

# 10.2

**Report to / Rapport au:**

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

**October 8, 2024 / 8 octobre 2024**

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**File Number: OPLB-2024-1008-10.2**

**SUBJECT: Central branch at Ādisōke – Service Planning Update and Impacts**

**OBJET: Succursale centrale à Ādisōke – Mise à jour de la planification des services et impacts**

## **REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Ottawa Public Library Board:**

- 1. Receive this report for information;**
- 2. Approve visitor experience principles for the Central branch; and,**
- 3. Approve the service model, as further described in this report.**

## **RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

**Que le Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa :**

- 1. prenne connaissance du présent rapport à titre d'information;**
- 2. approuve les principes de l'expérience visiteur pour la succursale centrale;**

**3. approuve le modèle de service, tel que décrit dans le présent rapport.**

**BACKGROUND**

In keeping with the *Public Libraries Act, RSO 1990, c.P.44* (the Act), other relevant statutes, laws, and good governance practices, the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) Board (the Board) holds accountability for the full range of decisions affecting the organization. The Board approaches its role using a policy model of governance that focuses on setting strategic directions and objectives, making decisions on major projects, and monitoring library and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) performance. The Board's attention primarily focuses on the long-term needs and goals for the library, rather than the administrative or operational details.

On January 31, 2017, the Board approved the Central Library Development Project ([OPLB-2017-0101](#)), including that a Joint Facility with Library and Archives Canada (LAC) be developed to meet the intent of the functional building program requirements outlined in the [Master Program](#).

On June 8, 2018, the Board approved the Implementation Plan for the Ottawa Public Library and Library and Archives Canada Joint Facility report ([OPLB-2018-0601](#)). The report established that a new and modern Central Library would be built under a tripartite agreement between OPL, LAC, and the City of Ottawa (City), and recognized OPL's participation in the partnership for the facility, now known as Ādisōke.

With Ādisōke building construction in progress, the OPL project team is continuing to focus on developing services, programs, and a visitor experience for the facility reflective of the significance of the space, the needs of the community, and the library's vision to deliver a welcoming and inclusive space for all. This comes after extensive and meaningful engagement with the community, with partners, and with the broader library sector to obtain input on how to meet these goals. It also aligns with the ongoing development of documentation for the five OPL service strategies and three delivery channels as defined by the Service Delivery Framework (SDF), approved by the Board in May 2022 ([OPLB-2022-0503](#)).

To ensure ongoing trustee engagement opportunities over the coming years, an Ad hoc Committee on Service Strategies (including Ādisōke) was created in February 2023, consisting of Trustees Brown, Crawford, and Kitts ([OPLB-2023-0223-10.2](#)). Information

regarding service planning for the Central branch has been discussed with the Ad hoc committee for review and feedback.

The most recent report to the Board ([OPLB-2024-0611-11.2](#)) in June 2024 described how service planning for the Central branch was being guided by extensive research and community input, including the ongoing development of a service model. The report also detailed that a staffing model was being developed and that operating budgets, including staffing and other pressures, would be presented to the Board for approval through upcoming annual budget cycles.

The purpose of this report is to seek Board approval of visitor experience principles and the associated service model, and to provide the Board with an update on key OPL planning activities, and the associated implications for staffing and the budget.

## DISCUSSION

Central libraries are transformational social infrastructure that build, strengthen, and enrich communities. The Central branch at Ādisōke is the largest project ever undertaken by OPL. In addition to library services being planned to meet the needs of the local community, the Central branch will serve all residents of Ottawa and be a destination for visitors to the nation's capital. With a location on the historic LeBreton Flats, the Central branch will provide access to the latest creative technologies, beautiful spaces to study and work, high-quality literacy programs, events with local and national artists, and exceptional collections.

