

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

June 20, 2006

To: Economic Development and Parks Committee

From: Brenda Librecz, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Subject: Preliminary feasibility investigation of adding a second storey to the new branch library at 1900 Sheppard Avenue West for recreational programming space
Ward 9 - York Centre

Purpose:

To report on a preliminary investigation into the feasibility of constructing a second floor addition to the proposed new library at 1900 Sheppard Avenue West, and to explore alternatives to address the recreational programming needs of children and youth.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation be directed to prepare a detailed recreational needs assessment in the 13 priority neighbourhoods; and
- (2) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

At its meeting of December 8, 9 and 12, 2005, City Council amended Policy and Finance Report 12, Clause 3, with respect to the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Program Budget by adding the following:

“That the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation in consultation with the Chief Librarian, be requested to report to the Economic Development and Parks Committee in the

Spring of 2006, on the feasibility of adding a second storey to the 1900 Sheppard Avenue West Library facility for the purpose of providing children and youth recreation programming.”

This report reflects a preliminary review of the feasibility of providing a second storey addition to the library building at 1900 Sheppard, and also considers the existing provision of recreational facilities within the area.

Comments:

Firstly, there are a number of factors for consideration in determining whether additional recreational space is constructed, such as Council-approved recreational facility priorities, existing provision of recreation space, needs assessment, capital budget allocation, operating budget impact, site feasibility and community space provided within the new Toronto Community Housing Corporation development.

Factors Considered:

(a) Recreation Facility Priority Listing

This location at 1900 Sheppard is not on the Council-approved list for new community space. Another location two kilometres west of this site is on the list. The area surrounding 1900 Sheppard is not deficient of recreation space, relative to other parts of the City. The available recreation space in this area is well used, but there are other areas of the City without any community centres such as York, and these areas are higher on the priority list.

(b) Existing Provision of Recreational Programming

This area is well served with three community centres within one kilometre of the 1900 Sheppard site, as well as additional programming offered at Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board sites in the area. The three Community Centres are: Northwood Community Centre, Domenico DiLuca Community Centre, and Oakdale Community Centre. (See Attachment 1). These community centres are located in three different wards.

(c) Needs Assessment

Community Recreation is undertaking a complete review of key service areas citywide and will be developing a comprehensive assessment by program type by the spring of 2008. This work will also place a higher priority on the 13 priority neighbourhoods, one of which includes the area around and including the 1900 Sheppard site. The existing service levels and identified recreational needs, in these different neighbourhoods, will be reviewed and prioritized relative to each other.

(d) Capital Budget Allocation

There is no funding allocated in the five year capital plan, nor has there previously been a capital budget submission for this project. If the construction of this new community space not previously identified in the capital plan was to proceed as a capital project, reductions to the state-of-good repair program, and other city priorities would need to be assessed by City Council.

(e) Operating Budget Impact

When the need for new community space is identified, the operating impact to run the facility needs to be carefully considered, and ways to reduce long-term operating costs must be considered upfront during the planning stage. This includes costs for staffing, utilities/energy costs, and maintenance.

(f) Site Feasibility

Once a needs assessment and review of existing provisions has been addressed, possible project sites in the location(s) determined by the assessment can be tested for feasibility. A preliminary feasibility review addresses the physical fit for the addition, and related site requirements such as parking. A further detailed study looks into the specific site conditions/restraints, project approvals required, impact on existing building if it is an addition, and the related capital and operating costs. See comments below on the impacts of adding a second storey to the library.

(g) Community Space Provided within Proposed Housing Component

The housing component will be managed by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation and Humewood House for young mothers who have experienced homelessness. The building, as designed, has three stories of residential space plus community space on the lower level. A large meeting room of 1,300 square feet, which can hold up to 100 people, and including a community kitchen can be made available for community groups in the evening. The space will be used by building residents during the day. A smaller multi-purpose room of 890 square feet may also be available after hours. In addition to the new community space planned for 1900 Sheppard, Toronto Community Housing Corporation has been working with community groups to find additional space within its existing housing in the immediate vicinity.

