

Date: February 26, 2025
To: Chair and Members of the West Harbour Site (WHS) Vision Board Committee
From: Paul Takala, CEO/Chief Librarian
Cindy Poggiaroni, Director Collections and Program Development
Subject: **Exhibit Build Funding Update – PT/CP**

RECOMMENDATION

That the West Harbour Site Vision Board Committee receive this report for information and comment.

BACKGROUND

On [December 13, 2023](#), the Library Board approved the use of up to \$310,000 from the General Development Reserve #106007 to support the purchase of HPL's exhibit fixtures, technology and displays for long-term use. The funding request also included the cost to run and maintain exhibits in the Discovery Centre for 2024 and 2025.

The original plan for HPL to run and maintain exhibits in the Discovery Centre involved working with the Waterfront Shores Corporation, where the firm would operate and staff its sales centre at the site while offering 1,200-square-foot space for exhibition displays and interpretive components. Due to recent developments, city staff have been authorized and directed to negotiate and enter an agreement to terminate and surrender Waterfront Shores' lease. Upon termination and surrender of the lease, the Discovery Centre will be primarily vacant. City staff are exploring interim uses to enhance site activity while the Hamilton Public Library conducts the Program Design and Development Study for the building's long-term reuse.

While plans for using the Discovery Centre have changed, the need to fund HPL exhibits across the library system and partner spaces remains a priority. Investing in capital costs of building exhibit components in-house is a cost-effective approach compared to outsourcing, which is significantly more expensive. These exhibit components are designed for long-term use in various settings, resulting in sustained cost savings. These funds also support collaborative initiatives with partners to bring exhibits into HPL and partner spaces.

Maintaining this funding is critical for HPL to achieve its goals of building, expanding, and enhancing exhibit spaces across the system and in collaboration with partners.

These goals include:

- Enhancing accessibility to materials held by Local History and Archives (LHA)
- Building capacity and exploring new exhibition and interpretation models

- Investing in quality, reusable capital equipment for use at the Central Library, branches, or partner locations
- Fostering collaborations with partners on exhibit initiatives
- Showcasing diverse and engaging local stories for and about our community

The investment of up to \$310,000 in exhibit components, technology and partnerships will strengthen HPL's internal expertise, skills, and capacity to develop and present modern, impactful exhibitions.