



## CITY OF VANCOUVER

### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: April 25, 2005  
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TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: City Librarian, Vancouver Public Library  
SUBJECT: Additional Open Hours

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT Council approve an increase to the Library's operating budget, without offset, to allow the Library to open additional hours at the Renfrew, Kitsilano and Joe Fortes Branches as outlined in this report at an estimated 2005 cost of \$111,400 (\$336,800 annually). 2005 source of funds to be Contingency Reserve and subsequent years funding to be added to the Operating Budget without offset.
- B. THAT Council approve an increase to the Library's operating budget, without offset, to allow the Library to open additional hours at the Central Branch on Sunday as outlined in this report at an estimated 2005 cost of \$74,300 (\$241,700 annually). 2005 source of funds to be Contingency Reserve and subsequent years funding to be added to the Operating Budget without offset.

#### CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recognizes that additional Library hours of operation increases citizen access to an important civic service. However, Council should consider this enhanced service level in context of next year's budget as well as other service level priorities.

In the Interim Budget Report, the City Manager and Director of Finance cautioned Council that the City could be faced with a significant tax increase in 2006, in the 5% to 7% range, if all the initiatives identified in the report were to be approved by Council. More specifically, the proposed additional hours of library operation would result in approximately a 0.13% tax increase in 2006.

Therefore, the recommendations relating to Library hours should be considered in this context and supported only if these initiatives are a significant priority for Council. To minimize the impact on 2006, it may be prudent to request that the Library prioritize its requests.

### **CITY LIBRARIAN'S COMMENTS**

The recommendations in this report address the Library Board's 2005 strategic objectives to improve hours of service.

### **COUNCIL POLICY**

Increases to the Library's base operating budget for improvements in service levels require Council approval.

### **PURPOSE**

To obtain Council approval for funding to increase hours of service.

### **BACKGROUND**

Most VPL branches are closed two days a week. The heaviest used Area Branches (Oakridge and Renfrew) are closed only on Monday. The Kitsilano Branch is open 4 hours (1pm to 5pm) on Monday.

The Joe Fortes Branch, serving the West End, is closed on Sunday and Monday.

The Central Branch is currently providing normal operations 6 days per week plus limited service (e.g., no telephone service) on Sundays (1pm to 5pm).

The proposal is to add open hours, with normal operations, on Mondays at Joe Fortes, Kitsilano and Renfrew (10am to 9pm) and to add Sunday hours at Joe Fortes (1pm to 5pm).

The proposal is also seeking to increase open hours on Sundays at the Central Branch. In 2004, Council approved funding for eleven additional Sunday openings at Central (as well as at Oakridge, Renfrew, and Kitsilano and added Sundays at Britannia).

### **DISCUSSION**

Increasing the number of hours the Library is open to the public is one of the Board's six strategic objectives for 2005 and was one of the new initiatives submitted as part of the 2005 operating budget process. When Library hours are extended, more items are borrowed, more questions are asked and more people make use of the facilities. This will be especially true when the increased hours open are on Sunday and Monday, when most VPL branches are closed.

The Joe Fortes and Kitsilano Branches are the Library Board's medium term priorities for facility renewal. Both locations are smaller than required to meet all of the service demands placed on them. Extending their hours of operation will both increase overall branch use and lessen the demands placed during peak use periods.

A recent analysis of Library facilities and expenditures by neighbourhood indicated that the West End has the second lowest library space per capita (the lowest being Kensington-Cedar Cottage which has a new and larger branch opening in 2006). The West End and Kitsilano-Fairview have the lowest per capita library expenditure of all Vancouver neighbourhoods (the Kitsilano Branch serves both the Kitsilano-Fairview and Point Grey-Kitsilano neighbourhoods).

The current 4 hour opening on Monday at the Kitsilano Branch is an anomaly which is confusing to users. The Branch is very heavily used on Monday and overall has the highest foot traffic of the Area Branches.

Monday opening at the Renfrew Branch is proposed to provide a geographic balance in the hours open at Area Branches. After Oakridge, its collection is the second most heavily used of the Area branches.

Sunday is the busiest day of the week in terms of circulation per hour at the Central Branch. Extending Sunday hours at the Central Branch will both increase overall use and increase access to resources and study space for current users for whom Sunday is a preferred day to come to the Library. Main branches in the neighbouring municipalities of Richmond and West Vancouver are open 7 hours on Sunday.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Opening the Joe Fortes Branch for 4 hours on Sunday will require an increase to the Library's Part time and Casual salaries budget of \$35,300 annually (\$10,700 in 2005 with a September start date). Opening Joe Fortes and Renfrew Branches for 11 hours on Mondays (10am to 9pm) will require an increase to the Library's operating budget of \$221,400 annually (\$74,000 in 2005 with a September start date). The Kitsilano Branch is currently open 4 hours on Mondays (1pm to 5pm) with limited service. Opening the Kitsilano Branch for 11 hours on Mondays (10am to 9pm), with normal service levels, will require an increase to the Library's operating budget of \$80,100 annually (\$26,700 in 2005 with a September start date).

Currently, the Central Branch is open 4 hours each Sunday (1pm to 5pm) on a reduced service level basis. Opening 7 hours on a Sunday (10am to 5pm), with the same reduced service level, will require an increase to the Library's operating budget, for Part time and Casual staffing (\$215,700), building maintenance (\$14,000), security (\$2,000) and utilities (\$10,000) costs of \$241,700 annually (\$74,300 in 2005 with a September start date).

The total increase required is \$578,500 annually (\$185,700 in 2005).

The funding for the additional hours initiative for the Library was identified in the City's 2005 Operating Budget as coming from Contingency Reserve. Subsequent years funding to be added to the Operating Budget without offset

## CONCLUSION

These hours improvements will increase access to the most heavily used civic facilities on an equitable basis across the City. Increased hours at the Joe Fortes, Kitsilano and Renfrew Branches will extend service to community residents unable to access the Branches during the present operating hours, an especially important consideration for families. The increased Sunday hours at Central Branch will increase access to the Library's most extensive resources and study space when the demand is highest.

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