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Report to / Rapport au:

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

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Submitted by / Soumis par:

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SUBJECT: Service Delivery Framework - Service Strategies

**OBJET: Cadre décisionnel sur la prestation des services – Stratégies
relative aux services**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Receive the Service Delivery Framework – Service Strategies report;**
- 2. Approve the concept and outcome statements for the following Service Strategies:**
 - a. Collections Strategy;**
 - b. Expertise Strategy;**
 - c. Programs Strategy;**
 - d. Spaces Strategy; and,**
 - e. Tools Strategy.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

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

1. **Prenne connaissance du rapport sur les stratégies relative aux services du Cadre décisionnel sur la prestation des services;**
2. **Approuve le concept et les énoncés de résultat des stratégies relatives aux services suivantes :**
 - a. **Stratégie sur les collections;**
 - b. **Stratégie sur l'expertise;**
 - c. **Stratégie sur les programmes;**
 - d. **Stratégie sur les espaces;**
 - e. **Stratégie sur les outils.**

BACKGROUND

In keeping with the *Public Libraries Act*, RSO 1990, c.P.44 (“the PLA”), other relevant statutes, laws, and good governance practices, the Ottawa Public Library (“OPL”) Board (“OPLB” or “the Board”) retains accountability for the full range of decisions affecting the organization. According to Section 15 of the PLA, the Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer (“CL/CEO”) shall have general supervision over, and direction of, the operations of the public library and its staff, and shall have the other powers and duties that the Board assigns to them from time to time.

The Board uses a policy or strategic model of governance that focuses most of the attention of trustees on setting strategic direction and objectives, making decisions on major projects and monitoring performance. As such, the Board has approved Policy 002 – Delegation of Authority (“the DOA”). As part of that policy, the Board has maintained authority to approve key strategic components of the OPL Service Delivery Framework (SDF) and other frameworks and has delegated the implementation and management of strategic frameworks to the CEO.

In May 2022, the Board approved a new Service Delivery Framework (Report #OPLB-2022-0503), and directed staff to implement Phase 6, which included establishing a service planning and design team, as well as developing the five Service Strategies (Collections, Expertise, Programs, Spaces, and Tools) and three Channel Frameworks (Facilities, Mobile, and Virtual) associated with the new Service Delivery Framework (SDF). In November 2022, the Board approved the Facilities Framework, which was one of the three Channel Frameworks identified in Phase 6 (OPLB-2022-0603). The Board subsequently received updates on the implementation of Phase 6 at its meetings

of October 2022 (OPLB-2022-1011-11.5), April 2023 (Item #14.2), October 2023 (OPLB-2023-1010-10.3), March 2024 (Item #12.3), September 2024 (Item #14.1), and February 2025 (Item #12.1). In addition, the Board struck an Ad hoc Committee on Service Strategies, composed of Trustees Brown, Crawford, and Kitts (and the Chair ex officio), which met in August 2024, October 2024, and February 2025.

The purpose of this report is to seek Board approval for the five Service Strategies as part of implementation of Phase 6.

DISCUSSION

The Service Strategies presented in this report have been developed in collaboration with employees at OPL, include input from OPL Board Trustees via the Ad Hoc Committee, and are informed by the findings of a public engagement process (“Me & My Library”) completed in December 2024. Their development represents significant progress towards completion of the implementation of Phase 6 of the Service Delivery Framework (SDF).

Considerations

A service delivery framework is a foundational document that describes the overarching services offered by an organization, as well as the ways the public can access those services. The SDF approved by the Board in 2022 includes two functional areas: the first describes what services are available across five service categories (Collections, Expertise, Programs, Spaces, and Tools), and the second describes the means of access (via the Facility, Mobile, and Virtual channels). An SDF should help an organization to develop consistent and equitable services, predictable service levels, and to determine the effectiveness of service offerings. The SDF is also an accountability tool, providing greater transparency into service commitments and decision making.

The PLA requires all libraries in Ontario to provide certain services for free, specifically, it mandates the provision of access to information (Collections) and reference services (Expertise). Therefore, the SDF approved in 2022 reflects the fact that Collections and Expertise are the foundational services that OPL will deliver in any and all circumstances. The remaining three service categories (Programs, Spaces, and Tools) reflect modern service expectations of public libraries and have been identified as

priority services that enable clients to effectively interact with the information we provide.

