



PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

HALTON HILLS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Georgetown Branch Project Approved!

Last night, the Halton Hills Public Library Board received Council approval for the Georgetown Branch Renovation/Expansion Project. The Cultural Centre enhancements were also approved. The Georgetown Branch will be expanded to approximately 31,000 square feet, addressing the severe shortfall of space for the population currently served. The expansion will mean significantly more space for collections, children's programming, Internet stations, reading and quiet study areas.

The cost for the Georgetown Branch Project will be \$10.6M (with .6M already committed to architectural and other consultant fees). The only change in the budget as originally presented in September 2007 was an additional 5% to cover the escalation in construction costs due to the one year delay. Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2010, with the new branch opening in the fall of 2011.

The project will be financed through development charges (\$6.1M) and the Town's "Major Capital Project Reserve" (\$3.9M). The Library has \$1.9M in their current development charges account, with \$4.2M financed in the interim from the Special Infrastructure Levy established during the 2008 Operating Budget process. The Special Infrastructure Levy will be reimbursed through the collection of future development charges.

Council also approved increased annual operating costs for staffing, maintenance and utilities for the expanded Georgetown Branch. The operating costs translate into a .8% dedicated tax increase over the three years of 2009-2011, or \$200,000 per year for a total of \$600,000. The costs include \$325,000 for additional staffing (including staff for Monday openings) with the balance of \$275,000 for utility and maintenance costs.

The Library Board also received approval for three other project-related reports. First, after some considerable debate, Council approved the pursuit of LEED certification at the Silver level, which means that we will have a very 'green' building. Utility costs will be considerably reduced, and the building will be a healthier place to visit and work (less off-gassing from materials such as carpeting and paint). Costs for attaining a Silver level of certification are estimated to be \$423,200, including costs associated with the LEED accreditation process. The 'payback' period, or time frame by which this total investment will be paid off is estimated to be 21.2 years. The Library is looking forward to serving as a working demonstration model, providing opportunities for the public to learn about LEED, and the many sustainable and environmentally-friendly features incorporated into the design.

Based on some information recently received, Council also directed staff to do a further study of a geothermal system for the facility, providing details on the benefits, costs and possible funding sources.

Council approved a second report recommending a feasibility study for a capital campaign for the Library and Cultural Centre. The purpose of this study is to examine the community's capacity to give. The consultant's primary task will be to identify and meet with potential donors, and to determine their willingness to donate to the Library and Cultural Centre projects.

This information will help the consultant determine a realistic fundraising target, as well as an action plan and cost-recovery budget for the campaign. The one-time cost of this study is expected to be \$25,000.

Finally, Council approved the use of Holy Cross Church located at 224 Maple Ave. in Georgetown as a temporary site for the Georgetown Branch during the construction phase, which is estimated to be 15-18 months. Costs for a temporary site have been included in the overall project cost.

The next three years will be a very busy and exciting time for Halton Hills Public Library, as staff work on “growing a great library” for this community.

Copies of the above noted reports, and any previous reports can be found on the Library’s website at: www.library.hhpl.on.ca. Any comments, questions or concerns about this project can be forwarded to the Library Director at: diamantij@hhpl.on.ca.

For more information, contact:

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