Set to open in 2026, the Central branch will replace OPL's current Main branch and will function as a flagship location among OPL's physical branches across the city. The vision for the new Central branch is to be the cornerstone of the community, both local and city-wide, providing seamless services and experiences for all who enter. The Central branch will be a dynamic and welcoming space where stories come together, serving as a catalyst for exploration, learning, and connection. Acknowledging the Anishinābemowin origin of the name Ādisōke, the Central branch will celebrate the significant past and present contributions of Indigenous communities throughout the facility. It will be a place where individuals of all ages and backgrounds will gather to discover, collaborate, and grow, fostering a sense of belonging and facilitating transformational experiences. Through intentional design, innovative programming, and a commitment to accessibility, inclusivity, and lifelong learning, individuals will be able to

pursue their passions, expand their knowledge, and contribute to the social and economic vitality of our city.

A primary element to support this vision is maximizing service hours. As such, planning accounts for the Central branch to be open year-round from 9am to 9pm Monday to Friday, and from 9am to 5pm on Saturdays and Sundays. This represents 16% more open hours (554 hours per year) compared to the current hours at the Main branch.

To ensure that the opening of the branch is met with services that truly resonate with Ottawa's diverse communities, OPL actioned a client-centric approach to the development of visitor experience principles and the service model. This approach upholds OPL's commitment to community and inclusion and focuses on engaging with clients, community, and service providers to inform the direction.

The approach to service design was collaborative and informed by best practice research, community input regarding needs and aspirations, and a commitment to including Indigenous culture and perspectives in programs and spaces.

To prepare for service design work, key OPL staff were trained by experts in research methodologies and design thinking. As noted in the last update to the Board in June 2024, OPL staff have completed extensive research and engagement, both internal and external, to inform service planning for the Central branch (see Consultation section), including:

- Researching community demographics;
- Identifying community needs through a series of engagement activities; and,
- Identifying gaps and opportunities that OPL might address through library services.

The information gleaned from all these activities was used to develop recommendations for programming, collections, tools, spaces, and expertise at the Central branch, as well as visitor experience principles.

### **Visitor Experience Principles**

Visitor experience principles are guidelines for the quality of the visitor experience, including satisfaction with a space, service, or event. Principles articulate intentions and help to ensure that visitors have a positive, engaging, and memorable experience.

Earlier this year, OPL worked with a consultant to create an audience model, which supports the development of visitor experience principles specific to Central branch service planning. An audience model is a tool that supports the planning, delivery, and communication of a cultural organization's services and offerings. By understanding the audience's needs, interests, and wants, it is possible to create experiences that are more likely to appeal to and connect with them.

OPL began this work utilizing an established and proven audience model, which is based on the understanding that people go to libraries to meet a self-perceived, identity-related need. Research demonstrates that visitors have different motivations for different visits: these motivations shape their behaviour, and shape how they define success for each visit. The model looks at both extrinsic (external) and intrinsic (internal) motivations, and sample outcomes, for a visit. Outcomes describe a change in the client, from that individual's perspective.

To shape the Central branch environment and services, the following visitor experience principles were developed through the application of the audience model, and further refined and tested through community engagement:

1. **Seamless:** Provide intuitive, easy, stress-free access to library spaces and services in a calm, uncluttered environment.
2. **Intentional:** Be relevant to, and provide fulfilment of, the wants and needs of the library's clientele by maintaining an awareness of visitor demographics and motivations.
3. **Inclusive:** Be welcoming and accessible to clientele with a diverse range of needs and abilities; provide a clean environment; ensure the clients see themselves reflected in our collections and programs; and promote inclusivity and collaboration, both within the library and external communities.
4. **Transformational:** Inspire and engage clients with innovative programs and infrastructure that foster creativity, develop skills, entertain, and engage.

These principles, grounded in sector best practices and thorough research, and refined through community feedback, are foundational to the successful implementation of Central branch service plans and will continue to guide the development of services and spaces that resonate with Ottawa's diverse community. These principles will enable

OPL to move forward with confidence, ensuring that the Central branch becomes a place where all visitors feel welcomed, engaged, and inspired.

