

**Report to / Rapport au:**

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

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**File Number: OPLB-2016-0152**

**SUBJECT: Ottawa Central Library Public Engagement Framework**

**OBJET: Cadre d'engagement du public dans le projet de la Bibliothèque  
centrale d'Ottawa**

#### **REPORT RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Ottawa Public Library Board approve the Central Library Public  
Engagement Framework as outlined in Document 1.**

#### **RECOMMANDATION DU RAPPORT**

**Que le Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa approuve le  
cadre d'engagement du public dans le projet de la Bibliothèque centrale  
d'Ottawa, décrit dans le document 1.**

#### **BACKGROUND**

A Public Engagement Framework has been developed to support Ottawa Public Library (OPL) plans to build a new flagship Ottawa Central Library (OCL).

In keeping with Board policy OPLB-002 Delegation of Authority, the OPL Board is responsible for approving strategic frameworks. The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with the high-level public engagement approach for the Central Library Development Project.

While there is much agreement regarding the need for a Central Library, and both public and political support (at multiple levels of government), it is widely recognized that the project is challenged by its complexity. There are a number of decisions that must be confirmed (i.e. funding, partnerships, site, and project delivery method) as part of the planning process. The parallel planning track with Library and Archives Canada (LAC) adds to the complexity (i.e. two-pronged approach: the existing Central Library Development Project, and the joint OPL-LAC facility). This results in a requirement to ensure that the planning process itself, and the engagement strategy that is developed to support it, is flexible and agile to respond to all of the potential outcomes.

As demonstrated through the activities undertaken to-date, the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) values public engagement as a meaningful part of the decision-making process. In particular, public engagement that is inclusive, accountable, and responsive to the public's perspectives and needs, is necessary.

The OPL ensures that public engagement for projects of this magnitude aligns with the City of Ottawa's Public Engagement approach.

## **DISCUSSION**

The OPL has ambitious plans to contribute to Ottawa's transformation into a world-class city by creating a modern Central Library that responds to today's rapidly developing technology, increasing customer expectations and changing demographics.

The OCL will be as an innovative, iconic, and significant civic building playing three roles: a local library branch, a citywide service, and a destination for residents and visitors to the Nation's Capital. The initiative is supported by the OPL Board and has been approved as a strategic Term of Council priority.

The community is eager to be involved in this transformational project, and the plans for the new OCL have sparked a passion and generated a healthy debate on the role of libraries in society, and the purpose they serve.

At its core, the OCL is a city-building initiative. Often referred to as 'creative placemaking' initiatives, new central libraries can have a positive transformational impact on a city. When the new Ottawa Central Library opens in 2020, it will be one of a number of new projects and facilities alongside LRT, Arts Court and the Innovation Centre that are propelling Ottawa towards becoming a 'world-class city.'

To ensure the continued engagement of the public throughout the multi-year life of the Central Library Development project, the OPL has worked with Public Affairs & Community Engagement (PACE) to develop a Public Engagement Framework (the Framework) (Document 1). The framework sets out the approach and process that will be used leading up to, and during, the project's various phases. The objective is to ensure that the public and stakeholders are consulted in a meaningful way, and that a broad spectrum of input is collected to inform the location, vision, and design of this new iconic modern library. The public will be engaged in a variety of methods, using the many channels available, in order to broaden the reach.

While the attached Framework outlines the overarching strategic approach to public engagement through to opening in 2020, details on individual activities will be developed as the project unfolds. This allows for alignment with the guiding principles in terms of adaptability and continuous improvement. Given the forthcoming decision points and evolving status of the project, the framework's emphasis is on current activities through to design in 2017.

One of the primary goals of this Framework is to build on the support that currently exists for OCL. Engagement activities (both communications and consultation) will reassure the community and stakeholders that the planning process is sound, rooted in best practices, informed by public involvement, and that it will result in a new Ottawa Central Library that meets and even exceeds community expectations.

