



**STAFF REPORT  
ACTION REQUIRED  
Confidential Attachment**

**27.**

## **Kennedy / Eglinton Branch Library – Potential New Capital Project**

<b>Date:</b>	June 11, 2007
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Public Library Board
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian
<b>Reason for Confidential Information:</b>	This report involves the security of the property of the Board – <i>Public Libraries Act</i> , R.S.O. 1990, Chapter P. 44, 16.1 (4) (a).

### **SUMMARY**

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The purpose of this report is to update the Board on a potential opportunity for capital improvements and expansion at the Kennedy / Eglinton Branch resulting from the Eglinton East Kennedy Park Neighbourhood Action Team proposal to use Capital Investment Funds (Mayor's Platform #5) towards a project at the library branch location.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:**

1. adopts the confidential instructions in Attachment 1;
2. authorizes the release of the financial information if the project is approved, upon completion of negotiations with the landlord.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The financial impact is described on the confidential Attachment 1.

The Director, Finance and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

The Library is currently investigating an opportunity to use city funding resulting from the Eglinton East Kennedy Park Neighbourhood Action Team proposal to use Capital Investment Funds (Mayor's Platform #5) towards a project to expand the library into adjacent vacant restaurant space which would provide an additional 2,628 sq. ft. at street level for a total of 6,482 sq. ft. Although the investigation is still in a preliminary stage, it was felt prudent to advise the Board of this potential opportunity. If this proposal goes ahead, Board approval would be required to submit a capital budget request to Council for approval, and it is likely that there will be no Board meeting in July or August.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The Kennedy / Eglinton Branch is a storefront library in a strip mall fronting on Eglinton Avenue, located in one of the City's designated Priority Neighbourhoods. The branch has been in this location since 1988. The branch is listed in the branch profiles as having 7,650 sq. ft., but much of this space is in a basement and is not included as paid space in our lease. The basement currently houses a small staff work area and a staff kitchen and lounge. The rest of the lower level is used for storage. The lower level is considered unusable for other purposes because of poor ventilation and because existing stairways are not suitable for public access.

The effective branch, without taking the basement into consideration, is approximately 3,854 sq. ft., well below the minimum level of 7,000 sq. ft. identified in the Service Delivery Model. The branch is in a good state of repair, having received new carpet and paint in 2003.

The current lease expires on August 31, 2007, and staff has negotiated terms for a new lease, covered under a separate Board report, including a clause that would allow negotiations to be re-opened in the event that this expansion occurs.

City of Toronto Real Estate staff reviewed the catchment area with Library staff to determine if there was any city-owned property available or city projects in the planning stage. They were not able to identify any suitable property, owned by the City or privately, which could serve as an acceptable alternate library site.

## **COMMENTS**

Kennedy / Eglinton branch serves a population of 25,000, predominantly young families with school-aged children. Children up to age 14 account for 20%, and youth 15-24 a further 12%; seniors make up 13%. Fifty percent of households have an income of less than \$40,000 per year. Homeowners represent 50% of households, and the majority of the rest live in high-rise rental accommodations. Ethnically the community is very mixed, with Chinese, Tamil, Italian, Tagalog and Greek topping the list of languages spoken at home.

Kennedy / Eglinton Branch is well used. The Branch has an active outreach function, working with Second Base Youth Shelter and other community agencies. They have also sponsored a series of programs in Family Math and Family Literacy this past year with the Ontario Early Years Centre. However, the small space limits the Library's ability to provide the depth and breadth of programs needed in the local community, particularly for youth.

The adjacent bar/restaurant became vacant in 2006 following a shooting, and as a result of a series of incidents of public drunkenness and disorderly behaviour by its patrons. The landlord and the local Councillor were instrumental in having the liquor license revoked in April 2006. The landlord offered the Library first right of refusal for taking over the restaurant space, but due to funding considerations at the time, the Library did not pursue this at that time.

### **Neighbourhood Action Team Proposal**

The Eglinton East Kennedy Park Neighbourhood Action Team (NAT) has identified an opportunity to create new community space on this site. They are interested in expanding the existing library on the street level, with expanded meeting room space and access particularly for a variety of youth programs. The community as a whole has very little space available for conducting programming for youth at present.

The vacant space would provide an additional 2,628 sq. ft. at street level for a total of 6,482 sq. ft., which brings the Library very close to the TPL minimum standard size for neighbourhood branches. It would allow the Library to expand the number of computers, develop attractive gathering spaces for teens and for children, and provide more study space and improved programming space. The enhanced facility would improve the Library's ability to engage in partnership opportunities with other neighbourhood agencies, opportunities which are currently being turned away due to lack of proper program space.

Some examples of programming needs identified by the NAT are multi-media programming/music recording space, increased access to computers, space for services such as homework assistance, and employment resources.

The proposal meets the City's criteria for this investment initiative in that it has long-term sustainability, is a legacy investment, involves partnerships, has visible impact, is supported by the community and contributes to the social infrastructure.

Potential community partners include Second Base Youth Shelter, YMCA, Remix (a youth driven music production company), Operation Springboard, Job Connect, Service Canada, Microsoft and Tropicana.

Support for the project is further provided by residents, community-based agencies, and other city divisions, agencies, boards and commissions. This potential project has also been reviewed with the local Councillor.

## **CONTACT**

Anne Bailey; Director, Branch Libraries; Tel: 416-397-5944; Fax: 416-393-7083;  
E-mail: [abailey@torontopubliclibrary.ca](mailto:abailey@torontopubliclibrary.ca)

Larry Hughsam; Director, Finance & Treasurer; Tel: 416-397-5946; Fax: 416-393-7115;  
E-mail: [lhughsam@torontopubliclibrary.ca](mailto:lhughsam@torontopubliclibrary.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

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Josephine Bryant  
City Librarian

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Confidential Information