



# REPORT

## Council

Meeting Date: September 16, 2024

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**FROM:** Oakville Public Library

**DATE:** September 3, 2024

**SUBJECT:** **Potential Acquisition of Land for a New Library at Trafalgar Road and Threshing Mill Boulevard**

**LOCATION:** Threshing Mill Boulevard and Trafalgar Road

**WARD:** Ward 7

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### RECOMMENDATION:

1. That staff be authorized to purchase approximately 17,244 square feet of ground floor space, together with 18 surface parking spaces and 5 underground parking spaces, within the future residential condominium to be constructed on development Blocks 23 and 24 on Plan 20M-1211 at the corner of Threshing Mill Boulevard and Trafalgar Road (the "Property") on the terms set out in the confidential staff report dated August 30, 2024, entitled *Confidential Potential Acquisition of Land for a New Library at Trafalgar Road and Threshing Mill Boulevard* from the Legal Department.
2. That the purchase agreement be executed in accordance with by-law 2023-021 and the Town Solicitor be authorized to execute all other documentation required to complete the purchase of the Property and any minor amendments to the purchase agreement.
3. That staff be authorized to incur costs associated with normal due diligence activities required to complete the purchase of the Property.
4. That staff be authorized to negotiate a reduction in price, satisfactory to the CAO and Town Solicitor, if the Town's due diligence discovers any material concerns that warrant a price reduction such as environmental, archeological, lease, or legal issues.

### KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Staff are recommending the acquisition of approximately 17,244 square feet of ground floor space within a future residential condominium at the corner of Trafalgar Road and Threshing Mill Boulevard for a future library branch.
- The Property includes 18 surface parking spaces and the potential to acquire up to 5 additional underground parking spaces for staff parking.
- There is a companion confidential report listed on the confidential agenda of the September 16, 2024 Council meeting that provides the financial terms of the proposed acquisition of the Property.
- OPL staff believe the Property is a good location for a future OPL branch supporting the Trafalgar Urban Core South and the Dundas Urban Core areas.
- The OPL Board supports and recommends the acquisition of the Property for a future library branch.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

On January 8, 2020, the Town entered into a Section 37 agreement under the *Planning Act*, granting the Town a first opportunity to purchase or lease space for a *public authority use* within the proposed future building at Threshing Mill Boulevard and Trafalgar Road, in exchange for additional building height. Last year, the owner of the development blocks, BC Trafalgar Inc. ("**Branthaven**"), notified the Town that they were ready to move forward with discussions. OPL, the Town, and Branthaven proceeded to discuss options and requirements resulting in Branthaven submitting a proposal to the Town for review. The Town now has until November 27, 2024, to complete negotiations on a formal agreement, should the OPL Board and Town Council wish to proceed.

The Branthaven proposal identifies a 23-storey residential building intended for residential condominium tenure at the corner of Threshing Mill Boulevard and Trafalgar Road. The library space would be on the ground floor of the building. Access to the building would be from Threshing Mill Boulevard. The initial estimate is the library space would be approximately 17,244 square feet. The space would be delivered to the Town in a shell condition that would then need to be fit out into a library branch.

The proposal also includes 18 dedicated surface parking spots for library customers with the potential to purchase an additional five underground spaces for staff. There is also on street parking available along Threshing Mill Boulevard. This type of library model, within a residential complex, will have less parking than what would be found at a free-standing building with a self-contained parking lot. Through consultation with Planning, the parking identified for the location is sufficient due to the density of the area, availability of on street parking and the ability for residents to use other methods of transportation.

The proposal is for the Town to own the library space as a freehold parcel of land outside the condominium corporation. The five underground staff parking spaces would be units within the condominium, but the library space would not be part of the condominium and therefore not subject to condominium governance. The deal would include easements and cost sharing agreements with the future condominium for any shared spaces/facilities.

### **Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plans**

The five-year review of the 2012 Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan (the “**Master Plan**”) stated the following for 2020+:

- A full-service library facility as part of the proposed civic building along the Trafalgar corridor north of Dundas Street (approx. 22,000 to 35,000 sf.)

