TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

**STAFF REPORT
INFORMATION**

Addressing the State of Good Repair Backlog

Date:	May 10, 2010
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

In 2009, the Library engaged a consultant to conduct a building condition assessment of the Board's 102 buildings. The results of the assessment showed a $50 million backlog of needed repairs to achieve a "state of good repair" (SOGR). This SOGR backlog was reported to the Board and the City as part of the 2010 capital budget submission. This report reviews the planning framework that guides capital budget decisions, provides a summary of the state of Toronto's library infrastructure, comments on the library infrastructure needed to deliver 21st century library service, reviews the current status of SOGR funding and presents several scenarios to address the SOGR backlog.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Of the 102 buildings maintained by the Library, approximately 20% are more than 50 years old and 60% are more than 25 years old. The average age of library buildings is 37 years and one third of the branches have not had a renovation in over 20 years.

A building condition assessment of library buildings was conducted in 2009. The assessment, performed by an external consultant and validated by Library staff, examined various elements of the buildings (e.g. roofing, HVAC, flooring, shelving, windows) and assessed their condition against industry standards. The assessment identified elements that needed repair and/or replacement (the SOGR backlog) and projected future repair and/or replacement based on industry standard replacement cycles. The assessment revealed a $50 million building SOGR backlog of repairs to building elements. The building condition assessment report did not address future Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements, nor did it address the inadequacy of the current infrastructure for 21st century library service. During budget discussions, the Library Board asked staff to report on strategies to address the SOGR backlog.

COMMENTS

Planning framework: buildings, library service and state of good repair

The Library has a planning framework to guide the development of its capital program for Library branches. The planning framework has been reviewed and endorsed by the Board at several points since amalgamation.

In April 2005, the Board received the *Planning Framework for Toronto Public Library's Capital Program for Library Branches* and approved the process for assessing new proposals or changes to existing projects for the capital program. The report identified three key factors in setting capital project priorities:
- the need to maintain all Library branches in a state of good repair and to address urgently needed repairs, relocation out of leased facilities and opportunities for improved locations or joint facilities;
- service delivery issues such as the expansion of branches to meet the space requirements needed to provide a full range of services, the enhancement of district libraries, enhancing library service in high needs areas of the city and balancing local needs while providing equitable service to all parts of the city;
- budgeting issues such as prioritizing projects within an established funding envelope and synchronizing plans with the city or other agencies that can impact the progress of joint facilities.

The Planning Framework built on earlier reports to the Board, namely:
- the *Service Harmonization Update* (June 2004) in which the Board endorsed the branch development strategy of maintaining existing branches by enhancing services and facilities and planning for additional branches at Scarborough City Centre and Waterfront areas only. The major renovation of existing branches, combined with expansion of existing facilities to meet service needs and population growth, is a branch containment strategy. With the exception of the two branches named above, this strategy has allowed the Library to manage growth and increased use without the significant operating impact of new branches;
- the *Toronto Public Library Branch Planning Study, Reinvesting in our Future* (September 1999), which was designed to assist the Library in achieving several objectives, including the identification of an appropriate branch physical infrastructure to support the effective delivery of library services in the future.

A Service Delivery Model was developed to provide a benchmark for evaluating, harmonizing and developing library services. The model was built on existing infrastructure and library planning principles widely accepted in public libraries and in use to varying degrees in all of the predecessor boards. The model includes four tiers of service: neighbourhood, district, research and reference branches and services that are not site or location specific, including the virtual branch and home library and literacy services. These tiers form a dynamic continuum of service delivery and provide multiple points of entry. The model ensures that services are coordinated and provide a rational

approach to resource allocation in which the needs of individuals and local communities are balanced with those of the city as a whole.

