



Ottawa Bibliothèque
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10.2

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:

**Sonia Bebbington, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Librarian /
Directrice générale et bibliothécaire en chef**

Contact Person / Personne ressource:

*Myra Skaronski, Division Manager, Branch Services / Directrice, Services en succursale
(613) 580-2424 x32337, Myra.Skaronski@BiblioOttawaLibrary.ca*

Contact Person / Personne ressource:

*Alexandra Yarrow, Program Manager, OPL Board & Strategic Services / Gestionnaire
de programmes, Conseil d'administration de la BPO et services stratégiques
(613) 580-2424 x32312. Alexandra.Yarrow@bibliooottawalibrary.ca*

File Number: OPLB-2026-0210-10.2

SUBJECT: Mobile Framework

OBJET: Cadre mobile

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Receive this report for information;**
- 2. Approve the Mobile Framework (Document 1);**

3. **Approve revisions to Board Policy 002 - Delegation of Authority, as further described in this report and (Document 3); and,**
4. **Direct staff to align operations with the Mobile Framework, including:**
 - a. **Returning to the Board by Q4 2026 with a Neighbourhood Services Prioritization List, as described in this report; and,**
 - b. **Providing a close-out report to the Board by Q4 2028.**

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 le cadre mobile (document 1);**
3. **Approuve les modifications à la Politique sur la délégation de pouvoirs du C.A. de la BPO (002) proposées dans le présent rapport et dans le (document 3); et**
4. **Demande au personnel d'harmoniser les opérations conformément au cadre mobile et de lui remettre les documents suivants :**
 - a. **Liste de priorité pour l'offre de services dans les quartiers, comme l'indique le présent rapport, d'ici au quatrième trimestre de 2026;**
 - b. **Rapport définitif d'ici au quatrième trimestre de 2028.**

BACKGROUND

As per Ottawa Public Library ("OPL" or "the Library") Board ("the Board") Policy OPLB-001, the Board is responsible for reviewing and approving major strategies, plans, and decisions. This role is further refined within Board Policy 002 - Delegation of Authority ("the DOA"), by which the Board has the authority to approve strategic frameworks for key OPL services (Item #22), to permanently modify bookmobile stops (Item #26), and to approve sites for new bookmobile stops (Item #28).

Over the last decade, the OPL Board has received and/or approved reports concerning OPL's strategic approach to mobile services, including:

- September 2014: A Bookmobile Service Review (“the 2014 Review”) confirmed the need to support bookmobile services, validated existing service points, and introduced the use of demographic criteria (an aggregate measure called the “service power”) for potential neighbourhoods (appended to OPLB-2014-0082).
- September 2015: The Alternative Services Delivery Framework 2016-2020 (“the 2016 Framework,” OPLB-2015-0071) took a holistic approach to OPL’s alternative services (at the time, including bookmobile, kiosk, and home services), and provided guidelines for decommissioning or optimizing existing bookmobile services.
- November 2018: The Alternative Services Priorities (“the 2018 Priorities,” OPLB-2018-1102) confirmed priorities for alternative services (inclusion, discovery, and neighbourhood access), confirmed continued investment in bookmobile and homebound services, and approved no further expansion of kiosk services.
- May 2022: Service Delivery Framework (“the SDF,” OPLB-2022-0503) described five service categories (collections, expertise, programs, spaces, and tools) and three service channels (facilities, mobile, and virtual). The Facilities Framework was subsequently approved by the Board in November 2022 (OPLB-2022-1108-10.2).
- April 2025: The Service Delivery Framework - Service Strategies report (OPLB-2025-0408-11.2) provided definitions and outcome statements for the five service categories, as well as corresponding client service commitments that outline the way that OPL operationalizes its services and provide clients with a clear understanding of what services can be expected via each channel.

In March 2019, the Alternative Services Ad hoc Committee (composed of Vice-Chair Kathy Fisher and Board member Mary-Rose Brown) was constituted to advise staff on integrating the 2018 Priorities into the Alternative Services Framework. At the end of the 2019-2022 Term of Board, the Committee endorsed maintaining the current Bookmobile Services schedule and affirmed the continued need for the Committee. The 2020 OPL Board Work Plan (OPLB-2020-0903) identified the Alternative Services Framework as “on hold” due to the pandemic.

