

Richmond Library Board Delegation to General Purposes Committee on September 2, 2008 – Briefing Paper Staff Response

Issue: Key Issues and Opportunities for Richmond Library Board Discussion with Council

Background:

For many years, Richmond Library Board has presented its Annual Report to Council, by delegating at a Council meeting. At the same time as presenting its Annual Report, other issues and opportunities that the Library Board wish to discuss with Council are also often brought up. In discussions between the Mayor and the Chair of the Library Board, it was agreed that a different approach could be taken, whereby issues and opportunities for discussion could be brought forward to a General Purposes Committee (September 2, 2008), while the Annual Report alone is presented at a Council meeting (September 8, 2008).

Staff from the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department met with the Chair, Richmond Library Board and the Chief Librarian to establish the issues and opportunities to be brought forward at GP Committee on September 2, 2008. This Briefing Paper provides a summary of these, along with staff commentary.

Issues and Opportunities:

1. Planning for the Future. In October 2007, the Library Board developed a Strategic Plan 2008- 2010 and a Library Facilities Plan (together comprising a document entitled “Building on Success”), which guide the Library Board’s priorities and operations. At the October 9, 2007 meeting, Council gave a referral to staff to incorporate seven of the eight priorities¹ in the Library Facilities Plan into the Corporate Facilities Implementation Plan. While the Board recognises that there will be many more stages before specific library facilities can be identified for construction, the Board requests that the Library continue to be involved in the development of the Corporate Facilities Implementation Plan.

Staff comment: The Corporate Facilities Implementation Plan is currently being developed by Facilities Management, who confirm that this plan will take into consideration the strategic facility plans of all departments, including the Library Facilities Plan.

2. Library Services in Hamilton. The Library Board began a limited library service in Hamilton in June 2007, being a one-day (Saturday) service in the Community Centre rotunda. There is also a library information computer kiosk available for the public when the community centre is open. The Library Board advise that further growth of this service is dependent upon a permanent facility, and request that they be made aware of the results of the current feasibility study for additional community space in Hamilton.

¹ The eighth priority related to a Richmond Oval Resource Centre, which Council referred to the Richmond Olympic Business Office and Major Projects Office, for consideration as a tenant in the Oval.

Staff comment: A Hamilton Community Space Feasibility Study is currently being conducted by PRCS (with consultants contracted in July 2008). The purpose of the study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the needs for community space in Hamilton and to provide clear recommendations on how Hamilton's current and future needs for community space can be addressed. The results of the feasibility study will be reported to Council in February 2009. The need for library space in Hamilton is well recognised. The Senior Librarian, Special Projects, has been made a member of the staff Advisory Committee that has been set up for the Feasibility Study, and the Library Board is also identified as a Primary Stakeholder for consultation.

3. Managing High Circulation. Richmond Library has the highest per capita circulation of any library in Canada. The Library Board reports that such high circulation means that materials get worn out more quickly and must be replaced more frequently than in other libraries, and that more copies of high demand items need to be purchased. In addition, a great deal of staff resources are required to check in, sort and re-shelve material quickly, so it can become available for the next customer, and that staffing increases have not kept up with the increase in circulation. The Library Board would like to develop a two-prong strategy to address these challenges: a Community Fund Raising Initiative and the installation of Automated Self-Sorting Technology. In the budget process for 2009, the Library Board is submitting an additional level request for increased collection funding, and a capital request for the automated sorting system.

Staff comment: Staff have advised the Library Board that Additional Level Requests for the Operating Budget must be received by September 5, 2008. A Capital Submission for the Automated Sorting Equipment (a one-time cost of \$250,000, with a \$25,000 annual cost for maintenance) has already been submitted, and is currently being reviewed by the Land & Capital Team for the 2009 Capital Budget. The process for evaluating Capital Submissions by the Land & Capital Team takes into account factors such as: need and demand for the project, consideration of competing interests, any prior endorsement or approval by Council, a sustainability analysis including Triple Bottom Line considerations, and, finally, availability of appropriate funding sources.

Actions resulting from discussion:

Notes and questions:

Respectfully submitted by
 Lucy Tompkins
 Acting Manager, PRCS Projects and Programs