The framework is intended to be robust, reestablishing a common understanding of the project vision and the opportunities for public input and dialogue.

A number of key decision-points will be put forth to the OPL Board and Ottawa City Council in the coming months, including the location decision, financing, and recommendations for project delivery. It is more important than ever to ensure the public and stakeholders have a sound understanding of the process, the context within which the new OCL is being developed, and opportunities to provide input. As such,

consultation activities will be supported by comprehensive communications programs, which will include earned and paid media, information materials, and social media.

From the public's perspective, this Framework is designed such that participants in the engagement process are left with:

- A better understanding of the project, its benefits and the trade-offs;
- A sense of having contributed meaningfully to inform the decision-making process; and,
- A feeling of greater trust in, and support for, the decision-makers and the process.

The overall approach to consultations and the supporting communications hinges on two main prongs – the need to:

- Frame this initiative as city-building to establish a common understanding of the project; and,
- Build trust in the process to ensure meaningful and productive engagement.

#### Upcoming engagement activities

The Framework is based on overarching guiding principles of meaningful consultation, and aligned with the ladder of engagement (see Appendix 1). It is overlaid on top of the project's technical program to ensure that input solicited from the public can influence decision-making.

With respect to the technical process going forward, there are two 'input points' throughout 2016 and one 'input point' in 2017 where public input can shape decision-making:

- May-June 2016: Site evaluation criteria ("Where it will be built")
- June 2016: Functional program ("What will be built")
- 2017: Building design ("What it will look like")

Engagement activities in May and June 2016 build on the results of past consultations including the 2013 IMAGINE campaign on the library of the future; on public input (in-person and online) on spaces and services in a central library as gathered in March - April 2015; and on public opinion research conducted in October - November 2015 with

customers, future customers, and residents on use of the current Main branch and future Central Library. In addition, they are supplemented by the recent release of a refreshed Ottawa Central Library website.

#### **1. Public Input – Site Evaluation Criteria**

The forthcoming site selection must take into account the views and input of city residents and interested stakeholders as to what they deem most important when selecting a location for a central library. Public engagement at this step is partnership and site agnostic, applying to both the OPL stand-alone and OPL-LAC joint facility. Previous and ongoing public input as well as best practices (library and technical expertise) will be considered in the development of the site evaluation criteria that the Board will approve in July 2016.

There will be two components to this consultation: In-person sessions, followed by an online questionnaire. The in-person sessions are scheduled for May 16, 2016. Notice of this public event was provided in a multitude of ways, through both owned and earned media.

The sessions will feature:

- Information boards and brief presentations, moderated by the OPL Board Chair; and,
- Community discussion: led by table hosts, participants will engage in small group discussions about what is most important to them about the location of the new Ottawa Central Library.

The input and ideas received during those in-person sessions will serve as the basis for an online questionnaire. The questionnaire will be launched in late May and will allow all residents to provide input into how site evaluation criteria will be weighed.

#### **2. Public Input – Functional Building Program**

With respect to the Functional Building Program, there are a number of opportunities for public participation throughout May and June. This input is partnership dependent, applying to both the OPL stand-alone and OPL-LAC joint facility.

Input begins through targeted focus groups scheduled throughout late May and early June. The focus groups are designed to validate specific functional components in advance of more broader public input in June. Focus groups will include participants from stakeholder groups for both OPL and LAC (e.g. Teen Advisory Group members, researchers, genealogists, etc.).

Following the focus groups, two sessions will be held to involve the broader public in the functional building program. The first is scheduled for June 15 at Jean Pigott Place (Ottawa City Hall). The second will take place at the Library and Archives Canada building, 395 Wellington Street, on June 22. In addition, display boards will rotate through some OPL branches throughout the summer.

The sessions will feature an Open House portion and presentation, followed by the consultation via a World Café, based on functional programming themes. In this type of consultation, participants move through tables reviewing the theme, comments left by other participants, and sharing their own thoughts and ideas.