In May 2022, the Board approved Report #OPLB-2022-0503, which included the Guiding Principles for the SDF, which apply to the Service Strategies as described further below. Services at OPL are:

- Underpinned by OPL's vision, mission and values;
- Shaped by, and responsive to, community needs and trends;
- Influenced by technology and innovation; and,
- Governed by the fiscal environment and resources available.

At that time (May 2022), the Service Strategies were described as including a combination of strategic and operational elements:

1. An outcome statement to guide the strategy;
2. Defined standards and/or guidelines for specific services within the broader category;
3. A description of how services are delivered via each Service Channel.
4. A decision instrument to determine the addition of new services; and,
5. An evaluation tool to measure progress in achieving the stated outcome, and to support decision-making with regards to increasing or decreasing existing services.

In line with the approved delegated authority (in which the Board approves key strategic components of the SDF and frameworks), some of these above elements have been combined or modified. New items, a service definition (already approved by the Board as part of the SDF in 2022) and a service concept, were added. Items #2, #3, and #4 have been combined and renamed as "Service Commitments", which have been arranged by Service Channel. Lastly, item #5 will be incorporated into existing documents (e.g., the Performance Measurement Framework) as well as future Strategic Plans, as required.

The components of the Service Strategies requiring Board approval are:

- Broad Definition (as previously approved as part of the SDF report in 2022)
- Concept (description of the service at OPL)
- Outcome Statement (the desired outcome as a result of the service)

Public engagement completed in the second half of 2024 ("Me & My Library") influenced the components of the Service Strategies. When staff reviewed the findings of the public engagement, clear themes and trends were identified and aligned with both the "Concept" and "Outcome Statement" for each service. The engagement incorporated elements of all five service categories - with respondents providing insight into the value and impact of OPLs Collections, Expertise, Programs, Spaces, and Tools. A summary of the findings of the public engagement is provided in Document 1, Public Consultation "What we heard" report.

Below are the key elements of the Service Strategies for approval:

Collections Strategy

- Broad Definition: Items in the catalogue to borrow
- Examples: Books, Musical instruments, DVDs, Chromebooks, Streaming service (e.g., Kanopy), eBooks, eAudiobooks, etc.
- Concept: OPLs collection is a wide range of materials that make up a shared resource for all clients that:
 - can be borrowed
 - is diverse both in format and content
 - can be accessed with minimal intervention or assistance needed
- Outcome Statement: OPL's collection provides a foundation for language acquisition, and for cultivating the joys of reading, lifelong learning, and discovery.

Expertise Strategy

- Broad Definition: Employees who support literacy and information needs
- Examples: Reader's Advisory, Research assistance, eReader support, Technology support, Account and membership support, etc.
- Concept: OPL employee expertise ensures clients can access the information they need by:
 - listening, understanding, and responding
 - planning and delivering activities
 - connecting and building community
- Outcome Statement: OPL expertise facilitates access to knowledge and connects clients to services in a welcoming and inclusive manner.

Programs Strategy

- Broad Definition: Intentionally-designed activities or events

- Examples: Babytime, Tech workshops, Art exhibitions, Book clubs, Author talk, etc.
- Concept: OPL programs help clients to learn, understand, and explore interests by supporting:
 - language and Literacy
 - life skills
 - creativity and leisure
- Outcome Statement: OPLs programs nurture a love of reading, and provide opportunities to exercise creativity, build skills, and foster social connections.

Spaces Strategy

- Broad Definition: Defined areas for client use
- Examples: Teen Zone, Meeting room, Reading Lounge, Website, Computer lab, etc.
- Concept: OPL has inviting public spaces where clients can engage with library employees and services. They:
 - are accessible
 - are flexible to serve multiple uses
 - provide opportunities for both individual and collaborative use
- Outcome Statement: OPL spaces offer welcoming environments for learning, leisure, and connection.

Tools Strategy

- Broad Definition: Equipment or technology that is not in the catalogue to borrow
- Examples: Computers, Printers, Scanners, Toys, 3D printers, Audio-visual editing software, etc.
- Concept: OPL provides functional and experiential items and equipment that:
 - are not borrowable
 - are self-directed
 - help clients to accomplish tasks and express creativity
- Outcome Statement: OPL tools enable clients to accomplish activities on an individual or collaborative basis.

