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Report to / Rapport au:

**Ottawa Public Library Board
Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa**

November 8, 2022 / 8 novembre 2022

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File Number: OPLB-2022-1108-10.1

SUBJECT: Hours of Operation – 2022 Survey Results

OBJET: Heures d'ouverture – Résultats du sondage 2022

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) Board:

- 1. Receive this report for information;**
- 2. Approve no further expansion of hours of operation on public holidays;
and,**
- 3. Direct staff to report back by Q3 2023 regarding any further recommended
changes to hours of operation.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

**Que le Conseil d'administration (C.A.) de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa
(BPO):**

- 1. Prenne connaissance du présent rapport à titre d'information;**
- 2. Approuve aucun accroissement des heures d'ouvertures durant les jours fériés; et,**
- 3. Dirige le personnel à faire rapport au Conseil d'ici le T3 2023 sur les autres changements recommandés concernant les heures d'ouverture.**

BACKGROUND

As per Board policy 002-OPLB Delegation of Authority (the DOA), the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is delegated the responsibility to “set or modify administrative and operational policies,” including hours of operation. As the Board is responsible for reviewing and recommending annual budget estimates to City Council, it is important that the Board be aware of any changes to the hours of operation that may have the potential to impact future budgets.

In 2017, Nanos Research was engaged by Ottawa Public Library (OPL) to conduct a survey and focus groups of cardholders and non-cardholders regarding hours of operation. The results of this research were presented to the Board at its meeting in October 2017 (OPLB-2017-1004). Using the data from this survey, OPL presented to the Board recommendations for changes to the hours of operations in both 2019 (OPLB-2019-1002 Update Hours of Operation Review) and in 2021 (OPLB-2021-0902 Hours of Operation-Next Steps). These changes included:

- The addition of hours on Wednesday and Friday afternoons at the Greely branch;
- The addition of hours on Monday-Thursday evenings, and Friday mornings, at the Ruth E. Dickinson branch;
- The provision of uninterrupted service during popular times of the day at most rural branches (Greely, Munster, North Gower, Osgoode, Richmond, and Vernon);
- Expanded Sunday hours of operation at the 10 locations and InfoService that are open on Sundays (from 1-5pm to 10am – 5pm) for improved access and more consistency in weekend service (starting Fall 2022); and
- Expanded Sunday hours of operation to include all Sundays in June at the 10 locations and InfoService that are open on Sundays.

COVID-19 has caused many residents to re-think their habits, including their commute and leisure time. To inform future decisions about Library hours of operation, staff sought to revalidate the 2017 survey results to capture any changes to resident preferences. OPL engaged Nanos Research in June 2022 to conduct a survey about hours of operation, building on the 2017 Hours of Operation Survey. Undertaking this work allowed staff to holistically consider several recent directives from the Board, including:

- That staff consider the needs of vulnerable communities before any new branches are recommended for additional Sunday service hours (November 30, 2021); and,
- That, following up on a discussion at the September 14, 2021 Board meeting regarding opening select branches on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (“Public Holidays – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation” OPLB-2021-0903), staff explore what would be involved in providing some services on other public holidays and bring back a report on this in 2022.

Undertaking this work at this time also allowed staff to:

- Obtain additional demographic data from survey respondents that was not considered in the 2017 survey in order to provide information about the needs of vulnerable communities;
- Obtain survey results in time to integrate potential future recommendations hours of operation into the 2024 Budget; and,
- Streamline decisions related to hours of operation with Phase 6 of the Service Delivery Framework (SDF). Service standards developed as part of Phase 6 include articulating OPL’s levels of service, including operating hours, and an approach to adjust existing service levels in the future. These service levels will be integral to inform other decisions (such as asset management).

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the results of the 2022 public consultation on the OPL’s hours of operation, provide a recommendation regarding public holidays, and to seek direction to conduct a more detailed analysis in 2023, reporting back to the Board at that time regarding any potential future staff-recommended changes.

DISCUSSION

As identified in the 2020-2023 Strategic Directions and Priorities, under “Redesign the Library Experience,” key priorities for OPL include defining the ideal experience across physical and virtual channels and assessing the impacts of barriers to service. This includes consideration of the library’s hours of operation.

Nanos Research was retained by OPL to conduct an opinion survey among residents of the city of Ottawa to help identify preferences regarding operational hours for library use among both customers and the general population. In order to ensure data collected could be compared to the 2017 survey results, questions were not significantly altered. From August 8, 2022, to September 2, 2022, a bilingual online survey for cardholders was conducted, as well as bilingual telephone and online surveys for the general population (including both cardholders and non-cardholders).

