

Report to / Rapport au:

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

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SUBJECT: Update – Indigenous Services at Ottawa Public Library

OBJET: Mise à jour – Services aux Autochtones à la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the Ottawa Public Library Board receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATION DU RAPPORT

Que le Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa prenne connaissance de ce rapport.

BACKGROUND

Ottawa is located entirely within the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation. It is a gathering place for all Indigenous people. The Algonquin Anishinabe Nation is the ancestral host nation of the unceded lands upon which Ottawa is built.

Statistics¹ for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people show that Ottawa is the third-fastest growing Indigenous community in Canada, and also has the largest Inuit population outside the North. According to the 2016 Census, there are 22,955 people² who self-identified as Indigenous. The break-down is as follows:

- 11,190 First Nations (of which, 1,580 people identified as members of an Algonquin Anishinabe First Nation);
- 9,475 Métis;
- 1,145 Inuit;
- 545 multiple Indigenous responses; and,
- 595 Indigenous responses not included elsewhere.

Due in part to self-identification hesitancy, mobility, and homelessness, census results are consistently lower than reality.

Ottawa Public Library (OPL) plays a dual role in the community. First and foremost, staff ensure that collections, programs and spaces are welcoming to all customers. Secondly, OPL provides opportunities for customers to learn more about the rich cultures, histories, and literature of all cultures across Canada. This duality also exists for both the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous communities of Ottawa.

In 2007, Ottawa City Council endorsed the creation of the Aboriginal Working Committee (AWC), a formal partnership with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition of urban Indigenous service partners and other public sector partners. The Committee was established to foster and build relationships with, and address the service needs of, Ottawa's urban Indigenous communities. OPL is a member of the Aboriginal Working Committee and receives input from the Committee on its services to the Indigenous community.

¹ City of Ottawa. Equity and Inclusion Lens. Diversity Snapshot: Aboriginal Peoples – First Nations, Inuit, Métis. 2010
(http://ozonehome.city.a.ottawa.ca/irj/servlet/prt/portal/prtroot/com.stellent.coo.wcmip.getwcmpage?did=IQCT_013317)

² Statistics Canada: Aboriginal Population Profile, 2016 Census (https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/abpopprof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3506008&Data=Count&SearchText=Ottawa&SearchType=Begin&B1=Aboriginal%20peoples&C1=All&SEX_ID=1&AGE_ID=1&RESGEO_ID=1)

In June 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released its findings and 94 Calls to Action³ aimed at redressing the residential schools' legacy and advancing the reconciliation process in Canada.

In 2016, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) established a committee to review the TRC's 94 Calls to Action. OPL was represented through participation of the Deputy CEO. The Committee's final report⁴ was released on April 24, 2017 and details 10 recommendations to address Indigenous issues related to libraries, archives and cultural memory institutions, and how best to support initiatives, which advance and implement meaningful reconciliation as identified by the TRC's Calls to Action.

In June 2017, the Ottawa Public Library Board (OPLB) received a presentation on OPL's approach to Indigenous services. At that time, staff committed to bringing forward a report outlining OPL's response to the CFLA TRC's recommendations.

In February 2018, the OPLB received a report titled OPL Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (OPLB-2018-0203). The report outlined OPL's on-going actions in response to the TRC's Calls to Action. At that time, direction was received to develop a position statement on Indigenous Services for the OPLB's consideration, as well as work with the City of Ottawa (the City) to develop protocols regarding verbal and visual land acknowledgments at library events and in library locations.

The purpose of this report is to update the OPLB on the work completed since receiving the February 2018 report.

DISCUSSION

Board Position Statement and Land Acknowledgements

At the tabling of the last report, staff believed that developing a Position Statement on Indigenous Services and implementing protocols regarding verbal and visual land acknowledgments could serve as meaningful actions in response to the TRC Calls to

³ Full version can be found by following this link: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

⁴ Full version can be found by following this link: http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/indigenous/trc_report/

Action. Based on the work of the past 18-months, staff now recognize this is not the case.

Elders serving on the City's Aboriginal Working Group have regularly counselled that relationship building must always be the primary focus in any initiative undertaken. Building relationships takes time. While OPL has made inroads with service providers, it has not yet succeeded in developing relationships with local Indigenous representatives at a more fundamental level. For a position statement or protocol to be meaningful:

- A relationship between OPL and the Indigenous communities must already be in place;
- A position statement must be developed jointly between OPL staff/Board and the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation and representatives of the urban Indigenous population to:
 - Obtain their perspectives and feedback on new OPL initiatives; and,
 - Determine how the host nation and the Indigenous urban population would like to participate in the process.
- Protocols regarding verbal and visual land acknowledgements must also be developed in conjunction with the host nation.

Over the past 18-months, staff have focused on relationship building using a two-pronged approach: a) collaborating with the City on various initiatives, and b) using an Indigenous lens when developing library-led initiatives such as collections, programs, and spaces. Staff do not recommend developing the position statement and various protocols until such time that a deeper relationship is cultivated.