The draft Master Plan currently under development recommends a 22,000+ sf. Library for Trafalgar Urban Core South for when the population reaches ~275,000. It also suggests that, if possible, the library should be combined with a future recreation center (~350,000 population).

Given the cost and lack of available land in the surrounding area, finding the 1.5 acres required for a comparable size free-standing branch is difficult. The addition of a future recreation center on the same parcel creates an increased challenge that may not be achievable in this area.

It should be noted that the combined library/recreation center is a preference where feasible but should not limit the Town’s ability to take advantage of beneficial opportunities when they arise.

The Master Plan identified that the anticipated growth north of Dundas Street would require a library to support residents in Trafalgar Urban Core South and Dundas Urban Core Areas with an estimated population of 45,089 by 2051 for Trafalgar Urban Core South and 10,459 for the Dundas Urban Cores (East/West). The Property location would be within walking distance of several high-density buildings in the area, and future residents on both sides of Trafalgar Road. This branch could also meet the needs of the growing population in advance of the future recommended branch near Burnhamthorpe Road. This opportunity was identified during the development review process of the larger subdivision and built into the community use agreement, since it could provide the space and location that aligned with the recommendations from the Master Plan.

Branthaven has recently applied for a Pre-Submission Review for their Site Plan application and will need confirmation from the Town if it is going to pursue the library space before they can move forward. Their current targets would have the potential library branch opening in 2028, but this is subject to change based on the

market conditions and timing of development approvals. The current forecasted timing for this branch in the Master Plan is 2029, so it may need to be brought forward if Branthaven is successful in meeting their current projected timing.

OPL staff brought this acquisition opportunity to the OPL Board on August 22, 2024, and the OPL Board supports and recommends the acquisition of the Property for a future library branch.

**COMMENT/OPTIONS:**

OPL staff are recommending the purchase of the Property as a permanent location for an OPL branch supporting the Trafalgar Urban Core South and the Dundas Urban Core areas for the following reasons:

- Meets the growth requirements for Trafalgar Urban Core South identified in Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan;
- The lack of land availability will impact the Town’s ability to meet the needs laid out in the Master Plan;
- The timing of the project, although slightly earlier than currently in the 10-year capital forecast, assures that OPL is in the community to support residents needs as the community grows.
- As traditional methods of building libraries are becoming less and less viable due to land scarcity, this proposal provides the opportunity for OPL and the Town to work with an engaged partner (Branthaven) to build a vibrant library branch under a new more urbanized methodology. Given the growth in Oakville, it is expected that this methodology will need to be increasingly considered as a standard within higher density development areas.

Terms of the proposed deal and a financial analysis of an alternative standalone facility are included in the confidential companion report dated August 30, 2024, entitled *Confidential Potential Acquisition of Land for a New Library at Trafalgar Road and Threshing Mill Boulevard* from the Legal department (the “**Confidential Report**”). If Council supports the staff recommendation, Legal staff will work with Branthaven to negotiate a purchase agreement with the purchase price set out in the Confidential Report, and Planning, Facilities and OPL staff will work with Branthaven throughout the site plan process to agree on the final design of the library space. Staff will also explore the possibility of using Branthaven as a contractor for the fit out of the library space since there would likely be potential savings and efficiencies in Branthaven completing the full fit out for the library branch.

**CONSIDERATIONS:**

**(A) PUBLIC**

The inclusion of this report in Council agenda will provide public notification.

**(B) FINANCIAL**

The Confidential Report discusses the purchase price. The acquisition funds will be funded entirely by Library development charges.

**(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS**

This report was jointly prepared by OPL and Legal staff, and Facilities and Finance staff were consulted in the preparation of this report.

**(D) COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

This report addresses the corporate strategic goal to be the most livable Town in Canada.

**(E) CLIMATE CHANGE/ACTION**

N/A

**APPENDICES:**

Appendix A – Location Map

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