In February 2023, the Service Channel Frameworks Ad hoc Committee (composed of Board members Bradley and Brown, as well as the Board Chair as ex-officio) was

constituted to advise staff regarding the Virtual and Mobile Frameworks (OPLB-2023-0223-10.2). In September 2023 and June 2024, memos to the Board provided updates on the Mobile Framework, including noting operational pressures affecting progress on the Framework and signaling the intent to allocate dedicated staff to the development of the Framework in Q3 2024. The Service Framework Ad hoc Committee met several times in 2024 to advise with elements of the Framework; this role was subsequently taken over by the Governance Standing Committee in 2025.

The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's approval of the Mobile Framework (Document 1), revisions to Board Policy 002 - Delegation of Authority ("the DOA", Documents 2 and 3), and direction to staff to align operations with the Mobile Framework as outlined in this report.

DISCUSSION

Mobile services are services delivered in an agile manner outside of an OPL facility; in other words, mobile services move regularly. At OPL, these include Bookmobile Services (launched in 1953) and Home Services (launched in 1971 as Visiting Library Services, later known as Homebound Services). Ottawa's unique needs have always been key drivers for the importance of mobile services: the first bookmobile was launched soon after the largest annexation of territory by Ottawa (increasing the size of Ottawa five-fold) and Visiting Library Services began when the Carnegie Library closed during the construction of the current Main branch.¹

These services provide crucial access to Library resources for many residents who face multiple, often intersecting, barriers to accessing OPL via other service channels. Bookmobile Services currently operates 20 stops on a weekly schedule, with stops of varying duration, serving over 600 active clients. Home Services selects and delivers material to over 500 individual clients monthly. Together, mobile services reach close to 1200 clients every month.

In the last decade (2015-2025), staff have received 24-36 requests annually for new bookmobile stops in additional neighbourhoods; five (5) new stops were added over this period, three (3) were decommissioned, and six (6) changed locations within the same neighbourhood. During the pandemic, Saturday service was paused and the schedule

¹ "Who was who in Ottawa 1855-1967" Gloucester Historical Society
<http://www.gloucesterhistory.com/Who%20was%20Who%20in%20Ottawa.pdf>

was temporarily adjusted to allow for most stops to be continued on weekdays; currently, four stops remain paused.

Also in the last decade, approximately 80-120 additional clients per year have been added to Home Services. No eligible clients have been turned away from service during this time but approximately 50-100 clients discontinue home services annually, due to health issues, relocation out of Ottawa, or death. It is projected that by 2031, seniors (65 years and above) will account for over 20 per cent of Ottawa's population, and in the rural Ottawa areas, there is an expected 183 per cent increase in seniors between 2011-2031. Based on these projections, it is likely that requests for home services to individual clients may increase over the coming years.²

Considerations for each key report recommendation are summarized below.

Recommendation #2: Approve the Mobile Framework (Document 1)

The 2016 Framework is a decade old and was created prior to the current Strategic Plan and Service Delivery Framework. It further did not include service criteria for home services and was not consistently applied to operations.

The Mobile Framework (Document 1) aligns with the Strategic Plan, the SDF, and its supporting documents, including other frameworks approved by the Board since the 2016 Alternative Services Framework. The Framework provides information about the services available via the mobile channel, standards for service, decision criteria, and practices for monitoring and evaluation (including decisions regarding new offerings and decommissioning of current offerings). The Framework ensures that OPL can operationalize strategic priorities and make decisions regarding planning, resourcing, and operations, including where, when, and how mobile services are offered.

Key elements of the Mobile Framework

- Definition and scope: Mobile services are delivered regularly, primarily in person, at locations outside of library branches, both at the neighbourhood level (Bookmobile Services) and at the individual level (Home Services).
 - Of note: Mobile services do not include kiosk services: Kiosk services provide access to popular collections via lending machines and to

² City of Ottawa. Older Adult Plan 2025-2030. Report to Community Services Committee, Oct 28, 2025. <https://pub-ottawa.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=266312>

requested items via holds pickup lockers. Kiosk services are a tool for making OPL collections available; they do not provide access to staff expertise, programs, spaces, or tools. Further, kiosk services lack the agility that defines mobile services, as they are stationary.