- The first tier consists of 79 neighbourhood branch libraries which provide informational and recreational collections and services in local neighbourhoods. The standard for a neighbourhood branch library for a new or renovated facility is 10,000 to 15,000 square feet.
- The second tier consists of 17 district branch libraries which provide extensive recreational and informational collections, reference and a broad range of services and more in-depth resources than neighbourhood libraries. The standard for a district branch library for a new or renovated facility is a minimum of 25,000 square feet.
- The third tier consists of three research and reference libraries which provide the most extensive range and depth of services and collections to all people living in the city of Toronto. It offers collections that meet the research, informational and recreational needs of all types of users throughout the city and in the immediate community. The standard for this tier is a minimum of 150,000 square feet.
- The fourth tier encompasses the non-branch services such as bookmobile, home library service, literacy and virtual branch services.

The current Service Delivery Model is appended as Attachment 1.

Building Condition Assessment: the state of the Library's building infrastructure

An external consulting firm, S2S Environmental, was hired to provide an assessment of the present physical condition of the Library facilities with respect to architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, vertical transportation, interior finishes, millwork, library shelving, library furnishings and exterior building perimeter hard surfaces. The specific initiatives of the building condition assessment were:
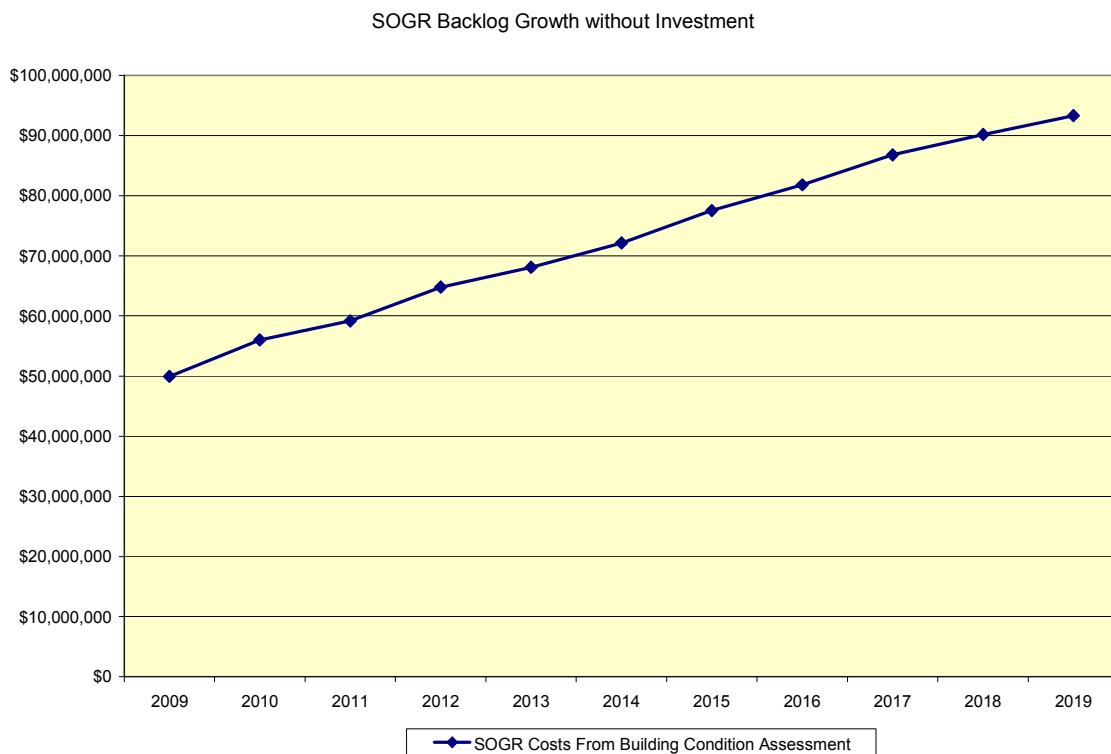- to inspect and report on all library facilities to establish existing physical conditions;
- to establish the life-cycle expectancy of building components in each facility;
- to determine the costs for capital repair/replacement of these components for budgetary purposes;
- to provide a means by which the Library can anticipate and forecast expenditures required for these components, rather than responding to emergency repairs/equipment failures.

The building condition assessment was delivered in database form, which will allow the Library to continually update the information, based on changes in the building conditions, costs and/or regulatory requirements. The detailed assessments for each library location were reviewed by the facilities managers and the public service managers and changes made as necessary.

