

MEMORANDUM

To: Newmarket Public Library Board

From: Todd Kyle

Date: September 16, 2015

Re: **Facility and Service Delivery Options**

Background:

The 2015 Business Plan set as a goal for the library to “explore future service delivery and facilities options”. This report sets out to start that process by outlining a course to study these options.

The current library facility is recognized to be undersized for a community of 85,000+ people. Public library standards in Canada suggest that communities provide a minimum of 0.6 square feet of total library space per capita. The current facility is roughly 35,000 square feet, which translates to .41 square feet per capita. Projections of Newmarket’s population in the near future range from 100,000 to 110,000, meaning ultimately we will be even farther below the standard. Moreover, for a standalone facility, which provides all services and houses administrative and technical functions, Southern Ontario Library Service standards suggest 1 to 1.25 square feet per capita. Finally, the average of library service points per 10,000 population served, for Ontario libraries serving 50-100,000 population, is 0.61, with Newmarket at 0.12, the lowest in the range.

A lack of library space impacts our ability to reach out to and inspire the community, and to provide dedicated collaboration, learning, and creative space. Although space for physical collections may ultimately be less needed, in the short term libraries are transitioning to lower-height shelving for greater accessibility and visibility. In addition, office, storage, and computer server space is highly constrained, and parking for users is limited and/or inconvenient.

A previous study (2006) identified that the preferred solution was to replace the current facility with a larger one in a central location. Although this project remains in the long-term capital plan and the Development Charges study, no funding has been approved by Council, and identified funding is insufficient.

Comments:

Town of Newmarket Council has identified community and recreation facilities as a strategic priority and may be open to discussing the future of library facilities within that context. As a result, Town staff will embark on an Accommodations Study to look at future community facilities needs and options to meet those needs, including potential locations and possible

partnerships. They have indicated a willingness to study library facility options as part of this process and have indicated that, while capital funds have already been set aside for the study, additional funds from the Library may be needed in order to expand its scope.

Accordingly I am recommending to the Board to authorize spending of up to \$50,000 from the Library's "alternative service delivery" capital reserve for this purpose. This capital account was set up in 2009 to fund projects related to exploring and implementing additional ways for the Library to bring its service to the community. The balance of this fund is approximately \$190,000. In the original details, approximately \$100,000 of this was for a remote library kiosk (such as a book-lending machine), \$50,000 was for a parking study, and the remainder was to fund a joint Wi-Fi project for Town facilities. As the latter two projects have become largely irrelevant in the meantime, it is suggested that some of this fund be dedicated to a library portion of a joint accommodations study.

At the same time, I would suggest that the Board authorize the CEO to enter into discussions with Town staff on commissioning the study, as well as give some direction as to the suggested scope of the options to explore for the Library portion. The options that might be considered include replacing the current library facility with a larger one in a central location; building an additional library branch; and installing one or more remote library service kiosks or "satellite" locations. In all cases, given the current partnership opportunity with the Town, exploring options that involve co-location with other Town community facilities would be encouraged.

Finally, it is unknown at this time whether the Library-Town Joint Task Force will be reconstituted by Council. If it is, it would be prudent to refer this matter to the JTF at that time.

The following motions are recommended:

THAT the Library Board receive the report on Facility and Service Delivery Options;

AND THAT the Library Board authorize the C.E.O. to enter into discussions with Town of Newmarket staff with the goal of commissioning a joint facility needs or "accommodations" study;

AND THAT the Library Board apportion up to \$50,000 of the Alternative Service Delivery capital project to such a study;

AND THAT the Library Board direct the C.E.O. to report back to the Board on the progress of the study;

AND THAT, should the Library-Town Joint Task Force be reconstituted by Town of Newmarket Council, this matter be referred to that body for coordination.