- Guiding Principles: The Framework considers public library sector findings regarding mobile services, as well as the context within Ottawa and OPL. The specific guiding principles for the Mobile services are access, connection, and adaptability.
- Service standards: The Framework outlines service offerings, the types of vehicles required, and the expectations for service frequency and reliability. New elements include:
 - Strengthened focus on the primacy of the collections and expertise service categories;
 - A two-week (biweekly) stop schedule for neighbourhood services (a change in frequency from current weekly stops) and standardized stop lengths: by adjusting the bookmobile schedule to every second week and implementing consistent durations for stops, OPL can offer up to twice as many stops, additional preferred timeslots, and retain capacity for preventative maintenance, as well as participation in special events, partnerships with other OPL services, and visits to community groups or congregate living facilities;
 - Of note: current data indicates most clients visit the bookmobile either every second or third week;
 - Lastly the addition of service modes for Home Services, including the possibility of other delivery mechanisms not currently offered, for example a bookmobile stop for congregate living residents or delivery by mail or courier.
- Decision criteria:
 - Neighbourhood Services: There are three criteria (equity, distance, and site) for urban and suburban neighbourhoods, and two criteria (distance and site) for rural neighbourhoods.
 - Of note: 10% of the neighbourhood services schedule is allocated to rural neighbourhoods, in line with the rural population representing 10% of the total Ottawa population (to be adjusted in subsequent iterations of the Framework as required to align with

population changes). This approach responds to feedback from the 2024 City of Ottawa Rural Summit, which included suggestions to consider tailored approaches to rural services, and that mobile services (such as food banks and health clinics) be considered to serve rural communities.³

- Home Services: Age is no longer a specific criterion, and clients must agree to the terms of service. Different service models are available depending on client housing situations, including potential to offer bookmobile service to (for example) a congregate living facility.
- Process for monitoring and evaluation
 - Regular reviews and adjustments of mobile services are conducted based on usage, feedback, and changing conditions. A comprehensive review of the Mobile Framework is conducted once per term of Board, or as required.
 - Budget requirements for operational changes will be identified as required via the annual budget cycle. Future plans for resourcing (including fleet and staffing), will be developed and maintained to align with needs based on applying the decision criteria and monitoring demographic trends and NEI data.

Recommendation #3: Approve revisions to Board Policy 002 - Delegation of Authority (Document 3)

Items #22 and #23 in the DOA Policy refer to the SDF and associated frameworks. Specifically, Item #22 indicates that the Board approves “key strategic components of the OPL Service Delivery Framework (SDF) and other frameworks” and Item #23 indicates that the CEO “implement[s] and manage[s] Board-approved position statements, strategic directions, priorities, and frameworks”.

These items were last revised in February 13, 2024 (OPLB-2024-0213-10.1). To align with the principle of these revisions, approval of operational implementation of

³ City of Ottawa Planning, Development and Building Department. “Current Population and Household Estimates: By Sub-Area, Year End 2024.” *City of Ottawa*, 2 Oct. 2025, ottawa.ca/en/living-ottawa/statistics-and-demographics/current-population-and-household-estimates#section-29b9341b-b349-49d2-98dc-5e384fb00c53.

frameworks can be delegated to the CEO. For the Mobile Framework, approving new bookmobile stops or permanently modifying existing stops (changes to timing, locations, or neighbourhoods, or decommissioning of stops), should thus be delegated to the CEO, if these decisions are made in alignment with the criteria in the Framework (for example, when there is a change to a neighbourhood's equity, distance, or site circumstances). Any exceptions to the Framework would be brought forward to the Board for consideration.

As a result, Items 26, 27, and 28 in the DOA Policy are revised as follows:

- Item 26. “Permanently close branches, modify bookmobile stops, or modify kiosk services” – Currently within the Board’s authority
 - Revise to “Permanently close branches.”
 - Note that “Permanently modify kiosk services” is removed as the Board approved no further expansion of Kiosk Services in November 2018 (Alternative Services Priorities, OPLB-2018-1102) and further approved the decommissioning of the existing lending machines and the relocation of the existing holds lockers (upon the opening of the Hunt Club branch (“Library Services in Old Hunt Club,” OPLB-2025-1014-10.3);
- Item 27. “Temporarily close or relocate branches in keeping with the branch closure policy; temporarily modify bookmobile stops, or temporarily modify kiosk services.” - Currently delegated to the CEO
 - Revise to “Temporarily close or relocate branches in keeping with the applicable administrative policy, and permanently or temporarily modify bookmobile stops in alignment with the Mobile Framework” delegated to the CEO
- Item 28. “Approve sites for new branches, buildings, bookmobile stops, or kiosk services.” - Currently within the authority of the Board
 - Revise to “Approve sites for new branches or buildings.”