### **Service Model**

The development of an audience model led to a more detailed look at what types of services would be offered in different spaces in the building, to suit different audience segments. By integrating meaningful visitor experience principles into service planning, staff can ensure that every touchpoint, from initial contact to the end of a visit, is thoughtfully crafted to provide a seamless, positive experience. This alignment not only elevates the quality of interactions but also drives loyalty, satisfaction, and advocacy.

Based on the work described above, the service model at the Central branch will include a mix of traditional and non-traditional library services, aligned with the functional building program requirements approved by the Board (January 2017) and with the service categories approved in the Service Delivery Framework (May 2022).

Traditional library services are those services that are currently offered in all OPL branches. These include readers' advisory, information and research assistance, assistance with borrowing and with client accounts, digital literacy support, and literacy-focused programming like storytimes, book clubs, youth and adult programs, author events, and partnered programs such as language conversation groups. These services will be delivered to clients at eighteen (18) staffed locations within the facility, and through regular public programming offered for clients of all ages.

Non-traditional library services include many new types of services that are not typically offered at other OPL branches, though are increasingly common in central libraries. Non-traditional services remain based in the role of providing access and supporting literacies, though they deliver access to a broader range of spaces, tools, and experiences relevant to the community.

The overall service model with details on the types of spaces and their programmed experiences are provided below.

### *Collections*

- The Central branch will be a vibrant community hub, featuring an accessible, fresh, and browsable collection that supports OPL's literacy mandate.

- Clients will find a collection that reflects the diverse needs of the community, inspires lifelong learning, and furthers OPL's commitment to Indigenous reconciliation.
- As every branch, the Central branch will also function as a primary access point for its clients to collections from across the system.

### Expertise

- Staff will provide expertise that supports access to diverse collections, spaces, programs, and tools.
- Roving service delivery in which library staff move throughout their indicated service area, making them more visible and able to assist clients at their point of need.

### Programs

- The Central branch will offer more programming than other OPL branches, both traditional print literacy-based programming and expanded program offerings in line with new spaces, and these programs will be offered at various times during the day, evening, and weekends in all service areas.
- Programming will be hosted at multiple levels, i.e., the Central branch will be a neighborhood branch, hosting traditional programming such as storytimes for children and families, and it will also be a destination venue for signature events.
- There are 32 library spaces and 34 program rooms that can be used for OPL programming including active and passive programs, and programs led by partners or external providers. At least 50% of these spaces will be animated by OPL or partner-led programs at any given time during service hours.

### Spaces

- The Central branch will include traditional spaces for all ages, including:
  - An entrance area offering clients quick access to holds pick-up and new and popular resources for all ages;
  - Seating areas adjacent to collection areas with views that encourage reflection and inspiration in the surroundings;
  - Meeting rooms for gathering and connecting;
  - Computer workstations and study table;

- An expansive children's space, including a stay-and-play zone, gaming area, terrace, a makerspace, and numerous program rooms; and,
- A youth space, including a quiet study room, collaboration spaces, meeting rooms, and an open area.
- A suite of new services will be offered in the following spaces:
  - An Indigenous centre, including a circular lodge, terrace, programming areas and collections, to showcase Indigenous culture, languages and knowledge and become a place for Indigenous gathering and cross-cultural sharing for the community;
  - A large creative centre including makerspaces, audio and video recording studios, a design studio, and a rehearsal space, providing community access to purpose-built spaces and equipment they might not otherwise have access to or own themselves;
  - An exhibition gallery with locally oriented and topical exhibitions. The program will be a blend of OPL-curated exhibitions and those developed in partnership with LAC, and/or with community organizations;
  - A demonstration kitchen with a focus on food literacy, allowing clients to take part in partner programs demonstrating cooking techniques and processes. The kitchen is also anticipated to be used for some science-based programming, where appropriate;
  - Spaces for in-residence programs, which involve a collaboration between experts (e.g. artists, entrepreneurs, Elders, etc.) and hosting organizations (in this case, OPL) in which the expert is provided with space and resources to support their practice, and both the Library and clients benefit from direct access to a practicing expert, and an enriched program offering;
  - "Living Ottawa", a place to learn about Ottawa's past, present and future in a space where historical materials are made available, and current events and Ottawans are celebrated as the history of tomorrow;
  - A family history and genealogy space shared with LAC.
  - Sensory rooms, which provide a controlled and immersive sensory experience, and are designed and used for relaxation, stress relief, and as therapeutic tools for visitors with various sensory processing disorders and cognitive conditions;
  - Spaces for partnerships with community service agencies;



