

ACTION

Subject: Main Library Building Condition Assessment

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Prepared for: Ottawa Public Library Board

Meeting of: September 12, 2011

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RECOMMENDATION:

WHEREAS the Main Library has not undergone a comprehensive renovation since the facility opened in 1974; and

WHEREAS the last building condition assessment was undertaken in 2004; and

WHEREAS in 2007, there was an emergency structural issue identified on the 3rd floor of the Main Library with one of the exterior concrete slabs, resulting in completion of an engineering assessment and required repairs; and continued precautionary reduced load requirements in identified edge bay areas;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, working with the City of Ottawa Infrastructure Services and other departments, the Ottawa Public Library undertake an external building condition assessment of the Main Library building that will examine expansion potential, building flexibility, end of life, and structural soundness; and, that will identify proposed remedies and recommendations including estimated costs.

References

- Ottawa Public Library Board, *Strategic Directions and Priorities 2008-2011*
- Doc 3, *City Librarian's Report*, December 17, 2007.
- Doc 11A, *Monthly Report*, September 8, 2008.

Background

1. One of the Library Board's five strategic directions focuses on developing library "Places and Spaces". This strategic direction includes a key priority to "Care for what we have."
2. The Main Library opened in January 1974. At 88,000 square feet, it is the both the largest and busiest branch in the OPL system. Key 2010 usage statistics include:

Area	2010 Total	As % of total OPL
Visits	810,850	16.2
Circulation	953,331	9
Public PC sessions	253,267	27
Collection size	413,154	18.5
Information questions	114,550	18.0

3. The Main Library facility has not undergone a comprehensive renovation since it opened in 1974, and the last building condition assessment was undertaken in 2004 by the City of Ottawa Public Works department.

In 2004, a significant renovation of the ground floor was completed which resulted in a new barrier-free entrance door to the Main Library, creation of a new Borrower Services counter and implementation of self-checkout units.

In 2007, there was an emergency structural issue identified on the 3rd floor of the Main Library with one of the exterior concrete slabs, resulting in completion of an engineering assessment and required repairs; and ongoing precautionary reduced load requirements, where possible, in identified edge bay areas. City Public Works was the lead in commissioning the required studies and repairs. This has resulted in the Library's inability to have heavy loads, e.g. books, in a number of perimeter areas on the west wall on the Ground Floor, on the west and northwest walls on the Second Floor, and the west and north (partial) walls of the Third Floor. Any changes in load deflections in these identified areas, e.g. book shelving, are now assessed by a structural engineer before the Library can proceed.

The Main Library is the most heavily used building in the OPL fleet of facilities. With the building coming up to its 40 year anniversary in 2014, it is both timely and prudent to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the facility at this time.

Analysis

1. In order to develop a short- to mid-term plan for the Main Library branch, it is being recommended that a comprehensive building condition assessment be undertaken by the Ottawa Public Library working with the City of Ottawa Infrastructure Services and key departments, e.g. Building Permit Services. The assessment will look at end of life for the building, expansion potential,

and building flexibility as well as structural soundness. The study will identify proposed remedies and recommendations including estimated costs.

The scope of work for the assessment review will include the following:

- Structural soundness: Is the building structurally sound? Investigation and comprehensive analysis and building assessment to include interior and exterior conditions, building systems and components, structural and foundation condition survey of the exposed elements, roof, exterior walls & windows, underground parking, and building systems (plumbing, electrical, security, fire alarm, mechanical). Seismic requirements will also be considered. Investigative processes may include an intrusive designated substance review (DSR).
 - End of life: Determination of estimated End of Life for the building.
 - Expansion potential: Investigation of feasibility for possible expansion of the building vertically and/or horizontally. Investigation to include physical and legal encumbrances.
 - Building flexibility: Investigation and analysis of the extent of structural modification the building would require to accommodate renovations required for the implementation of RFID technology, increased use of technology (more plugs, outlets, repeaters), etc., and flexibility for future overall renovations.
 - Remedies: Identification of suggested remedies of physical deficiencies, including options for improving safety and security, accessibility, shipping and receiving, user flow around the building, natural lighting and atmosphere.
 - Recommendations: Recommendations are to include the cost estimates, potential timing/duration and sequencing/occupancy impact.
2. The building condition assessment study will be a tool for the Library Board in determining how best to proceed with respect to the Main Library.

Next Steps

Pending Board approval, a Statement of Work for the structural review will be developed working with City Infrastructure Services and other key departments.