



To: Toronto Public Library Board – February 19, 2001

From: City Librarian

Subject: **Current Status – *Reinvesting in Our Future: Toronto Public Library Branch Planning Study: September 1999***

Purpose:

To describe the current status of the report *Reinvesting in Our Future: Toronto Public Library Branch Planning Study* as context for reviewing service reduction options presented for achieving the potential reductions for the 2001 Operating Budget submission.

Funding Implications and Impact Statement:

There are potential impacts on the 2001 and subsequent operating and capital budgets if the branch closures proceed.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) The Toronto Public Library Board receive the report *Current Status – Reinvesting in Our Future: Toronto Public Library Branch Planning Study: September 1999*.
- (2) The Toronto Public Library Board consider the potential branch closures identified in the report in the context of other service reduction options being presented to the Library Board as part of the 2001 Operating Budget process.

Background:

*Reinvesting in Our Future: The Toronto Public Library Branch Planning Study* was written in response to a request by the City of Toronto Budget Committee to submit a report which is a “review of branch locations considering the potential to reduce sites based on usage and boundary overlapping, considering amalgamation after consideration by the Library Board.” (Budget Committee Minutes, February 9, 1999.)

### Summary of Report:

“Reinvesting in the Future” proposed harmonizing the Library’s infrastructure through reallocation. The Study proposed closing and/or consolidating twelve small libraries over a period of ten years, which would achieve net annual operating savings of \$1,042,000. These savings would be reduced by the opening of the St. James Town Branch and proposed branches in the Scarborough Civic Centre and Railway Lands.

A \$40 million capital investment is proposed to harmonize library service by providing new or enlarged branches in high needs and growth areas and expanding the district library network throughout the City. Through adherence to planning guidelines in the Service Delivery Model, future growth of the library branch network would be managed.

### Summary of Branch Closures/Consolidations – Impact on Operating Budget:

Total annual operating savings of \$1,042,000 to be reduced by the opening of the St. James Town Branch and proposed new branches in the Scarborough Civic Centre and Railway Lands.

<b>Phase 1 (2000)</b>	<b>Phase 2 (2000-2004)</b>	<b>Phase 3 (2004 Beyond)</b>
Niagara Todmorden (Consolidated) Swansea	St. Clair Silverthorn Davenport  Queen Saulter Mount Pleasant Northern Elms	Mimico & Humber Bay (Consolidated) Maryvale & Victoria Village
Net Operating Savings: \$113,000	Net Operating Savings: \$577,000	Net Operating Savings: \$352,000

### Process of Public Consultation:

- Public meetings attended or organized by Local Councillors were held in the three communities impacted by Phase 1 (Niagara, Todmorden and Swansea) and Phase 2 and 3 (Mount Pleasant, Queen Saulter, and Victoria Village) in late 1999 and 2000.
- Six public meetings were held throughout the City on the Library’s draft Strategic Plan in 2000.
- The Library Board receives deputations, letters and comment forms from Councillors, community groups and citizens on an ongoing basis, expressing opposition to branch closures.
- There was considerable negative media coverage about the proposed branch closures.

### Results of Public Consultation:

The operating savings that can be achieved through these twelve branch closures and/or consolidations are not supported or justified by the results of the public consultation.

There is overwhelming public opposition to library closures which can be summarized as follows:

- Citizens are passionately opposed to the closure of local libraries.

- There is a strong attachment to local neighbourhood libraries as a highly-valued community service.
- Citizens, particularly children and seniors, want the convenience of access to existing libraries and will advocate strongly to retain them.

Current Status:

The Library Board received the report for information at its meeting on September 21, 1999, and directed Library staff to proceed with community consultation for Phase 1 immediately and Phase 2 and 3 when appropriate.

On April 7, 2000, the Library Board adopted recommendations in *Reinvesting in Our Future: Report on Community Consultation for Phase 1 (Niagara, Swansea and Todmorden)* which in summary stated that:

- Swansea and Todmorden remain open and be reviewed in subsequent years after capital improvements in adjacent libraries.
- Niagara not reopen but that a community service partnership be pursued at 1029 King Street West.
- Public input gained through the strategic planning process be incorporated into future consultations on the branch network.

Conclusion:

The twelve closures/consolidations recommended in the *Branch Planning Study* will achieve a maximum of \$1,042,000 annual operating savings.

Results of public consultation indicated that there is no support for branch closures. It is, therefore, recommended that the closures be considered in the context of other service reduction options being presented to the Library Board as part of the 2001 Operating Budget deliberations.

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City Librarian

List of Attachments:

Not applicable.