



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**To:** Peterborough Public Library Board of Trustees

**From:** Erik Hanson, Heritage Resources Coordinator

**Meeting Date:** June 26, 2018

**Subject:** Report PPL18-040  
Newspaper Digitization Project

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## **Purpose**

A report to recommend that the Peterborough Public Library receive a presentation on providing funding for a newspaper digitization project.

## **Recommendations**

That the Peterborough Public Library Board approve the recommendations outlined in Report PPL18-040, dated June 26, 2018 of the Heritage Resources Coordinator, as follows:

- a) That the Library Board receive for information a presentation on a project to digitize microfilm copies of the various historic city newspapers; and,
- b) That the Library Board approve the re-allocation of reserve funds previously directed to the city directory digitization project in support of the digitization of microfilmed copies of city newspapers.

## **Budget and Financial Implications**

The proposed project involves the digitization of the microfilm copies of four Peterborough newspapers dating between 1846 and 1950. The project includes both the digitization of existing reels and the replacement of some reels so deteriorated that a digital copy could not be accurately searched using OCR technology. The costs

outlined are based on the rates provided by Canadiana.org which is the only vendor that has provided a full quote. Pricing has been solicited from several other companies and it is anticipated that they will be in a similar range. Based on Canadiana's quote, the total cost of the project is:

Item	Unit Cost	Total (incl. HST)
Digitization of 393 microfilm reels	Based on 393 reels @ \$3.00/ reel plus \$0.20 per image @ 438,900 images	\$88,960
Replacement of low quality reels	\$135 plus HST	\$11,900
	<b>Project Total:</b>	\$100,860

In 2016 the Library Board approved the use of a reserve fund from the 2004 flood to support the digitization of 124 City Directories dating from the mid 1800s through 2009. A total of \$49,200.00 was allocated for the directory digitization project but only \$6,843.00 was required for the project, leaving a total of \$42,357.00 which could be reallocated to the newspaper digitization project. An application for the remaining \$58,500 required is being made to a federal grant program through Library and Archives Canada supporting the digitization of archival material by municipalities.

## Background

In 2016, Peterborough Public Library funded a project by the Heritage Preservation Office (HPO) to digitize the Peterborough City Directories, consisting of 124 volumes dating from 1846 to 2009. Through this project, the directories were made key-word searchable and widely accessible through an on-line database and distribution of the PDF files to local heritage and municipal institutions. Over the last two years, the collection of digital directories has become a powerful research tool for historians, genealogists, and those with a general interest in the history of the city. The project has been met with universally positive feedback since the directories became available in late 2016.

Given the success of the directory digitization project, the HPO is seeking to develop a similar collection of digitized city newspapers currently held on microfilm by the Library. Like the directories, the resultant digital files would be key-word searchable and available on an online platform accessible to the public. However, this project is significantly larger in scope, due to the high number of microfilm reels held by the Library, and has its own unique issues.

While the newspapers are copyrighted material, many of the older issues have passed into the public domain. For more recent material, it is reasonable and acceptable for the City to undertake record management to maintain a document collection that is in danger of being lost through deterioration. Digitization is understood to be acceptable

record management. As with all such material, it will be incumbent on the end-user to satisfy themselves that their use of the digitized newspapers complies with the Copyright Act.

The current condition of the microfilm also makes producing high-quality scans from the microfilm which generate accurate key-word searches a challenge. Test reels have been sent to several vendors to determine the image quality of the digital files. These will be tested to determine the accuracy of the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) on the file. Given the overall condition of the microfilm collection, it is anticipated that a number of the microfilm reels will need to be replaced in order to produce scans of sufficiently high quality for acceptable OCR accuracy. The test scans will generate a quality baseline for determining the number of reels which need to be replaced. Currently, it is anticipated that about 20% of the reels will need to be re-printed before they can be digitized. The cost of replacement reels for a percentage of the collection has been factored into the overall cost of the project. The role of the Library in the project will be limited and will not require library staff time beyond collecting providing the reels chosen for digitization.

To meet the added costs of renewing the microfilm prior to digitization, the HPO is seeking additional funding for the project through the National Heritage Digitization Strategy's "Digitizing Canadian Collections" funding call by Library and Archives Canada. While this is not a cost matching program, staff feels that confirmation of the availability of a significant contribution from the Library speaks favourably to the City's commitment to the project. The application deadline for this funding call was June 12, 2018. While the grant application did not commit the Library funds to the project, it did indicate that a request was being made for the reallocation of the reserves from the previous directory digitization project.

The digitized collection will be available on an online platform for public access and copies of each file will also be provided to the Library as an in-house research tool. As with the directory project, the digitization of the Library's newspaper collection will create far greater access to an important historical resource through both its near universal, online availability and its searchability. It is anticipated that the digital versions of the newspapers will be of interest to a wide audience, from historical researchers to the general public. The digitization of the material will also allow for the microfilm reels to be appropriately stored and archived, thus decreasing their use and the potential for damage to this physical resource.

Submitted by,

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