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To: Toronto Public Library Board – May 12, 2003

From: City Librarian

Subject: **Joint Facilities and Joint-Use Facilities Policy**

Purpose:

To establish a policy on joint facilities and joint-use facilities for the Toronto Public Library.

Funding Implications and Impact Statement:

None.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board adopt the *Joint Facilities and Joint-Use Facilities* policy.

Background:

The Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan 2000-2003, *Creating the Future, Treasuring the Past*, contains the strategic direction; "To pursue opportunities for joint facilities". To support this strategic direction, a policy has been developed to guide staff in the planning and operation of joint facilities.

The planning of joint facilities demands that special attention, over and above that given to the planning of stand-alone facilities, be paid to the relationship between the partners recognizing the interests of all. The Toronto Public Library currently has to establish service agreements with some of its partners in existing joint facilities. A clear policy, together with guidelines for the planning of joint facilities will ensure that all aspects of the partnership are adequately addressed.

Staff involved with the planning and operation of libraries in joint facilities have been consulted for their input. A literature review was also undertaken to determine international best practice in this field.

Comments:

Joint facilities can provide an enhanced service to the public through the synergy that is created by partnering. There are distinct advantages that may include:

- convenience to the user and the related environmental benefits in minimizing travel to different locations;
- expansion of the user base through attracting clients of partnering facilities;
- promotion of greater community interaction;
- the opportunity for joint programming or complementary programs by participating institutions which fulfill unique community needs;
- a highly desirable location providing a community focal point that would be unavailable as a stand alone facility;
- the potential to reduce capital costs;
- the potential maintenance and operating cost savings if a formal maintenance agreement is in place; and
- opportunities for joint promotion and advertising.

In spite of the potential to provide a better public service, joint facilities are relatively complex to manage and operate. Both TPL staff and a review of the literature on the topic have revealed some of these disadvantages and complexities that include:

- libraries often become tenants in a joint facility arrangement and are subject to the landlord's maintenance standards;
- potential savings may be lost if the library is held liable for both capital and operating costs for parts of the facility not directly related to library service provision;
- difficulty in expanding the library in later years and coming to agreement on how it is to be done and who is to pay for what;
- should one of the partners experience labour unrest, it could mean the closure of the entire facility even though library workers are not on strike;
- conflicting demands on the space for deliveries between partners; and
- in a joint-use library, strict access control at schools acts as a barrier to the public utilizing the library.

Research and experience have shown that there are critical factors for a joint-use facility or joint-use library to be successful. These factors, if addressed in a formal agreement between partners, can offset many of the disadvantages identified above.

The attached policy outlines the conditions under which TPL will enter into a joint facility or joint-use library. Guidelines which detail the criteria and conditions that contribute to the initial and ongoing success of the facility have been developed. Together these documents provide a context and framework to evaluate opportunities for new facilities initiated from other authorities, or initiated by TPL and to enhance existing facilities partnerships.

Conclusion:

Adopting the policy for libraries in joint facilities and joint-use facilities will allow the Library to evaluate these opportunities objectively and establish Library branches that meet the needs of local communities and operate effectively and efficiently.

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City Librarian

List of Attachments:

Attachment 1: Joint Facilities and Joint-use Facilities Policy

Attachment 2: Libraries in Joint Facilities and Joint-Use Facilities in the City of Toronto