- A meditation / interfaith prayer room to support client needs for brief meditation, mindfulness, or finding a moment of peace;
- A nursing room to support caregivers feeding infants;
- Retail spaces, including food services and a gift shop; and,
- Event spaces such as an auditorium, a theatre, and an exterior plaza with an amphitheatre. These spaces are shared with LAC, allowing the organizations to build on the existing programming partnership to host events in dedicated spaces. Event spaces will also be available for private bookings, and it is anticipated that these will account for approximately one-third of space usage.

### Tools

- The Central branch will provide access to a wide variety of low- and high-tech equipment and technology to ensure a transformative, seamless experience and access to basic and specialized tools for all members of the community.
- Tools will include things such as Chromebooks, high-end computers in a digital media lab, laser cutters, 3D printers, gaming equipment, interactive play tables, sewing machines, etc.

Traditional and non-traditional library services have been mostly defined for the Central branch. With approval of visitor experience principles, staff will develop more detailed plans over the coming months, in preparation for a successful opening in 2026.

As detailed plans are developed and refined for each service category, an approach to evaluation of services will be created, in direct response to motivational audiences and demographics. One effective approach to evaluation is the use of logic models, which organize and communicate the intention of a specific service, the problem it is working to solve, and how the planned activity and required resources work to deliver the intended outcomes.

Working with outcomes is a crucial aspect of the commitment to being responsive, effective, and accountable to the community. It helps OPL to demonstrate value, make informed decisions, and continually enhance services to better serve client needs. As such, staff are committed to ongoing collaboration with the community and continuing to use a community development lens for development and evaluation of services.

### **Implications of the Service Model on Resources**

The June 2018 report to the Board “Implementation Plan for the Ottawa Public Library and Library and Archives Canada Joint Facility” (OPLB-2018-0601) anticipated an operating pressure of \$1.865M, which included 11.9 FTEs along with other facility maintenance pressures. This was completed prior to facility design and service development. In a January 2023 report to the Board regarding the 2023 budget (OPLB-2023-0131-11.2), staff anticipated a minimum of 23 new FTEs. Through the work of finalizing services these numbers have been validated and refined.

In recognition of the increased size of the facility (more than 94,000 square feet of public space over five floors, including the OPL portion of shared spaces, compared to approximately 72,000 square feet over three floors at the current Main branch), expansive service offering, enhanced operating hours, and anticipated increase in visitors as compared with the existing Main branch, there will be a requirement for additional human resources for the provision of traditional library services, in addition to the resources required for the new services that will be offered, and secondary support staff.

With the service model developed, staff have refined the human resource requirements, to be expressed as “Full Time Equivalent” (FTE) positions. This included identifying specific job classifications and commensurate salary levels to finalize the financial costs associated with the growth. Based on the information currently available, the required staffing complement to support the vision described above is 113.5 FTE positions, with approximately two-thirds required for traditional services, and one third for new services, including secondary support. The number of new positions may be adjusted once the delivery model for shared services with LAC is finalized.

There are 52 FTE positions currently staffed including those that support service delivery at the Main branch. All positions at the Main branch (and where filled, the associated employee) will be transitioned to the Central branch to fulfill part of these resourcing requirements.