The SOGR backlog, as identified in the assessment, has been calculated at $50 million. This cost does not include the SOGR backlog for branches that were closed for renovation at the time of the assessment (Bloor/Gladstone, Thorncliffe, Cedarbrae). Any cost projections of SOGR needs in the future, would need to be adjusted to include these three branches.

The building condition assessment does not include an assessment of the accessibility requirements that are proposed for the Built Environment under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The standards for the AODA Built Environment are still under review. Once the standards have been set, the Library will conduct a gap assessment and incorporate the findings and estimated costs into the building condition assessment database.

The building condition assessment forecasts required SOGR expenditures. The chart below shows the growth of the SOGR backlog, if no repair work were to take place.

SOGR Backlog Growth without Investment

Defining Library infrastructure to deliver 21st century service

Toronto Public Library's mission is to provide public library service which meets the changing needs of the people of Toronto. Libraries are vital community hubs which respond to residents' needs, foster community connections and build community capacity.

To fulfill these roles, 21st century public libraries:
- reflect the unique characteristics of the community they serve;
- contribute to public space and to the fabric of the community and are an important civic presence;
- are architecturally interesting, well built, attractively designed and furnished public spaces which respect the heritage and individuality of the existing facility;
- extend the library space into the community through reading gardens or other creative uses of outdoor space;
- address emerging standards for accessibility, to meet the needs of library users;
- incorporate evolving standards for green design to support sustainability;
- offer flexible designs to address the changing services needs of children, youth, adults and seniors including reading lounges, individual and group study spaces;
- provide access to collections in print, audio visual and new and emerging formats with shelving that promotes display;
- provide access to the Internet, wireless, and technology enabled meeting room space and classrooms to support residents' engagement in the online world, in recognition that libraries play a strong role in addressing the digital divide;
- build community capacity through access to public meeting space, auditoriums and theatres to support community events, services delivered in partnership, and access to cultural activities;
- build neighbourhood pride through well maintained buildings and external landscaping.

Every time the Library re-opens a branch that has been renovated to bring an existing branch into the 21st century, the Library receives a clear message from its users. In all cases, use of renovated libraries increases dramatically and is sustained. The Library is a major contribution to the well-being of the community.

The story has been heard many times since amalgamation, with the renovation of 25 branches since 1999. Renovating these libraries involves much more than replacing or repairing building elements, it usually includes a complete reconfiguration to manage service efficiency and effectiveness, and it may involve partial or full demolition of the existing building. The major renovation of existing spaces, sometimes combined with expansion of existing facilities is a containment strategy. It allows the Library to manage growth and increased use without the addition of new facilities. These renovations support the Board's vision for library service for the 21st century, which is articulated in the Board's Planning Framework and brought to life through the Board's strategic plan.

Current status of the Library's SOGR funding

The Library's capital building program comprises two main components:

1. An on-going **multi-branch minor renovation** program, which has proven to be a cost effective way to keep branches maintained and operational until a major renovation can be executed. The multi-branch program addresses the repair and replacement of building components identified in the building condition assessment report. Whenever possible, such repairs are coordinated, to least disrupt branch operations and to have the most public service impact.