Recommendation #1: Receive this report for information

Based on the combined results of the public consultation conducted by Nanos Research, the following key insights were identified:

- Results were relatively consistent with the previous 2017 survey, including with respect to popular days and times, as well as general satisfaction among cardholders with their branch’s opening hours (about three in four that say they are “satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied”).
- Response to what would encourage a non-cardholder to become a cardholder are consistent with 2017 data with one exception: there was an increase from 22% to 31% in those that say they can’t think of anything that would encourage them to become a cardholder. Approximately 35% are likely or somewhat likely to become a cardholder if hours changed.
- Preferred days of the week:
 - Saturday mornings remain the top preferred opening day and time for individuals open to being a cardholder as identified in the general population survey (46%), or who are already cardholders (40%).
 - Mondays are the second preferred opening day for both groups, with a significant gap between the top preferred day (Saturday) and the second preferred day (approximately 20% in both cases). The general population preferred Monday evenings and cardholders preferred Monday mornings.

- Preferred times of day:
 - Key changes included cardholders marginally preferring Monday-Thursday mornings more than evenings (the reverse of 2017), with a 10% jump in those indicating mornings are their preferred time, and a 10% decrease in those indicating evenings are their preferred time.
 - Cardholders also now prefer Friday morning hours (interest jumped by more than 10%) to Friday evening hours (interest dropped by more than 10%).
 - Cardholders continue to prefer Saturday mornings and are relatively evenly split on Sunday times of day (mornings and afternoons). The general population generally preferred Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons.
 - Fewer respondents (cardholders and those likely to become cardholders) are interested in extended Sunday hours.
- Responses among vulnerable populations¹: In keeping with the Board direction to staff to consider the needs of vulnerable communities before recommending any expansions to Sunday hours of operation, staff ensured the 2022 survey collected demographic data that would assist in determining the needs of vulnerable groups. Among survey respondents:
 - Immigrants were more interested in Sunday hours in the summer than other Canadians;
 - Cardholders with both the lowest (less than \$20,000) and highest (\$150 000 and above) income levels were most likely to visit if Sunday hours were extended;
 - Racialized residents were more interested in summer Sundays, extended Sunday hours, and opening on public holidays than residents who identified as white;
 - Interest in Sundays (both summer Sundays and extended hours) was higher among respondents with children, as were Friday evenings. There was slightly more interest in public holidays among respondents with children (but still only 1 in 5); and,

¹ OPL defines vulnerable communities according to the criteria from the Neighbourhood Equity Index, developed by the Social Planning Council of Ottawa, as per the "Vulnerable Communities and Community Development Update" (OPLB-2022-1011-11.1),

- Cardholders that are rural residents were less interested in summer Sundays, and extended Sunday hours, than urban residents.

Recommendation #2: Approve no further expansion of hours of operation on public holidays

A new question was introduced into the 2022 survey to address the direction from the Board that staff provide a report on what would be involved in providing some services on public holidays.

When asked “On which public holidays, if any, would you visit OPL?,” close to half of respondents indicated that they would not visit OPL on any public holidays (46% of cardholders; 44% of those likely to become cardholders), and between 17-20% would visit on some or all public holidays. About one in three respondents remain unsure about whether they would visit on public holidays.

With respect to public holidays, the survey results indicate that it is unlikely that a majority of customers or those likely to become customers would visit OPL on public holidays. As a result, staff do not recommend any further expansion of hours of operation on public holidays.

Recommendation #3: Direct staff to report back by Q3 2023 regarding any further recommended changes to hours of operation

Initial reviews of the 2022 survey results do not indicate any other urgent considerations regarding hours of operation. Given the volume of data received from the survey, staff intend to further review the data prior to making further recommendations for the Board’s consideration. While hours of operation are delegated to the CEO as per Board Policy OPLB-002, staff recognize that the Board should be aware of the changes, especially if they have the potential to impact budgets. For instance, staff will incorporate the 2022 survey results when preparing the 2024 budget and bring forward a report regarding hours of operation for the Board’s consideration prior to the budget period if required.

CONSULTATION

More than 5,000 participants provided input through the survey consultation, specifically: 4,530 self-selected customers via the online cardholder survey and a

Random Digit Dialing (RDD) dual frame hybrid telephone and online random survey of 504 residents of the City of Ottawa, between August 8 and September 2, 2022. The supporting documentation regarding the public consultation was reviewed and discussed with the OPL Senior Leadership Team.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

Ottawa Public Library complies with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (2005)* in its operations. There are no accessibility impacts associated with this report.

BOARD PRIORITIES

This report aligns with the strategic direction to build organizational capacity through data-driven decision-making in the Strategic Directions and Priorities 2020-2023.

BUSINESS ANALYSIS IMPLICATIONS

There are no business implications associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 2022 OPL Cardholder Survey Report and Tabulations

Document 2 2022 OPL General Population Survey Report and Tabulations

Document 3 2022 OPL Cardholder Open Ended

DISPOSITION

Upon approval of this report, staff will incorporate key findings from the 2022 Nanos Research survey when preparing future recommendations regarding changes to hours of operation before Q3 2023.