The remaining 61.5 new positions are required to deliver services based on the visitor experience and service model described above, with the majority required to ensure adequate coverage of the client service touchpoints that are located throughout the branch (traditional services). Of these new positions, 80 percent are confirmed to be

bargaining unit positions, and less than five (5) percent are confirmed to be management / professional-exempt positions. The remaining 15 percent, predominantly new job classifications for which descriptions do not currently exist, are subject to review via the job evaluation process.

With the Central branch set to open in the summer of 2026, staff will need to be engaged by year-end 2025 to undertake employee onboarding, training, and orientation to the new facility. Recognizing this requirement to engage human resources in advance of the facility opening staff developed a fiscally-responsible plan to secure funds for new positions incrementally over four years (2023 – 2026). In 2023 and 2024, the Board approved a combined funding authority of \$1.29M for new positions, with the majority currently in operation.

- The 2023 budget included four (4) positions (total compensation value of \$420K) to support Central branch services:
  - o One (1) Indigenous Services position related to service design.
  - o Three (3) FTEs were included and not assigned.
- The 2024 budget included eight (8) new FTE positions (total compensation value of \$870K) to support Central branch services:
  - o Six (6) positions for services related to programming (i.e. exhibitions, in residence, librarians, and a coordinator) and a Retail Manager.
  - o Two (2) additional FTEs were included and not assigned.

#### Operating Costs (compensation for library service provision)

Total funding to address the compensation requirements associated with the OPL-specific staffing requirements, excluding compensation for the existing positions, is estimated at \$5.4M (2025 rates), including benefits.

- \$615,000 in existing funding, unused, as per previous authorities (2023-2024)
- \$850,000 as allocated to the Library Reserve in 2024 (to draw on in 2026 when the positions will be required)
- \$3.475M will be sought via internal efficiencies and annual budget processes.

It should be noted that the financial requirements do not include the potential for cost-recovery from LAC (for shared services), subject to partnership agreements.

### Operating Costs (non-compensation for library services provision)

With both the new and traditional services, there will be an estimated increased requirement for funding for service delivery starting in 2026 of \$775,000. This represents the ongoing costs associated with licensing and maintenance for technology and other equipment, program delivery including stipends, and supplies.

### Operating Costs (utilities and maintenance)

In addition to operating costs associated with direct library service provision, there are other operating costs associated with the new building, including an increase in utilities, security personnel, and a requirement for additional facility maintenance personnel. While the associated human resource positions will reside with the City, OPL will be required to fund the compensation as part of the shared services arrangement.

The cost associated with OPL's share (61% of the overall building) of City-supported services is estimated at \$3.295M. Following a similar strategy as the costs for direct library services provision, OPL staff are working with City colleagues to confirm the approach to incorporate these costs, including using efficiencies. Any requirement for additional funding will be incorporated through the annual budget process.

The operating costs noted above account for a transition from the Main branch to the Central branch, including a period of overlap until the Main facility is fully decommissioned. As such, there will be some utility- and maintenance-related carrying costs for the Main branch through to decommissioning (year-end 2026). Staff are tracking these costs and expect refinements via the 2027 budget. Anticipated savings of \$1.15M are expected to be achieved in 2027.

### Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment

Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E) refers to movable furniture, fixtures, or other equipment that have no permanent connection to the structure of a building and are therefore separate from construction. It includes items such as desks, chairs, computers, electronic equipment, tables, shelving, etc. Detailed planning for FF&E initially occurred in 2021, and the OPL cost was estimated at \$11 million.

Refinements to the numbers and types of FF&E have been ongoing since 2021 to reflect the vision and service planning for the Central branch, as FF&E are a critical support for services that will be offered (in particular, to support collections, spaces, and

tools). The purchase of FF&E will occur using various procurement vehicles (Requests for Proposal, Requests for Tender, standing offers, etc.) over the course of 2025.

