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STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Parliament Street Branch Relocation

Date: January 27, 2025

To: Toronto Public Library Board

From: City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Toronto Public Library Board approval to relocate the Parliament Street branch to 325 Gerrard Street East (east of Parliament Street), which is a part of Phases Four and Five of the Regent Park Revitalization Plan, subject to negotiating a satisfactory shared use cost sharing agreement with Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) and receiving all appropriate approvals.

Toronto Public Library (TPL) has been in discussion with the local councillors, TCHC and the City of Toronto for a number of years regarding relocating the Parliament Street branch. The branch is currently located at 269 Gerrard Street East and is approximately 14,634 square feet. The relocation to the Regent Park site as part of TCHC's revitalization plan would deliver a new and much needed larger branch of approximately 23,000 square feet and provide opportunities to be co-located with other City partners. As part of the relocation process, the

Library Board will need to declare the current branch site as surplus to TPL's needs and transfer it to the City for their use or disposition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. approves 325 Gerrard Street East, part of the Regent Park Revitalization plan, as the new site of the Parliament Street branch subject to negotiating a satisfactory shared use cost sharing agreement with Toronto Community Housing Corporation and receiving all appropriate approvals; and
2. authorizes the City Librarian to take such actions as are necessary to implement the Board's decision, including negotiating a satisfactory shared use cost sharing agreement and any other necessary agreements.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The 2025 10-year capital plan includes a Parliament Street Relocation and Expansion project for \$27.2 million. This budget will cover the architectural fees and the cost of building the 23,000 square foot shell for the library and the subsequent fit-out including fixtures, furniture, equipment and shelving. The cash flows start in 2025 and span several years.

Once open, the larger space and additional services will result in additional staff, approximately 3.0 full time equivalents at a cost of approximately \$275,000.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

The relocation and significant expansion of the Parliament Street branch helps to achieve various strategic plan priorities and goals including:

- Increasing access to in-branch services and spaces through responsive service hours and new options to expand public and community space;
- Addressing State of Good Repair projects to provide welcoming, well-maintained, multi-functional and efficient public space;
- Creating in-branch environments that connect neighbourhoods and communities, offering opportunities for partnerships, civic engagement and resident participation; and
- Building capacity to deliver eLearning, and interactive distance learning services.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The relocation and expansion of the Parliament Street branch will improve the ability of the Library to provide existing and new services to equity-deserving groups within the catchment of this branch.

DECISION HISTORY

On July 22-24, 2003, City Council considered [Regent Park Revitalization - City Actions \(Ward 28 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale\)](#) and directed that the interdepartmental review of the redevelopment proposal be undertaken as a priority.

On March 20, 2014, City Council considered [325 Gerrard Street East – Official Plan Amendment & Zoning Amendment, Residential Demolition Control Applications \(Phases 3-5\) – Final Report](#) and approved amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law for Phases Three to Five. It also approved development of the remaining lands of the Regent Park Revitalization Plan, known as Phases Four and Five. Under an existing Section 37 agreement, the developer is required to construct 3,714 square meters for community space, of which 24,500 square feet is a new Toronto Public Library branch representing the relocated Parliament Street branch. It also directed TPL, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, and CreateTO to explore partnership

opportunities for additional community space within a shared building, in consultation with the Ward Councillor.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

TPL currently operates the Parliament Street branch located at 269 Gerrard Street East and the property is legally owned by TPL. The branch is 14,634 square feet, on 3 levels including a basement and a tenant space. The current branch is both undersized for the needs of the local community and has substantial state of good repair issues due to the age of the facility and because major renovations were being deferred pending ongoing discussions around the potential relocation of the branch to the Regent Park development.

The building is listed on Toronto Historical Board's *Inventory of Heritage Properties*, and so any major renovation work would need to respect the heritage component.

The Parliament Street branch falls within the TO Core study area which predicts a significant increase in population growth by 2040. The Regent Park Revitalization has already resulted in higher density. The relocation of Parliament Street branch to Regent Park has been ongoing with the local councillors and the City since the start of the redevelopment and the final phases of the redevelopment now includes a proposed new library.

COMMENTS

As noted in the July 2023 report to Council, [325 Gerrard Street East Gerrard Street East \(Regent Park Phases 4 and 5\) – Zoning By-law Amendment and Rental Housing Demolition Applications – Decision Report – Approval](#), the development will include a larger and relocated Parliament Street branch:

A new Toronto Public Library branch is proposed in Phases 4 and 5, which would replace the Parliament Street branch currently located at 269 Gerrard Street East once completed. The library is expected to include a minimum of 23,000 square feet over two floors in a new building fronting onto Gerrard Street East. The rear of the building would face onto the central plaza and provide opportunities to animate the surrounding open space. The library is expected to include collections for children, teens and adults; lounge spaces and reading areas; small group and individual study spaces; and program rooms that may be booked for use by external groups. Funding for the library is included in the Toronto Public Library

2021-2032 Capital Budget and Plan. Toronto Public Library will be undertaking further community consultation related to the design and service offerings to be included in the new library, which may include specialized services such as a Digital Innovation Hub, business incubation spaces, a KidsStop Early Literacy Centre, or Youth Hub. The zoning by-law permits a height of 30 metres for the library building, to provide the opportunity for additional community services to be located in floors above the library, subject to future funding.

The proposed location for the new branch, which will be located approximately 200 meters away from the current location or a 3-minute walk, is shown on Attachment 1. A shared use cost sharing agreement will need to be negotiated with TCHC, the owner of the site, and TPL will need to obtain all appropriate approvals during the construction.

Once TPL's plans are solidified for vacating the current property at 259 Gerrard Street East, a report will be taken to the Library Board seeking approval to declare the property surplus to TPL's needs and it will be transferred to the City for their use or disposition.

CONCLUSION

The Regent Park Revitalization has been underway for approximately 20 years and is now in its final stages which includes plans for a relocated and larger Parliament Street branch. The new branch, which will be on City-owned land, will better meet the needs for a growing population with additional branch space as well as new and improved services.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Vickery Bowles
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 Toronto Public Library – Location Map - 325 Gerrard Street
East

Attachment 1

Toronto Public Library - Location Map - 325 Gerrard Street East

