



REPORT TO THE LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

MEETING DATE: May 21, 2008

Session:	Public Session
Subject:	Carson Branch Library
Prepared By:	Susanna Hubbard Krimmer, Nancy Collister, Delilah Deane Cummings
Presented By:	Susanna Hubbard Krimmer
Purpose of Report	For Receipt and Information Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received.

ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY

The ***London Public Library Strategic Plan*** articulates the need for community engagement in order to fulfill the library's promise to the community of being inclusive, essential and accessible. In November, 2007, staff reported on LPL's community-led service development strategy. One of the next steps identified in the Board report was the establishment of a Branch Library Advisory Committee and Model. The W.O. Carson Branch Library was selected as a pilot location to implement a branch library advisory committee and model. The purpose of this report is to provide the Library Board on an update on the collaborative work of members of the Carson community and library staff.

BACKGROUND

In February 2008, a group of community members from East London, including the Old East Village, consisting of Jason Ahrens, Frank Filice, Shelly Happy, Sarah Merritt and Susan Pedersen met with Nancy Collister and Susanna Hubbard Krimmer of Customer Services & Branch Operations to talk about maintaining and further developing the Carson Branch Library as a critical and relevant resource in East London. The group brainstormed about various strategies and agreed to proceed with the establishment of a collaborative action group with a clear mandate and specific roles. This differs from the original concept of establishing an advisory committee. This new approach moved the group further along the engagement continuum, to a partnership/collaborative team with the community playing a greater role in the planning of services. On the basis of this model for working together, Delilah Deane Cummings, in her role as Community Outreach & Program Services

Coordinator, joined the team in providing professional expertise in applying the philosophies and techniques that community developers use in the context of library service planning.

During April/May, the ***Carson Branch Library Action Group: Terms of Reference*** was drafted cooperatively by the team. [Please see attached.] This document emphasizes connecting, consulting and collaborating with community members in order to build relationships and partnerships. This perspective is designed to:

- Ensure provision of relevant, accessible, high quality library services that are integral to the fabric of the community and support capacity building;
- Identify and implement innovations and best practices;
- Identify and eliminate barriers that previously disengaged or excluded community members from being library users; and
- Serve as an example of innovation and best practices within the library system and beyond.

NEXT STEPS

In the early discussions, the team considered some actions that might be undertaken immediately to develop strong, mutually beneficial relationships and show immediate benefits to the community. Work is underway to develop a public garden at the branch! As well, a community display area will be set up in the branch to showcase some of the exciting community initiatives.

Membership Carson Branch Library Action Group: Terms of Reference

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Vision

The community will improve as the library becomes an active, contributing player; and the library will improve because it is more relevant to the community.

Mandate

The Carson Branch Library Action Group comprises members of the community and representatives from the London Public Library. The group will work together collaboratively and act as a task team with a clear mandate, roles and concrete action plan.

The mandate of the Carson Branch Library Action Group is to:

- Work together to maintain and further develop Carson Branch Library as a critical and relevant resource in East London, including the Old East Village;
- Ensure provision of relevant, accessible, high quality library services that are integral to the fabric of the community and support capacity building;
- Identify and implement innovations and best practices; and
- Serve as an example of innovation and best practices within the library system and beyond.

Membership

The Carson Branch Library Action Group will consist of community representatives and Library staff. Members will serve a three-year term. Group reports to Senior Director, Customer Services and Branch Operations. Members will rotate Chair and Secretary duties. Agendas and minutes will be shared with the group and the community. A call for agenda items will be sent to members one week ahead of meetings. Library staff will prepare and distribute agendas. Group will meet once per month, initially. Community Representatives on the team could include:

Community members at large, representatives from Old East Village BIA, Old East Village Community Association, local School Councils and a Community Worker from the London InterCommunity Health Centre.

Library Staff on the team will include:

- Director/Manager, Customer Services & Branch Operations
- Coordinator, Customer Services & Branch Operations who supervises the branch
- Community Outreach & Program Services Coordinator
- Library Assistant, Carson Branch Library.

The LPL Customer Services & Branch Operations Coordinators will act individually as resources in their respective areas of expertise and accountability and as a team to support key strategies and initiatives.

Goals/Objectives

In order to accomplish this we will:

1. Ensure that the community is an equal partner in the creation, development and implementation of the action plan for the library. This will involve identifying and developing appropriate processes for capacity focused community engagement and consultation, employing a variety of means that will:
 - a. Identify and build upon community capacities and assets;
 - b. Understand and meet needs and expectations;
 - c. Identify and take advantage of opportunities; and
 - d. Identify and seek to overcome community and systemic challenges and barriers to the successful growth, development and community ownership of the library.
2. Review how the community is currently using the library, e.g. collections usage, to use as baseline. This will involve reviewing a variety of data including traditional measures and other relevant activity not currently captured in library statistics.
3. Consider and incorporate "lessons on innovation" using examples of best practices from London Public Library, other libraries and communities.
4. Look for and take action on some immediate initiatives through which to build community ownership of the library and to develop strong, mutually beneficial relationships. e.g. gardens, display board to showcase community initiatives
5. Develop a three year action plan with clear goals, objectives, and time lines on the basis of the above. The plan could include strategies such as:
 - a. Draw upon, support and profile existing local assets;
 - b. Develop community support mechanisms for the library;
 - c. Connect LPL to neighbourhood resources and develop ongoing relationships and partnerships; and
 - d. Ensure LPL is a part of the Old East Village Revitalization Initiative.