Service Commitments

Given that the SDF is a foundational document that sets standards and guides service delivery, staff took steps to formalize service benchmarks so that OPL can more effectively plan services. With a defined Concept and Outcome Statement for each type

of service, staff developed corresponding client service commitments to formalize what services can be expected when clients visit OPL. These service commitments outline the way that OPL operationalizes its Collections, Expertise, Programs, Spaces, and Tools, and provides clients with a clear understanding of what services can be expected via each channel (Facilities, Mobile, and Virtual). Document 2 presents a table illustrating OPL's corresponding service commitments.

Document 2 also includes an accompanying legend, which defines some of the quantifiers used in the table. Of note, some of the service commitments are already in place (OPL currently meets those standards) while others do not meet the current service model and will take some time to adjust operations in order to meet the commitments in the future. These aspirational commitments are identified with an asterisk (“*”), and OPL will work towards consistent delivery of these items within the next five years. As an example, OPL offers clients the ability to book 1-on-1 appointments with employees, to help with technology support or in-depth research questions. At present, only some branches offer this service, and as part of the SDF, staff commit to expanding this appointment service to all branches in the coming years. It is also important to note that for the service commitments within the Facility Channel, Rural branches provide a baseline for volume and variety, with each level of service increasing with the additional space available in Local branches and then District branches. As an example, all branches have public computers: a Rural branch may have two computers/laptops, while a Local branch may have ten, a District branch may have twenty, and the Central branch may have fifty. Appendix A of the Facilities Framework provides the facility classification (Rural, Local, and District) details for each branch at OPL.

Some service commitments are tied closely to other OPL policies, such as the commitments to services in both English and French. OPL's Official Languages Policy provides guidance for both English and French services, and by incorporating commitments to services in French, OPL is further reinforcing to Francophone clients the type of services they can expect to receive when visiting the Library. Finally, it is worth noting that the service commitment for Local History Collections results in a change in practice. Currently, a handful of branches have local history materials, but with the opening of the new Central branch at Ādisōke, practices will change. The new Central branch has a unique space dedicated to local history, genealogy, and family history services, as well as a service area co-located with Library and Archives Canada

dedicated to these topics. As such, it will be important to ensure that all relevant resources are located together at this branch.

Next Steps

OPL staff will continue the implementation of Phase 6 of the SDF, as per Report #OPLB-2022-0503:

- Ensure new frameworks, and revisions to existing frameworks, align with the new SDF.
 - Specifically, the Content Services Framework, but also subsequent reviews of other Frameworks as well.
- Complete the three Service Channel Frameworks and bring these to the Board for approval
 - Specifically the Mobile Framework and Virtual Framework, as the Facilities Framework has been completed.
- Keep the Board apprised of progress of SDF implementation

In addition, staff will use the completed SDF as the basis for developing the next Strategic Plan, and any subsequent changes to the Performance Measurement Framework.

CONSULTATION

The development of this report required consultation with OPL employees via working groups, as well as OPL Board Trustees via the Ad hoc Committee on Service Strategies, as well as public consultation, completed in Q4 2024 by consulting firm Hill & Knowlton. They conducted 100 interviews, consulted 45 clients via focus groups, and collected 150 online submissions from clients.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

OPL complies with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (2005)* in its operations. OPL is committed to providing inclusive and barrier-free access to information, documentation, programs, and services. Approving this report will clarify service commitments with regards to dedicated support accessing OPL Collections, Expertise, Programs, Spaces, and Tools.

BOARD PRIORITIES

This report is aligned with the Strategic Priority "Redesign the Library Experience," specifically "Define the client experience across service channels" and "develop the Service Strategies," as well as "Build Organizational Capacity," specifically "Increase data-driven decision-making."

BUSINESS ANALYSIS IMPLICATIONS

The business analysis implications are related to the measurement of success against the Outcome Statements, and any relevant changes to the Performance Measurement Framework to align with the SDF.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications of this report are associated with the Service Commitments, specifically, those which may require operational changes in order to deliver. For example, the development of a creative space at every district branch could have financial implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

INDIGENOUS AND GENDER EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

The Indigenous implications of this report are related to the Service Commitments, specifically, the availability of Indigenous language collections at all district branches as an aspirational commitment.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

The technological implications of this report are related to the Service Commitments, such as the availability of creative technology tools at all district branches.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 Public Consultation "What we Heard" report

Document 2 Service Commitments Table

DISPOSITION

If approved, staff will complete implementation and operationalization of the SDF, including Service Strategies.