Site Impacts at 1900 Sheppard Avenue West:

Expansion of the library at 1900 Sheppard to incorporate a second storey community space would have the following impact:

- (i) There is no space on site for additional parking required for the community centre. If the City Planning Division waived the parking requirement for the community centre, the second floor community space would only be accessible to the community by public transit

or as a walk-to facility only. If the parking was not waived, underground parking would be required, which would increase the project cost.

- (ii) The 7,534 square-foot library includes a 700 square-foot Program Room with kitchen and storage facilities. The proposed library will be approximately twice the size of the current library located in the Jane Sheppard Mall. A second-floor addition to the proposed library would effectively reduce the ground floor area by approximately 250-300 square foot to accommodate stairs, an elevator, and an elevator machine room. The useable recreational program space on the second floor would also have to accommodate stairs, and an elevator, in addition to support spaces such as washrooms, office, storage, and mechanical/electrical service spaces.
- (iii) The library building would need to be redesigned to accommodate the second storey including making provision stairs and elevator, and any other impacts identified (building code and zoning) due to the increased size of the building.
- (iv) The costs to build and operate a second-storey addition at the 1900 Sheppard location would be significantly higher than those for an addition of the same size at an existing community centre where there is sufficient space to accommodate both an addition and parking. There would be substantial operational savings in adding to an existing centre particularly for staffing costs, since the operation of the new space and the existing would be combined.

Future Recreation Opportunities:

A preliminary review of the three existing community centres within one kilometre of 1900 Sheppard suggests that the top two priorities for recreational needs at these centres are children and youth. Community Recreation staff at each of the three facilities have identified the following priorities for their respective centres, if future expansion was to be undertaken:

Northwood Community Centre:

Addition up to approximately 4,850 square feet, including 2 multi-purpose/meeting rooms, approximately 1,075 – 1,940 square feet, each plus storage.

Domenico DiLuca Community Centre:

Addition up to 4,850 square feet, including 1-2 multi-purpose/meeting rooms, approximately 1,075-1,940 square feet, each plus storage.

Oakdale Community Centre:

Addition up to 7,275 square feet including 2-3 multipurpose/meeting rooms, approximately 1,075-1,940 square feet each plus storage.

A preliminary review to add programming space at the above facilities was undertaken. The review, was limited to the spatial requirements only, and identifies potential locations for an

addition and parking at each site. It did not take into account, site plan agreements, zoning requirements and other approvals. Based on this limited review, both Northwood and Oakdale could accommodate an addition of equal size to the second floor of the library.

Conclusions:

A preliminary review has shown a second floor would reduce the size of the library, the building would have to be redesigned with related approvals, and parking for the community space would have to be waived by City Planning or constructed underground, which would be very expensive.

The feasibility of a particular site is only one consideration that needs to be addressed when determining whether recreational space is constructed, the others being Council-approved recreational facility priorities, existing provision of recreation space, needs assessment, capital budget allocation, and operating budget impact. A project to add a second-floor community space at 1900 Sheppard Avenue West is not currently a City Council-approved priority in the Capital Plan, nor has a detailed assessment to determine need, program, and project prioritization been completed.

The city-wide review of key service areas being implemented by Community Recreation will include a detailed assessment of existing recreational service levels and needs in the 13 priority neighbourhoods, including the area of 1900 Sheppard as part of the priority neighbourhood review. Those results will establish the specific recreational needs, prioritize projects in the capital budget, and determine the most appropriate sites for future projects in this area.

The Affordable Housing Office has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Contact:

Anne Marra
Director, Parks Development and
Infrastructure Management
Tel: 416-394-5723
Fax: 416-394-8935
Email: amarra@toronto.ca

Michael Schreiner
Acting Manager, Construction Management/Capital
Projects
Parks Development and Infrastructure Management
Tel: 416-392-8453
Fax: 416-392-3355
Email: mschrein@toronto.ca

Brenda Librecz
General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

List of Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Map of Community Centres within 1 kilometre of 1900 Sheppard Ave.W.