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Report to / Rapport au:

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

April 8, 2025 / 8 avril 2025

Submitted by / Soumis par:

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SUBJECT: 2025 Ottawa Public Library Board Work Plan

**OBJET: Plan de travail 2025 du Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque
publique d'Ottawa**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Receive the report for information;**
- 2. Approve the 2025 Board Work Plan items in Document 1; and,**
- 3. Receive the 2025 Corporate Work Plan items in Document 1 for
information.**

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. **Adopte les éléments du plan de travail 2025 du C.A. dans l'annexe 1;**
3. **Prenne connaissance des éléments du plan de travail 2025 de la corporation dans l'annexe 1 à titre d'information.**

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” or “the Library”) Board (the “Board” or “OPLB”) holds accountability for the full range of decisions affecting the organization.

The Board approaches its role using a strategic model of governance that focuses on setting directions and objectives, making decisions on major projects, and monitoring library and CEO performance. Trustees’ attention primarily focuses on the long-term needs and goals for the library, including, as per the OPLB Delegation of Authority Policy (“the DOA Policy”), approving strategic directions and priorities.

In October 2023, the Board approved the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan (OPLB-2023-1010-10.2), with the strategic directions and priorities informing the development of annual work plans for the Board through the Board Work Plan, and for staff through the Corporate Work Plan. The Strategic Plan is multi-year and intended to capture both long-term vision and flexible, actionable objectives, hence annual work plans reflect both in-year activities, as well as show ongoing progress on multi-year initiatives.

The purpose of this report is to seek the Board’s approval of the Board Work Plan items in the 2025 Board and Corporate Work Plan (“the Plan,” Document 1), which includes key items requiring the Board’s stewardship and active participation, and to inform the Board of Corporate Work Plan items reflected in the same document.

DISCUSSION

The 2024 Board and Corporate Work Plan – Progress and Close-Out

In 2024, staff committed to advancing seven (7) Board Work Plan items with trustees. At year end, one (1) item was completed, and six (6) multi-year initiatives remain in

progress or held for carry-forward to 2025. Details are as follows, with additional information in the 2025 Board and Corporate Work Plan (Document 1):

Completed 2024 Board Work Plan item:

- Begin the governance review process for the 2023-2026 term of Board. The Governance Evaluation Report and Action Plan was approved by the Board in December 2024 (OPLB-2024-1203-11.2) and the membership of standing committees was approved at the March 2025 Board meeting (OPLB-2025-0311-10.1). Completion of this item also includes completion of the concurrent item on the 2024 Corporate Work Plan.

“In Progress” items:

- Six (6) items remain in progress. Significant advancement on several of these items is already made in keeping with the multi-year nature of these initiatives. Further progress and completion of some items is expected in 2025, e.g., delivery of the Mobile and Virtual Frameworks, completion of the Service Strategies within the Service Delivery Framework (ADF), and delivery of the Brand Strategy (Phase 2 approved in February 2025; Phase 3 expected in Q3 2025).

The Board approved other strategic items in 2024, including changes to four Board policies (Delegation of Authority, Fund Development, Commemorative Naming, and Sponsorship) and the extension of the Board Intellectual Freedom Position Statement until the next term of Board. The Board also received a report on Phase 1 of the Branding strategy, a cybersecurity update, and regular fund development updates.

In 2024, staff committed to 26 items on the Corporate Work Plan, including 18 multi-year initiatives. At year end, eight (8) were completed, including some that have been operationalized and one item that had a corresponding Board Work Plan item (mid-term governance). 14 Corporate Work Plan items remain in progress and continue into 2025, three (3) items are on hold, and two (2) items noted as “ongoing,” a new category to indicate items that will continue throughout the duration of the Strategic Plan. Details of the Corporate Work Plan items are as follows:

Completed 2024 Corporate Work Plan items:

- Develop the Library Asset Management Plan (“the AMP,” OPLB-2024-0502-10.2); noting an update will be provided in 2025 and updates will continue every five years as required by legislation;
- Renew and formalize the community development approach and resources for employees: several actions were completed in 2024, including formalization and subsequent operationalization of the approach, with community development work becoming an ongoing element of operations;
- Develop revised Intellectual Freedom Framework (OPLB-2024-0502-10.5);
- Assess current digital offerings, identify gaps, and develop a plan to address barriers to digital inclusion: several actions were completed in 2024, including planning for removal of WiFi login requirements and the expansion of the Chromebook lending program, both of which were delivered. Work to identify and address barriers to service across all areas of OPL operations continues on an ongoing basis.
- Review of rural branch hours for potential standardization (OPLB-2024-1105-11.1);
- Update the OPL Emergency Plan to align with incident management roles and build in flexibility (OPLB-2024-0910-11.3); and,
- Development of support tools for public services staff in managing and responding to workplace public incidents: this was determined to be the preferred approach to support public services staff in lieu of the planned establishment of a formalized peer support network. This item was reflected as two separate items on the 2024 Corporate Work Plan; these two items were combined and have been marked completed.