A) Collaboration with the City

- i) In February 2018, the City approved its Reconciliation Action Plan⁵. The plan addresses the TRC Calls to Action and confirms the City's commitment to reconciliation. The plan is a direct result of a relationship built on trust and collaboration between the City, the Indigenous communities of Ottawa, and many community partners, including OPL. It includes 14 actions in the areas of:

⁵ City of Ottawa Reconciliation Action Plan 2018 (<https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/your-city-government/city-ottawa-reconciliation-action-plan>)

- Culture;
- Employment;
- Children's Services; and,
- Education and Awareness Building.

One such action is the development of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation Civic Cultural Protocol.

- ii) Throughout 2018, OPL has been an active partner in the development of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation Civic Cultural Protocol and Implementation Plan. Through the leadership of Cultural Development Initiatives, in full collaboration with the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation and Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council and the Algonquin Nation Programs and Services Secretariat, the joint-team has developed a protocol and implementation plan that serves as a living document, to be reviewed every five years. The protocol is intended to frame and establish a formal relationship between the parties, providing a guide for interaction and partnership development in the areas of arts, heritage and culture. Still in draft form, it is anticipated that the document will be presented to Ottawa City Council later this year. In the plan, OPL has identified four objectives, specific to the Host Algonquin Anishinabe Nation. These are:

- Develop Algonquin Anishinabe content in collections;
- Develop programs that feature and highlight Algonquin Anishinabe history, heritage and culture;
- Support the Algonquin Anishinabe in preserving, revitalizing, and strengthening their language; and,
- Build a visible presence of Algonquin Anishinabe culture and language in OPL spaces through art and architecture.

The adoption of the City's Algonquin Anishinabe Nation Civic Cultural Protocol will serve to guide library staff in developing a better understanding of Algonquin Anishinabe communities, people, history, heritage, culture, and related needs. This understanding will improve outreach and engagement with the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation, and identify new opportunities for collaboration.

B) Library-led Initiatives

OPL is an important portal for discovery and learning for customers through its collections, programs, and spaces. This also holds true in terms of OPL's dual role in serving both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

- The collection reflects a broad spectrum of Indigenous communities across the country, and their respective interests. The rich, varied, and relevant Indigenous collections are available in multiple formats, including print, e-content, music and film, and target all age groups. Staff have been working to increase the 'discoverability' of Indigenous authors through the catalogue by labeling collections with appropriate key words, by creating reading lists, blogs, and on-line book clubs, particularly during National Indigenous History Month.
- OPL collaborates with local Indigenous partners to provide wholistic, culture-based programs and services to local Indigenous communities, in an environment that promotes Indigenous languages, cultural teachings, traditional foods, and programs that are grounded in traditional knowledge. With the community-led approach, staff engage in on-going dialogue with service providers to determine how OPL can help support their needs. In doing so, OPL has been invited to participate in external events/activities, and has learned how to better incorporate Indigenous content, culture, and language into library programming in a systematic way.
- The site for the Ottawa Public Library-Library and Archives Canada (OPL-LAC) Joint Facility is located near Chaudière Falls, a sacred meeting place for the Algonquin Anishinabe and other First Nations, associated with a portage and trade route for Indigenous people along the Ottawa River. The OPL-LAC Joint Facility's public engagement process incorporates meaningful dialogue with the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation to examine the nature of knowledge transfer and learning that will take place in the building as it relates to the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation. The project also includes an Indigenous art stream, providing for visual representation of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation and other Indigenous communities. Lessons learned from this initiative will guide OPL in future building and revitalization projects.

Going forward

Libraries have an important role in creating inclusive and welcoming public spaces, providing access to materials in all formats, highlighting Indigenous titles, and offering programming and events. These services support Indigenous peoples while also creating general awareness of Indigenous matters today and every day.

Going forward, staff will:

- Ensure the library continues to serve as a catalyst for raising awareness of Indigenous culture, history and languages;
- Develop and implement programs and services in collaboration with the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation and with all First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities of Ottawa;
- Continue to actively participate in City initiatives that help strengthen relationships with the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation and with all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities in a more fundamental fashion;
- Continue collaborating with Indigenous communities to integrate Indigenous values into the design and program elements of the OCL-LAC joint facility, including identifying program spaces within the facility where Indigenous interest and needs could be accommodated, and where Indigenous spirit could be incorporated; and,
- Support grass-roots work done by front-line staff to sustain relationships with service providers and Indigenous communities across the City.

CONSULTATION

OPL Senior Management and front-line staff responsible for direct service delivery were consulted in the development of this report, as were partners from the City of Ottawa.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with 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

There are no accessibility implications associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

BOARD PRIORITIES

This report aligns with the Board's Strategic Statement (By 2023, we will increase the number of active cardholders by 25% by improving OPL's community relevance), Strategic Direction (Redesign the Library Experience), specifically: i) define the ideal experience across physical and virtual channels, ii) create the destination experience for Ottawa Central Library, and iii) assess the impact of barriers to service.

DISPOSITION

Under the stewardship of the CEO, staff will continue to use an Indigenous lens on all library services, as well as continue building relationships of trust, and collaboration. Any decisions requiring Board approval will be brought forward as per the Board Policy 002-OPLB, Delegation of Authority.