The input and ideas received will be used to validate the spaces and uses of the Ottawa Central Library, building on the input received at the blue-sky engagement held in March and April 2015.

#### Timelines

The following outlines the anticipated timeline / release of various public engagement activities and related key decision points.

Date (2016)	Activity
May 16	Public discussion on what's important regarding location
May 26	Launch on-line questionnaire.
June 9	Close on-line questionnaire.
June 15 (City Hall) June 22 (LAC)	Public discussions on functional building programming.
July 7	Public release of Board documents regarding draft site

	evaluation criteria, including summary of public input.
July 12	OPL Board meeting – approval of site evaluation criteria.
December 2016	OPL Board meeting – complete decision package including recommendations on site, partnerships, funding, and project delivery method. This includes a summary of the public input related to the functional program.

## **CONSULTATION**

The Ottawa Central Library Public Engagement Framework was developed using feedback received through public delegations and Trustees at previous Board meetings, with input from past consultations, a series of stakeholder interviews, media and literature reviews.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal impediments to receiving this report.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

In keeping with the guiding principles, accessibility is a key consideration throughout the public engagement framework. Accommodations will be made available for participants upon request and as required (e.g. visual aids, hearing support, etc.).

## **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

## **BOARD PRIORITIES**

Central Library Development is a 2015-2018 approved strategic priority for both the Board and City Council.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

The following immediately follows the report.

Document 1 Ottawa Central Library Engagement and Communications Strategy

## **DISPOSITION**

Pending Board approval, the Framework will support the Ottawa Public Library's plans to build a new flagship Ottawa Central Library.



## **Public Engagement Guiding Principles and Levels of Engagement**

The Public Engagement Framework for the Ottawa Central Library is based on the following overarching guiding principles on engagement in order to ensure a meaningful and effective process:

- **ACCOUNTABLE:** Provide participants with information on how their feedback was considered and adopted, or why it was not adopted.
- **INCLUSIVE:** Plan and implement engagement activities that are accessible and respond to the needs of all, and that remove potential barriers to participation.
- **OPEN, INFORMATIVE, and TRANSPARENT:** Provide clear, relevant and complete information, in plain language at the start and throughout the public engagement process and communicate the purpose, expectations, and limitations clearly.
- **TIMELY:** Ensure that engagement is conducted in a well-timed manner, providing sufficient time for soliciting input, and for reporting back on how the input was used.
- **ADAPTIVE:** Ensure that the engagement is well-tailored to the nature of the topic being discussed and flexible enough to be modified during the process, as needed.
- **CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING:** Evaluate each public engagement initiative by seeking input from participants about the process and the content. Evaluate on an ongoing basis in order to improve the quality of the public engagement process over time.
- **COOPERATIVE:** Build and maintain positive, respectful, and co-operative relationships with residents, stakeholders and community partners in order to increase the effectiveness of public engagement.

In keeping with these principles, public engagement methods are considered based on the level of engagement required (known as the ladder of engagement). The various levels are:

- **INFORM:** one-way communication method that usually involves information aimed at raising awareness and understanding. It is conducted throughout projects in order to help the public understand the issues and the environment informing the Board's decisions and recommendations to Council (where applicable).
- **CONSULT:** in addition to achieving the goal of the INFORM stage, this method provides opportunities for public feedback, including two-way communication and public comment in its planning.
- **INVOLVE:** this method is used at various stages throughout a project to engage the public and ensure that their issues and concerns are understood and considered. At this level, public input is analyzed, incorporated, and built into the decisions and outcomes.
- **COLLABORATE:** in this method, the public partners with the OPL participating in the analysis of issues and directly influencing the recommendations, outcomes, and decisions.
- **DELEGATE:** decision-making authority is handed over to another group in accordance with a formal governance approach (agreement, terms of reference), with the OPL providing support where required.