The current version of the DOA Policy is appended to this report as Document 2. An updated version, incorporating proposed revisions, is appended to this report as Document 3.

Recommendation #4: Direct staff to align operations with the Mobile Framework by Q4 2028 ("Next Steps")

The Framework will guide operational changes that will be implemented over the next two years. Neighbourhoods will be assessed by the criteria in the Framework, resulting in a "Neighbourhood Services Prioritization List" which will be used to initiate preliminary analysis of potential stop locations, and undertake the exploration of partnership opportunities. The Prioritization list will be shared with the Board for information by Q4 2026, and subsequently used to generate a new stop schedule for the bookmobile. Stop timing will be determined based on demographics, available data, and feedback collected by employees through OPL's community development approach.

Administrative documents (such as the online intake form for Home Services) will also be reviewed to ensure alignment with the Framework.

A robust communication plan will be developed for the implementation process, including connection points with the Board (status updates) and interest-holders including ward councillors and neighbourhood residents. Once implementation is complete, a close-out report will be provided to the Board for information.

CONSULTATION

The Mobile Framework was informed by the findings of the 2024 OPL public engagement process ("Me & My Library", summary report provided as part of OPLB-2025-0408-11.2), as well as earlier client questionnaires (2022 Hours of Operation, 2016 Alternative Services). The Framework was further informed by the input of Board members via the Service Framework Ad hoc Committee and the Governance Standing Committee, feedback from community agencies (City of Ottawa Recreation, Cultural, and Facility Services, Ottawa Public Health, Good Companions, Meals on Wheels, and the Council on Aging), input from staff at the Bruyère Health Research Institute (BHRI)'s Ottawa Neighbourhood Study team, as well as input from key OPL employees. Further consultation may occur during implementation, as outlined in the "Next Steps" section of this report.

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. The Mobile Framework affirms OPL's commitment to accessibility for residents experiencing barriers to service.

BOARD PRIORITIES

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

BUSINESS ANALYSIS IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct business analysis implications to approving the recommendations in this report. A variety of data sources were used in developing the Mobile Framework, as referenced in the document and report. Future operational implications will be driven by the Decision Criteria, with required data analysis conducted using internal and external sources as described throughout the Mobile Framework.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. Financial implications resulting from decisions made using the Framework will be brought forward as required. OPL is guided by the Financial Framework when balancing its resources and considers usage and other internal operational metrics. The main funding source for mobile services at OPL is currently operational funds allocated annually to Branch Services (Bookmobile Services, Home Services), as well as capital funds for fleet lifecycle. Any requests for additional resources will be made via the annual budget cycle or other financial reports, as described in the Financial Framework.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

INDIGENOUS AND GENDER EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Equity implications refer to the implications for all equity-denied groups, including racialized people, those who identify as women, those who identify as gender diverse, those who identify as LGBTQI2S, children and youth, older adults, and immigrants. The City's Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook further acknowledges rural residents as a group at risk of exclusion, given that Ottawa has the largest rural area of any city in Canada.

Recognizing the library's value to be inclusive, the Mobile Framework prioritizes equity for urban and suburban neighbourhood services and prioritizes distance for rural neighbourhoods. The Mobile Framework further provides service standards and decision criteria for home services to people confined to their home, which includes equity-denied groups such as people with disabilities and older adults.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Recognizing that the Mobile Framework is a new document to OPL, there are several key risks to be considered.

1. As with any new undertaking, there are risks that the process may have unintended consequences. To mitigate this, staff have included regular reviews in the overall Framework.
2. Expectation management: The Mobile Framework is a guiding document for decision making. The principles and criteria identified herein will be used to make operational decisions about service offerings. Staff will mitigate this risk by further communicating and clarifying the Framework's purpose as mobile services matters arise.
3. Financial risks and implications are as noted in the respective section.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

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

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 Mobile Framework

Document 2 Board Policy 002 - Delegation of Authority (current)

Document 3 Board Policy 002 - Delegation of Authority (proposed)

DISPOSITION

If approved, staff will:

1. Ensure the Mobile Framework is publicly available on the OPL website;

2. Ensure the revised DOA Policy is available to Board members; and,
3. Initiate the implementation process, including:
 - a. Providing progress updates to the Board, as required;
 - b. Returning to the Board by Q4 2026 with a Neighbourhood Services Prioritization List (for information); and,
 - c. Providing a close-out report to the Board for information by Q4 2028.