   In the 2010 budget submission, the multi-branch project amounts to a total of $20.5 million for 2010 – 2019, and this will allow the Library to address a combination of flooring, shelving, furniture, accessibility and health & safety issues. Given the long cycle for major renovations of branches, targeting branches for minor renovations extends the service life of the branches.
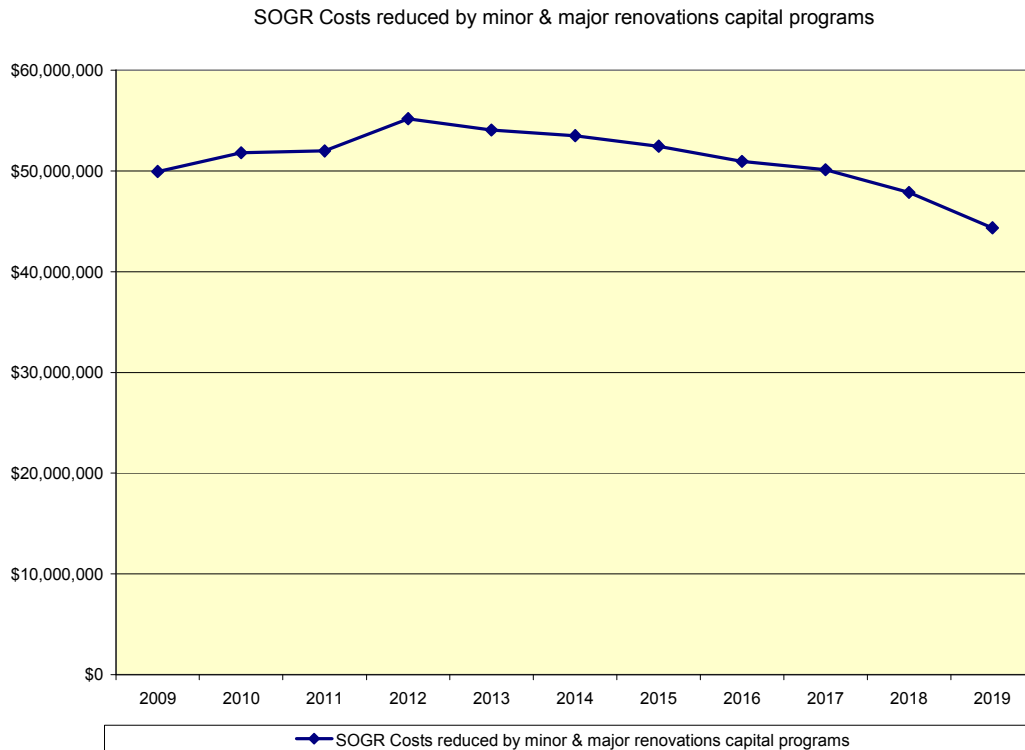
2. **A major renovation and construction** program, which significantly improves the functionality of a branch and updates and expands its services. Major renovation projects often include a significant re-configuration of space to reflect current service needs (e.g. more space for computers, teen areas, KidsStop, meeting rooms) and an expansion component, which reflects the growth in community since the original opening of the branch or to upgrade an undersized or inadequate branch. A number of the libraries are listed heritage buildings, which has an impact on the design and cost of renovations.

   In the 2010 budget submission, the SOGR budget for major renovation projects amount to a total of $89.3 million for 2010 - 2019. This doesn't include expansion components or the two new branch projects, West Waterfront and Scarborough Centre, which are budgeted at $17.4 million for 2010-2019.

The total capital budget dollars for the two programs allocated to SOGR in the capital budget submission for 2010-2019 is $109.8 million (gross).

The Library's 10-year capital budget submission projects expenditures for major renovation projects and the multi-branch renovation program. Based on the 10-year submission, the Library can project reductions in the SOGR backlog, as result of the multi-branch minor renovation program and the major branch renovation projects. As an example: the SOGR backlog for the existing Mount Dennis Branch, which is part of the $50 million backlog, will be eliminated with the completion of the renovation project for that branch in 2015.

The chart below shows the SOGR backlog, adjusted for planned capital expenditures, based on the current 2010-2019 capital budget.

