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To: Toronto Public Library Board – December 13, 2004

From: City Librarian

Subject: **Thorncliffe Branch Capital Project**

Purpose:

To provide the Toronto Public Library Board with information regarding the Thorncliffe Branch renovation and the impact of adding this project to the 2005-2009 capital budget.

Funding Implications and Impact Statement:

The capital cost of the Thorncliffe Branch renovation is estimated at \$2.7 million (including applicable taxes), or \$0.2 million in 2005, \$1.1 million in 2006 and \$1.4 million in 2007.

The increase in annual operating costs for the renovated branch, comprised of staffing, collections and information technology costs, is estimated to be \$150,000.

Funding for this project is not currently included in the 2005-2009 capital budget submission to Council.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board provide direction to staff on the following three options:

- (1) add the Thorncliffe project to the capital budget request, to begin in 2005 and be complete by 2007, subject to additional City funding so as to avoid displacing another priority project; or
- (2) defer other capital projects in order to accommodate the addition of the Thorncliffe project to the 2005-2009 capital budget; or
- (3) do not add the Thorncliffe project to the 2005-2009 capital budget.

Background:

At the November 15, 2004 Library Board meeting, Councillor Jane Pitfield requested that the Library Board consider adding the Thorncliffe Branch to its 2005 capital budget submission to

Council. Staff was asked to report to the Library Board's December meeting on the impact the addition the Thorncliffe project would have on other capital projects identified for 2005-2009.

Toronto Public Library's 2005-2009 Capital Budget approved at the November 15, 2004 Library Board meeting was based on the following criteria (Attachment 1):

1. the planning framework for dealing with the branch infrastructure as provided by the Service Delivery Model, Strategic Plan, the NORR report on building condition analysis, the Wong Gregerson Architects' state-of-good-repair report and Hanscomb order of magnitude estimates;
2. the need to address a critical backlog of repair projects;
3. the need for an annual "state-of-good-repair" programming;
4. the need for new electronic technologies in delivering TPL services;
5. the need for expansion of some of the existing district and neighbourhood branches; and
6. consideration of the long-term \$10 million capital envelope approved by Council in 2003.

Comments:

Within this context, priority has been given to state-of-good-repair projects and addressing the backlog of work. In addition, projects carried forward from the predecessor boards have been addressed. In the former East York, Leaside branch was reconstructed, reopening in 2002, Dawes Road branch was renovated in 2002 and Thorncliffe branch and Todmorden Room received state-of-good-repair improvements in 2003. One new project, Malvern branch reconstruction and expansion, in a growing and under-served east area of the city, was approved.

As a result, Thorncliffe Branch was not included in the 2005-2009 capital budget. As noted above, it underwent state-of-good-repair improvements including new flooring, shelving and painting in 2003. Given the constraints of the current space, no further renovations were planned at this time. However, two recent developments provide an opportunity to add a new capital project for Thorncliffe Branch to the Library's plans that will improve library service for the Thorncliffe Park community:

- There is a strong possibility the on-site daycare will be relocated to other space within the community thereby vacating 5,000 square feet of library-owned space;
- The *Recreation Facilities Report* adopted by City Council on September 28, 29, 30 and October 1, 2004, identifies Thorncliffe as the second priority for community center projects in its capital plan. Parks and Recreation completed an expansion study of the Jenner Jean-Marie Community Centre (attached to the Thorncliffe branch) in 2002 and has requested capital funding for 2006 to increase the size of the gymnasium, add change rooms and make other modifications to their portion of the facility.

A capital project would allow the Library to expand much needed library service for the Thorncliffe Park neighbourhood by integrating the lower level daycare space into Library operations while at the same time capitalizing on the efficiencies offered in proceeding jointly with Parks and Recreation.

Library service at Thorncliffe would be improved in the following ways:

- larger children's area;
- additional computers including a learning centre for computer literacy;
- additional space for individual and group study;
- program room to accommodate 100;
- energy efficiency upgrades.

History of the Branch

The Thorncliffe branch opened at its current location in 1970. When the East York Public Library Board originally requested funding to build a 5,000 square foot library in the Thorncliffe Park neighbourhood, East York Council required that the Library Board build 5,000 square feet on the lower level for a daycare and that the Parks and Recreation department lease the space so that it could be used for sports and other recreational activities when not in use by the daycare. This arrangement remains in effect today. In 1996, Parks and Recreation added the Jenner Jean-Marie Community Centre with a gymnasium and meeting rooms, onto the existing Library building. Parks and Recreation no longer uses the Library-owned space for any of its activities. However, the Library owns the property.