Significant headway was made on the items remaining in progress, as described in the “2024 actions” column in Document 1. Notable progress on the Plan for Ādisōke and HR Strategy, for example, included Board approval of the Central Branch at Ādisōke - Service Planning Update and Impacts (OPLB-2024-1008-10.2), the completion of the event services plan, and progress on identifying the staffing complement (which will form one component of the Human Resources strategy), hiring and onboarding several key positions, and developing operating protocols and agreements. Upcoming work includes move planning, signage and wayfinding design is ongoing, preparation for procurement of furniture, fixtures and equipment, and the design of gift shop and food service spaces.

The two (2) items represented as “ongoing” are:

- Strengthen organizational culture: In 2024, work included acclimating staff to new leadership competencies in advance of implementation in 2025. This year will include collaboration with the City to launch competency-specific training programs and supports; work to further strengthen the organization culture beyond 2025 is ongoing.
- Integrate an ongoing commitment to intellectual freedom into all OPL activities: In terms of Corporate Work Plan tasks related to this item (that is also listed on the Board Work Plan), the Intellectual Freedom Framework was completed in 2024; work to raise public awareness remains ongoing.

Three (3) items remain on hold pending completion of the Facilities Master Plan:

- Planning for the East Urban branch (as per Ottawa Public Library 2024 Development Charges Background Study and Project List OPLB-2024-0502-10.3 which has a timeline of 2031 – 2033 for this project);
- Plans for the Metcalfe Village branch; and
- Plans for the Centennial branch renovation.

The 2025 Board and Corporate Work Plan

The 2025 Board and Corporate Work Plan (Document 1) contains both strategic areas of focus and operational areas of focus associated with strategic priorities. The Plan includes the six (6) Board Work Plan and 19 Corporate Work Plan legacy items related to activities initiated in earlier years, as noted above, and three (3) future-focused activities that will strategically advance the organization.

Items on the Corporate Work Plan (the fifth column from the left in Document 1) include key action items (rather than an exhaustive list) that are operational in nature, supporting and complementing the items on the Board Work Plan. The Corporate Work Plan recognizes that significant staff involvement will occur in implementing the aforementioned items of the Board Work Plan, as well as items that advance the organization in several key areas.

Details of the new items are outlined below.

- One (1) new item has been added to the Board Work Plan: Approval of a written agreement between the OPL Board and City Council. This new item flows from conversations during the previous term of Board among trustees and the CEO at the time and will outline high-level governance and key areas of collaboration and differentiation (including finance, facilities, human resources, information technology, and legal matters).
- Three (3) new items have been added to the Corporate Work Plan:
 - Concurrent with the Board Work Plan item above, the Corporate Work Plan includes formalizing the relationship between OPL and the City.
 - Impact study: OPL is participating in a national study on the impact of public libraries hosted by the Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC). This work will build on the 2016 OPL Economic Impact Study (November 2016) and allow OPL to develop new practices for describing and demonstrating the value of library services in the emotional, social, creative, and intellectual domains, to support evidence-based decision making about future services, and to assist in key advocacy conversations. The Friends of OPL (FOPLA) are funding OPL's participation in this study.
 - Privacy audit: An audit of privacy procedures and practices for OPL's public-facing services will be initiated in 2025, and completion may span the following year.

Next Steps

Staff efforts in 2025 will focus on implementing elements of the Plan that relate to their respective areas, including the identification of specific actions for each item, and identification of budgets to support the actions, where required. Standing committees of the Board will assist in guiding staff regarding key initiatives, and reports will return to the Board for information or approval in alignment with responsibilities in the DOA Policy.

CONSULTATION

The Ottawa Public Library Senior Management Team developed the annual Corporate Work Plan with input from management and other key staff.

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 the recommendations in this report.

BOARD PRIORITIES

This report aligns with the Board Strategic Priorities. If approved, this report confirms the Ottawa Public Library Board's 2024 Work Plan.

BUSINESS ANALYSIS IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct business analysis impacts associated with approving the recommendations in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for all activities within this report is covered by the approved 2024 OPL Capital and Operating budgets.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to approving the recommendations in this report.

INDIGENOUS AND GENDER EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

The ongoing work of addressing barriers to library service and closing gaps for equity-deserving individuals and groups will support relationships with and services for these populations.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with approving the recommendations in this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications associated with approving the recommendations in this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 2025 Board and Corporate Work Plan

DISPOSITION

If approved, staff will facilitate the advancement or completion of the Board Work Plan items and advance or complete the Corporate Work Plan items.