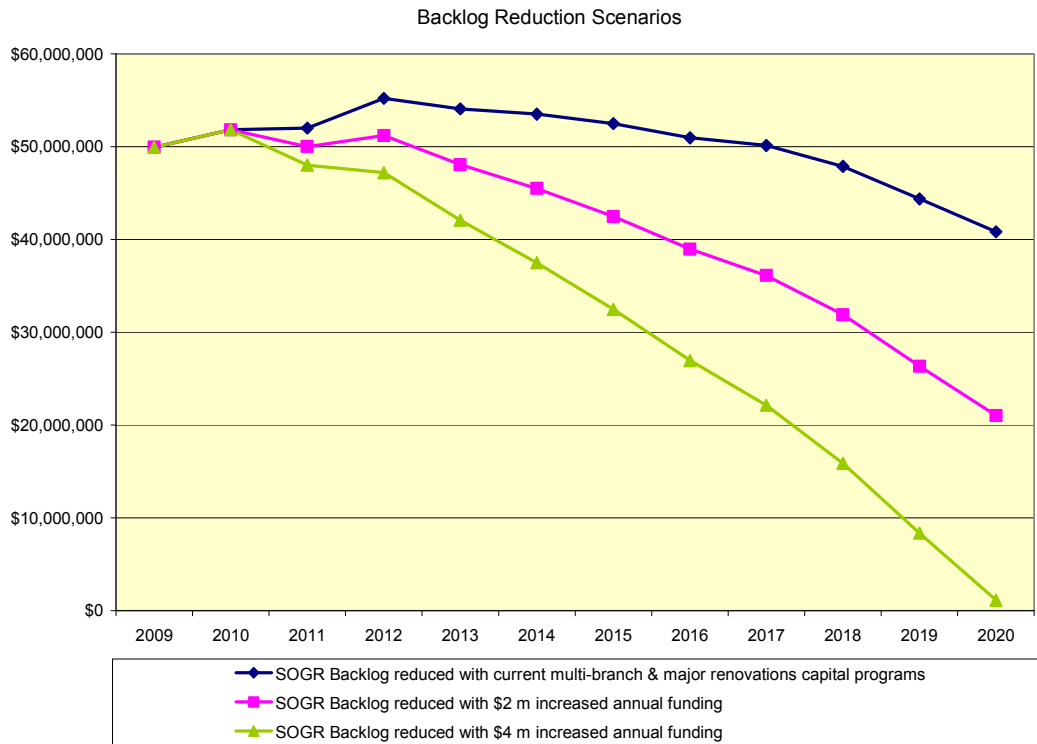SOGR Costs reduced by minor & major renovations capital programs

The current level of capital budget funding allows the Library to reduce the SOGR backlog by only 12% over 10 years. The funding is inadequate to eliminate the backlog and additional funding is required to achieve this. The reality is that legislated (e.g. AODA) or health & safety repairs take precedence over scheduled building condition repairs and therefore could extend the timeframe for backlog elimination.

Long term funding strategy for SOGR: Towards a sustainable infrastructure investment model

Since amalgamation, the Library has worked with the City to address the funding required to maintain a state of good repair of Library buildings. The annual debt funding has increased from $2.035 million in 1999 to $15.5 million in 2010. The funding levels fluctuate in the next five years, from a high of $15.5 million to a low of $10.968 million, due to one-time debt funding and adjustments for Infrastructure Stimulus Funding. While the increase in funding support from the City goes a long way to meeting the Library's current needs, the funding level has not kept pace with the full capital building program needs, which are based on a service model for libraries in the 21st century and building state of good repair.

The funding level for SOGR in the 2010 - 2019 budget will allow the Library to reduce its SOGR backlog. However, the balance at the end of 2019 will still be in excess of $40 million. The Library has examined several scenarios that would accelerate the backlog reduction within a 10 year timeframe.

The chart below shows the impact on backlog reduction of increased funding over the next ten-year capital budget cycle. The first scenario, based on an additional $2 million each year for ten years, would reduce the backlog to approximately $20 million. The second scenario, based on an additional $4 million each year for ten years, would eliminate the backlog in 10 years.

Backlog Reduction Scenarios

Legend:
- ◆ SOGR Backlog reduced with current multi-branch & major renovations capital programs
- ■ SOGR Backlog reduced with $2 m increased annual funding
- ▲ SOGR Backlog reduced with $4 m increased annual funding

Conclusion

During the next capital budget planning cycle, the Library will be submitting a plan to reduce the SOGR backlog and to maintain the current cycle of major renovations of branch libraries. The extent to which the backlog can be addressed will depend upon the City's funding capability.

The Library has demonstrated the capacity to manage a larger capital budget, achieving a very high spending rate for its capital budget, averaging over 80% in the past years. In 2008 and 2009 TPL spent over 85% of its capital budget and expects to spend over 90% in 2010. Any increase in funding for the capital budget can therefore be effectively managed.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1:   Service Delivery Model