Neighbourhood Profile

The Thorncliffe Park neighbourhood has changed dramatically since the library opened in 1970:

- Census statistics indicate a population of 16,410, but it is widely acknowledged that the population is grossly under-reported with the more accurate count being closer to 30,000.
- Thorncliffe Park Elementary School, located up the street from the library, is the largest elementary school in North America with about 1,600 students in junior kindergarten to grade 5; a third of these students are in kindergarten alone. Forty-seven countries are represented in the student population. Ninety-seven percent of the students live in the high-rise apartment buildings surrounding the school. An 80,000 square foot addition increased the size of the school by 60 percent and was completed in 2003 to accommodate the increased population.
- At 66.4 percent immigrants, many of whom are newcomers, comprise a significant portion of the population. According to the 2001 census statistics, 46 percent of the immigrant population arrived between 1996-2001.

- 44.3 percent of families are living below the ‘low income cut-off’ (LICO). LICO is the measure of poverty that expresses the amount of income a family needs to live. Many adults, particularly recent immigrants, face challenges accessing ESL classes and skills training as well as barriers to recognition of overseas experience and/or qualifications.
- The United Way and Canadian Council on Social Development’s report, *Poverty by Postal Code: The Geography of Neighbourhood Poverty 1981-2001*, identifies Thorncliffe Park as a neighbourhood with very high poverty rates. The report also indicates that poverty rates for immigrants that have been in the country less than five years has doubled between 1980 and 1995.

5 Year Capital Program

There are a number of challenges and issues in allocating capital funding to the various branches. As noted on Attachment 1, the current capital budget shows funding from the City in the amount of \$57.6 million over 2005-2009, or an average of \$11.5 million per annum. Other previously identified issues which place further funding pressure on the capital budget include:

- as construction costs continue to increase, it becomes more expensive to maintain an adequate state of good repair program;
- Council has expressed its desire for TPL to relocate its branches from leased space onto City-owned land whenever feasible. Included in TPL’s 2005-2009 capital budget are two such relocations - Jane/Sheppard and Morningside branches. Capital funding for potential relocation of the remaining 12 leased locations is not included in the budget;
- there continue to be requests for new branches; and
- information technology needs place further pressure on a funding envelope which may only be adequate to fund building SOGR needs. The City’s change in policy for 2005 to fund replacement of desktop equipment from the capital budget will place further pressure on the capital budget.

Without adding the Thorncliffe renovation, the Council approved \$10 million annual capital funding envelope is already not adequate to address the backlog of repairs and meet the current funding needs. To meet the \$10 million annual target, approximately \$7.6 million of capital projects would need to be deferred from the 2005-2009 period, and this could mean delaying renovations to Cedarbrae, Northern District, Mount Dennis, Sanderson and Parliament.

EMT Recommended 2005 Capital Budget

The City’s Executive Management Team (EMT) has recommended a capital budget for 2005 of \$9.9 million, requiring a \$0.7 million reduction to the \$10.6 million budget request for that year; the required reduction is addressed under a separate report to the Board. Any additions to the 2005 capital budget at this time will result in exceeding the EMT recommended budget.

Thorncliffe Renovation

The addition of the Thorncliffe branch project, while worthy, will increase the gap between funding needs and affordability. Once again, if the Library were held to the \$10 million annual capital target, then an additional \$2.7 million of projects would need to be deferred, impacting S. Walter Stewart and Brentwood.

2005-2009 CAPITAL BUDGET (NET)

(\$000s)

| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | Total |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Budget Submission | 10,662 | 11,636 | 11,528 | 11,007 | 12,828 | 57,661 |
| Thorncliffe Renovation | 200 | 1,100 | 1,400 | | | 2,700 |
| | 10,862 | 12,736 | 12,928 | 11,007 | 12,828 | 60,361 |

Conclusion:

The Thorncliffe Park neighbourhood is a high needs area of the City that has changed dramatically in recent years. The community would benefit from a branch renovation and expansion project. However, unless additional funding is provided, the current \$10 million capital funding envelope cannot support the addition of this project without displacing other projects. The three options available to deal with this request are: (1) to add it to the 2005-2009 capital budget request and seek additional funding so as to avoid displacing another priority project; (2) to defer other projects in order to add the Thorncliffe project; and (3) not to add the Thorncliffe project to the 2005-2009 capital budget.

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List of Attachments:

Attachment 1: Toronto Public Library 2005-2009 Capital Budget Submission.