



Corporate Report

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DATE: December 3, 2008

TO: Chair and Members of Budget Committee
Meeting Date: December 8, 2008

FROM: Paul A. Mitcham, P. Eng., MBA
Commissioner of Community Services

SUBJECT: **Update on Changes to Library Hours in 2009**

RECOMMENDATION: That the report dated December 3, 2008 from the Commissioner of Community Services on changes to library hours in 2009 be received for information.

REPORT SUMMARY: The Library was asked to review the proposed reduction in hours for Sundays and Friday evenings from October to May with the affected councillors and report back with a final plan to meet the budget reduction on \$174,000 in 2009.

BACKGROUND: Currently the Library has two groups of weekly hours apart from the Central Library – 9 large branches that are open 63 hours a week from Monday to Saturday, and 8 small branches that are open 49 hours a week from Tuesday to Saturday with Mondays closed. Both patterns are normal for branch libraries of their respective size and activity level. Currently, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Toronto and Ottawa do not offer any library service Friday evenings; only Edmonton does. As well, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto and Ottawa offer no Sunday library service from May to September.

The Library has reduced weekly hours over the past few years as a result of budget reductions. Some branches were closed on Friday

evenings and Sundays from May to October a few years ago. See Appendix 1.

Currently small branches are open about 2,300 hours a year and large branches are open about 3,300 hours a year. These hours ensure activity levels of about 100 loans per hour for the small branches and about 175 for the large branches. These levels compare favourably with similar sized branches in other public library systems.

The following service reductions on Sundays and Friday evenings were proposed to meet a budget reduction target of \$174,000 in 2009:

“Reduce the number of branches open Friday evenings from October to May from 8 to 4 and locate them strategically around the city (9 are currently closed.) Those to be closed Friday evenings year round would be Burnhamthorpe, Churchill Meadows, Meadowvale, and South Common. Those to remain open would be Courtneypark, Erin Meadows, Frank McKechnie, and Lorne Park.”

After review and consultation the Burnhamthorpe Branch will remain open Friday evenings from January until May 2009. This will allow the special needs of this community to be further studied as part of the Future Directions study and other options re hours of service to be better considered along with usage patterns. The small cost of this extension will be covered by other savings within the Library’s budget reduction plans.

“Reduce the number of branches open on Sundays from October to May from 8 to 4 and locate them strategically around the city (9 are currently closed.) Those to be closed Sundays would be Burnhamthorpe, Malton, Meadowvale, and South Common. Those to be open would be Courtneypark, Erin Meadows, Frank McKechnie, and Lorne Park.”

After review and consultation the Malton Branch will remain open on Sundays from October to May annually in recognition of the needs of this unique community. The costs will be covered by reductions in other areas of staffing changes planned for 2009 due to over estimates. As well, the Burnhamthorpe Branch will remain open Sundays from January to May 2009. This will allow the special needs of this

community to be further studied as part of the Future Directions study and other options for branch hours to be better considered along with usage patterns. The small cost of this extension will be covered by other savings within the Library's budget.

COMMENTS:

The reductions in Sunday and Friday evening hours will begin in January 2009. There will be a publicity campaign to alert the community to these changes and to inform them of where library service is provided on Sundays and Friday evenings from October to May.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The reduction in library hours on Sundays and Friday evenings as proposed in this report will meet the budget reduction target of \$174,000 for 2009.

CONCLUSION:

The reduction in service hours recommended by staff ensures that library service will continue to be available at the present level albeit in fewer locations on Friday evening and Sunday afternoon during the winter. It recognizes the needs of several special communities within the city as well. This solution to reduced library hours reflects common practices in many cities and is in fact better than some.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 1: Schedule of Library Hours

Paul A. Mitcham, P.Eng. MBA
Commissioner of Community Services

Prepared By: Don Mills, Director of Library Services