

# **BURLINGTON CENTRAL LIBRARY NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

To early August 2000, the Burlington Central Library Needs Assessment Study and the Central Park Master Plan have moved forward through the technical studies, the first round of public consultation and various review and strategy alternatives assessments. At this point, this document provides the results of the Burlington Central Library Needs Assessment Study related to defining eight strategic development alternatives, variable architectural programs and preliminary capital cost estimates.

This report has been prepared for the Library Board's review. Once completed, it will become the basis for a presentation to City Council in the fall of 2000. It will also form the basis for the resource materials that will support the second round of public consultation.

### **2.0 RESULTS**

The following are the highlights of all the assessments and investigations:

- Population growth of over 40,000 individuals is anticipated, along with an increasingly aging population profile that will be more multi-culturally diverse.
- Service segmentation will increase in terms of age specific services for teens, young adults and others, beyond the current children's, adults and seniors. Also, technologically-based segmentation will occur related to heavy, moderate and non-users.
- Using provincial guidelines, an additional 32,000 square feet of library space will likely be required over the next twenty years. How this space is allocated related to upgrading and existing smaller branches, servicing the high growth northeast area of the City and improving the Central Library facility represents a major strategy choice for the Board. Ensuring space for all three levels of service delivery is seen as the most flexible and preferred resource allocation strategy.

- Central Park was widely identified as the preferred site for the Central Library due to its connectivity with other users and uses, as well as the positive park setting.
- Demand for Central Library specialized services will increase up to 30% just related to population growth, but also could increase related to technology, information access, increased interest in genealogy and local history and other transitions that are occurring related to resident and user interests and needs.
- Increasing the amenities within the Central Library was identified as a primary change initiative related to public washroom accessibility and security, interior and external accessibility, a café, ergonomically-enhanced furniture, improved maintenance and book processing relationships, circulation desk improvement and other important public service and operational considerations.
- The Functional Audit identified, that in order to support the improvements needed, building expansion also must occur. Therefore, an integrated strategy is the preferred approach. The building deficiencies identified in the Functional Audit are totally consistent with those identified from the public consultation process.
- Key trends that will be impacting library services in the future involve:
  - o Access to expanding technology.
  - o Changes in the educational sector related to online services, curriculum supports and study space.
  - o Demographic changes within an aging population who will have needs related to large print books, along with specialized needs for a more culturally diverse population.
  - o Preferences for libraries to become more of a gathering place and community centre.
  - o Globalization which is changing the training and skill-set requirements of citizens, as well as giving users a more global vision and set of information and reading expectations.
- From the research material, technical assessments and public consultation, priorities for Central Park are evolving. They are increasing the Park's identity, improving its entrances, sustaining and enhancing the mature vegetation and natural features, as well as developing more supportive and less impacting traffic circulation and parking strategies.

### **3.0 DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES**

Of the eight development scenarios assessed, four scenarios have been given a more detailed review based on their strengths. Two strategies have evolved to a higher preference level at this time due to their ability to service population growth and increasing demand for library services, to sustain a coherent and integrated library operation across all its functional areas and other factors.

The costs associated with the preferred alternatives range from \$7 to \$11 million and would provide an additional 19,800 to 27,700 square feet of space over three floors involving expansions to the existing Central Library building.

Relocation of the Central Library, the utilization of leased space for non-public service functions and the development of a two-tiered Central Library strategy were investigated and were found to have considerable concerns ranging from high capital costs with limited tangible returns to significant impacts on operating costs, organizational culture and customer service.

Based on the assessments and the Committee's discussions to date, the major expansion and the medium expansion development alternatives are identified as best addressing a balance between capital cost considerations, population growth demands and operational impacts in terms of successfully servicing Burlington's growing population over the next twenty years.