasing requirements. The remaining response met all mandatory Purchasing submission requirements.

The response from DMR was for a price of $209,200 plus taxes.

The response was reviewed by Toronto Public Library staff based upon the specifications contained in the Request for Proposal and an interview of the proponent.

Comments:

The solution proposed by DMR addressed all the components of the enterprise the Library requires. DMR's solution reflected a good understanding of the complexity of the task at hand, and its critical importance for the future of web-based services at the Toronto Public Library. During the proponent interview, Library staff clarified that the scope of the project as defined by the Library in the RFP did not include a network review. Library staff asked the proponent, DMR, to review its cost submission to reflect that clarification. DMR submitted a revised cost of $173,900 plus taxes, totaling $193,029.

Conclusion:

The Library recommends staff enter into contract negotiations with DMR for the supply of VRL Technical Environment Review services, at a cost not to exceed $193,029, taxes included.

Contact:

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City Librarian

<u>List of Attachments</u>:

Not applicable.