



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: September 20, 2010
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TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: City Librarian, Vancouver Public Library
SUBJECT: Central Library levels 8 and 9

RECOMMENDATION

THAT, at the expiry in 2015 of the 20 year lease to the Province of British Columbia for levels 8 and 9 at the Central Library, the floors be incorporated into the Library as publically accessible civic space, including publicly accessible exterior green space on the upper floors, subject to funding being available in 2015.

THAT the Library Board be authorized to plan, including preparing cost estimates for, the use of levels 8 and 9 at the Central Library.

CITY LIBRARIAN'S COMMENTS

The incorporation of levels 8 and 9 into the Central Library will provide the opportunity to offer service enhancements for the Library and potentially other civic services. Since the public endorsement of the Library design in the early 1990's there has been a continuous demand to access the roof garden which was proposed in the original design. From the outset levels 8 and 9 were planned to provide expansion space for the Library twenty years after opening. The expansion will, in the words of architect Moshe Safdie, "reinvent the building for a new generation" as well as fulfilling the promise of publically accessible exterior green space on the upper levels.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager concurs with the recommendation.

COUNCIL POLICY

The operating guidelines between the City Council and the Vancouver Public Library Board require Council approval for funding of Library locations.

PURPOSE

This report seeks Council authorization to incorporate levels 8 and 9 of Library Square into the Central Library as civic space in order that that space planning and the preparation of a capital campaign for the project can commence.

BACKGROUND

The Central Library at Library Square opened to the public on May 26, 1995. As part of the construction, two expansion floors (levels 8 and 9) were built for library use. These two floors were leased to the British Columbia Buildings Corporation for a period of 20 years (expiring July 2015), with two 5-year renewable options should the space not be required for library use. The library has a green roof, consisting of various grasses and shrubs, which is not currently accessible to the public. In addition there are two large patio areas on Level 8.

DISCUSSION

During the planning phase of the Central Library it was recommended that an appropriate size of the building should be 440,000 square feet. Due to capital budget constraints at the time, it was decided to construct a building of approximately 390,000 square feet, with approximately 347,000 square feet being immediately occupied by the library. An additional 43,000 square feet of library expansion space would be leased for 20 years.

The construction of levels 8 and 9 was funded with a loan from the City's Property Endowment Fund. The Province agreed to lease the space for approximately \$1 million a year and these rent payments are repaying the loan. This lease expires in July 2015 to coincide with the full repayment of the loan.

The library has a need for this space. In addition to library usage, this civic space would be configured so as to allow public access to green/outdoor space on the upper floors.

Preliminary discussions have taken place on the co-location of the City Archives at Library Square concurrent with the incorporation of the upper floors. This would have the advantage of cost avoidance through shared infrastructure and enhanced public service through a single service point for common services provided by the two civic agencies. Further investigation is underway to ensure that this would be feasible.

With Council's approval of the recommendation in this report, staff will begin the process of planning the space and preparing cost projections for a funding request to the 2015-2017 Capital Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the fit up of the space will be sought during the 2015-2017 Capital Plan process. Funding for the planning of the space will be requested as part of the 2011 Capital Budget from the 2009 to 2011 Capital Plan allocation for Branch Renovations.

CONCLUSION

This is an exciting opportunity to provide additional library/civic space and accessible green space in the downtown core. The expansion will, in the words of architect Moshe Safdie, "reinvent the building for a new generation" as well as fulfilling the promise of publically accessible exterior green space on the upper levels.

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