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Library Board Report

To: Newmarket Public Library Board

From: Tracy Munusami, CEO

Date: March 19, 2025

RE: Building Revitalization Projects for 2025

Key Issue

The Newmarket Public Library aims to continue its revitalization efforts by implementing updates and enhancements. These improvements will build upon the work initiated in 2022, ensuring a modern, welcoming, and functional space for the community.

Recommendation

That the Library Board receive the report for information;
And That the Board directs staff to enhance the Library space to better serve the community;
And That the Board approve the allocation of funds from the Strategic Implementation Fund to support updates to the Library building.

Strategic Implications

This initiative aligns with the Library's strategic plan under the *Ensuring Welcoming and Accessible Places and Spaces* action area. The goal is to create an environment that is inviting, inclusive, and accessible to all. Through these updates, the Library is evolving as a true *third space*—a place beyond home and work where the community can connect, learn, and feel a sense of belonging.

Background

Since updating the Strategic Plan in 2022, Library staff have been dedicated to revitalizing the building to ensure its longevity and enhance its appeal to the community. These improvements not only support the Library as a vital public space but also create a more welcoming and functional environment for visitors.

The first major project focused on upgrading the lighting system. This change significantly reduced electricity costs while brightening the space, creating a more inviting atmosphere.

Community feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many patrons noticing and appreciating the improvement.

In 2023, the Library undertook critical infrastructure projects, including updating the accessibility ramp and exterior stairs to improve safety and ease of access. Additionally, with support from federal funding, essential work was completed on the HVAC system. Basement renovations were also carried out to prevent future leaks, ensuring the building's long-term integrity.

Building on these efforts, 2024 saw further remedial and safety enhancements. Projects included asbestos removal, storm drainage replacement, and key safety upgrades such as new roof railings, fire panel improvements, and security cameras. To enhance the customer experience, the Library also introduced several cosmetic and functional improvements, including a refreshed service desk, accessible study pod, a renovated boardroom, and a fresh coat of paint on the main floor.

The response from the community has been enthusiastic. Visitors have praised the brighter, more open atmosphere and the modernized service desk. Students, in particular, have expressed appreciation for the new study pod, which provides a quiet, focused space to work and manage stress effectively.

Looking ahead, Library staff have identified additional improvements for 2025 to continue enhancing this essential community space. These ongoing efforts reflect the Library's commitment to providing a safe, accessible, and welcoming environment for all.

Discussion

In collaboration with Library staff, the Manager of Library Operations compiled a list of proposed projects for 2025 to enhance the Library's spaces.

Enhancing the Library's Front Entrance: Creating a Welcoming First Impression

- The vestibule and entrance area serve as the Library's first impression, setting the tone for each visitor's experience. By updating this space, we can create a more inviting entryway that reflects the warmth and inclusivity of the Library. Enhancements such as refreshed finishes and updated design elements will contribute to a welcoming atmosphere, ensuring that all community members feel comfortable and engaged from the moment they step inside. Investing in this high-traffic area aligns with our commitment to making the Library a vibrant and inviting space for all.

Modernizing Service Desks for a More Accessible and Welcoming Library

- Replacing the existing service desks will enhance accessibility and create a more modern, inclusive space for our community. The current desks present physical and visual barriers, limiting interaction between staff and patrons. By updating these workspaces, we can improve customer service, foster more engagement, and ensure that all patrons feel welcome and supported. The success of the newly installed main floor desk—well received by customers—demonstrates the positive impact of this change.

Replace Library Outdoor Book Unit

- Replacing the broken return unit with a new one will improve visual appeal and patron experience.
- Conducting necessary masonry repairs will help maintain the integrity and safety of the building.

Wall Division Between Public and Customer Space

- Construct a permanent wall between the Circulation area and public space to reduce visual distractions and enhance storage and space efficiency.

Second Level Painting

- Painting the second floor will enhance the space by creating a brighter, more welcoming environment for visitors. A fresh coat of paint will not only refresh the area but also contribute to a more inviting and comfortable atmosphere
- Work to be completed on a hybrid schedule (business hours & after hours).

Study Pods (Lower Level - 3 Units)

- Since installing the first study pod in December, we have seen a significant demand for these quiet, dedicated spaces. They have become a valuable resource for students and community members seeking a space to focus, study, and reduce stress. Given the growing need for spaces outside of home and work, installing three additional study pods will allow us to meet this demand better.

Financial Implications

- Estimated Project Cost: \$159,000 + HST.
- Contingency Fund: \$20,000.