FF&E are subject to the same cost pressures previously identified on the construction contract (inflation and market escalation related to supply chain challenges from the pandemic), resulting in an updated estimate of \$16 million for OPL. Strategies for addressing this shortfall will involve a variety of mechanisms including funds raised through the *Unlock Potential* campaign, other available trust funds, existing capital accounts, and Library Reserves. Funds taken from the Library Reserves will be replenished via fundraising efforts and any potential annual surpluses.

## CONSULTATION

The OPL project team conducted nine engagement sessions with staff across various OPL branches, engaged with more than 500 clients via interviews and questionnaires, and consulted with more than 45 community agencies.

Staff also reviewed feedback received via community engagement during the design phase of the project, which reached more than 7,000 individuals in Ottawa and across Canada, as well as insights from targeted community conversations held in 2019.

The development of this report required further consultation with OPL Senior Management and the relevant Ad hoc committee of the Board.

## 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

In October 2023, the Board approved an updated Strategic Plan that will carry through 2028 and includes “Create the destination experience for the Central branch at Ādisōke” as a key component of “Redesign the Library Experience.”

## BUSINESS ANALYSIS IMPLICATIONS

There are several business analysis implications associated with this report.

If approved via this report, the visitor experience principles will continue to guide the development of detailed plans for each service category, and an approach to evaluation of services will be created in direct response to motivational audiences and demographics. This may include the use of logic models, which organize and communicate the intention of a specific service, the problem it is working to solve, and how it will help to deliver the intended outcomes.

Working with outcomes is a crucial aspect of OPL's commitment to being responsive, effective, and accountable to the community. It helps OPL to demonstrate value, make informed decisions, and continually enhance services to better serve client needs.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The 2025 and 2026 budgets will build on the 2023/2024 plan and will propose new positions for future operational roles for the Central branch at Ādisōke, as described in this report. This approach supports operational readiness for the new facility and demonstrates prudent fiscal management of taxpayer funds.

The 2025 and 2026 budgets will also incorporate non-compensation related operating pressures as applicable as described in this report.

Further, the 2025 budget will address the FF&E additional funding requirement of \$5 million through a combination of approaches including funds raised through the *Unlock Potential* campaign, other available trust funds, existing capital accounts, and the use of the Library Reserve to provide for funding at the time of need, as described in this report. Funds taken from the Library Reserve will be replenished via fundraising efforts and any potential annual surpluses, not otherwise directed for other purposes.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The Board approved Strategic Priority, to "Create the destination experience for the Central branch at Ādisōke", is built upon the original vision for the Central branch, as described in the functional building program requirements outlined in the Master Program (approved by the OPL Board in January 2017). The design of the Central branch at Ādisōke, and the associated service model, are intended to deliver the

envisioned destination experience. The inability to secure funding for operating pressures through the 2025 and 2026 budget processes would create risks for a successful opening of the Central branch and create an inability to achieve the Board-approved Priority.

The FF&E requirements will be funded through a combination of both existing and future funds. More than two-thirds of the dollars required are from available, existing accounts. The remaining \$2M will be taken from Library Reserve, which is currently over the Board-approved target of 10% of the operating budget. Using these funds for the described purpose will the Reserve account in alignment with both the minimum amount and with the intended use of the Reserve, as noted in the Financial Framework (60% of the Reserve should be used for capital allocations). If funds from Reserve are not available, OPL will need to secure debt to fund the remainder of FF&E, subject to both the City's affordability cap, and OPL's ability to fund interest. This approach is not prudent, nor recommended, considering the healthy state of the Library Reserve.

### **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

### **DISPOSITION**

With approval of visitor experience principles and the service model, staff will develop more detailed plans over the coming months, in preparation for opening in 2026.

Staffing and other operating budget impacts will be included in the 2025 draft budget report, to be tabled November 5, 2024.