

**Report to / Rapport au:**

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

**April 12, 2022 / 12 avril 2022**

**Submitted by / Soumis par:**

**Danielle McDonald, Chief Executive Officer / Directrice générale**

*Contact Person / Personne ressource:*

*Anna Basile, Division Manager, Corporate Services / Directrice, Services  
organisationnels*

*(613) 580-2424 x32335, [Anna.Basile@BiblioOttawaLibrary.ca](mailto:Anna.Basile@BiblioOttawaLibrary.ca)*

**File Number: OPLB-2022-0407**

**SUBJECT: Semi-Annual Performance Measurement – July to December 2021**

**OBJET: Cadre de mesure du rendement semestrielle – Juillet à décembre  
2021**

**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 à titre d'information.**

**BACKGROUND**

The Ottawa Public Library (OPL) Board approved the Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) in May 2013 (Board Report # OPLB2013-0052). The PMF ensures that Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are reviewed and re-aligned each term of the Board, with the organization's Strategic Plan and industry best practices. In June 2019, the Board approved a new Strategic Plan with one overarching statement: "By 2023, we

will increase the number of active cardholders by 25 percent by improving OPL's community relevance."

Following the adoption of the new Strategic Plan, and in accordance with the Performance Measurement Framework (PMF), on February 11, 2020, the Board approved an updated list of Key Performance Indicators (KPI). The new indicators introduced a focus on customer and employee experience as key influencers in the customer's journey to becoming an active cardholder.

The PMF monitors four employee (E) and four customer (C) KPIs on a semi-annual basis. The list below identifies the specific measures in alignment with OPL's 2020-2023 Strategic Directions and highlights important customer and employee trends:

- Redesign Library Experience

C1. Cardholder Growth Rate (Customer Experience)

C2. Total Twelve-Month-Active Cardholders (Customer Experience)

- Build Capacity

E1. Average Applicants per Job Posting (Employee Experience)

E2. Employee Turnover Rate (Employee Experience)

E3. Active Cardholder to Full-Time Equivalent Ratio (Employee Experience)

E4. New Employee Referral Ratio (Employee Experience)

- Promote OPL's Value

C3. Economic Benefit per Cardholder (Customer Experience)

C4. New Cardholder Referral Ratio (Customer Experience)

Measurement groups (C1-C4 and E1-E4) comprise a strategic view of important facets of customer and employee journeys. Customers and employees are central to the Library's Vision and Mission, and the focus of the KPIs. This information is necessary to inform strategic decision making and marks a shift away from traditional Library metrics and toward strategic indicators. Additional background information about the KPIs is available in the February 11, 2020, Board report (OPLB-2020-0202).

Indicators C1 and E1 represent early touch points in the customer and employee experience. Both KPIs focus on activation and acquisition to assist in evaluating if OPL is attracting new customers and employee candidates. Understanding changes in these measures can inform decision making as the library redesigns the experiences of customers and employees and builds capacity. “Cardholder Growth Rate (C1)” measures the activation of new memberships as a percent change in comparison to the same period in the previous year. “Average Applicants per Job Posting (E1)” provides critical information about the acquisition of OPL candidates based on job postings.

Once visitors and candidates become employees or cardholders, monitoring retention becomes critical to ensure that OPL retains valuable skills and knowledge on the employee side and continues to provide valuable public services to customers. “Total 12- Month Active Cardholders (C2)” includes any customer who used online resources or physical services at least once in the previous 12-month period. “Employee Turnover Rate (E2)” provides an indication of whether permanent employees leave within a period of less than two years (referred to as regrettable turnover).

As customers continue to use services, economic benefit is created for the cardholder, community, and residents. Economic benefit is the estimated value generated through programs, activities, and services. Direct benefit is value created by the usage of free services provided by OPL in lieu of paid alternatives. Indirect benefit is value created through spending by OPL staff; that is, employee spending of wages in the local economy, creating jobs and additional economic value. “Economic Benefit per Cardholder (C3)” focuses only on the direct added value customers receive. The measure accounts for traditional usage statistics related to the benefits of card membership (access to collections, registered programming, and online resources). Measure C3 is reported only in Period 2 (July-December). Period 2 reporting occurs annually each April.

Growth in memberships and evolving and innovative services require adaptive staffing models. Shortages in staffing can lead to longer wait times or fewer service offerings and decrease customer and employee satisfaction. “Active Cardholder to Full Time Equivalent Ratio (E3)” helps OPL understand whether staffing models are responsive to changes in the active cardholder base. The measure looks at the Total 12-Month Active Cardholder figure as a ratio of staffing Full Time Equivalent positions.

Customers and employees who stay with OPL, and who typically derive benefits from library services, often promote OPL's value by word of mouth. It is important to confirm whether new cardholders or employees were referred to OPL. Referrals can be an indicator of satisfaction and are linked directly to the creation of new 12-Month-Active Cardholders. The “New Cardholder Referral Ratio (C4)” and the “New Employee Referral Ratio (E4)” track the percentage of customers and employees that were created based on the referral of an OPL customer or employee, respectively. Both measures required the creation of new data collection methods which began in Period 1 2020.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with a performance measurement update for the July - December 2021 period. In accordance with recommendations presented in the 2020 Semi-Annual Performance Reports (OPLB-2020-1006, OPLB-2021-0405), it remains that Period 2 2021 results should not be used for benchmarking typical Library operations compared to future KPI results.

In addition, and as directed at the September 14, 2021, OPL Board meeting, this report includes an addendum providing an update on the implementation of the Materials Recovery Model (MRM) in 2021, included in Document 1.

## **DISCUSSION**

July to December 2021 was the fourth semi-annual reporting period to occur during the Coronavirus pandemic. During the reporting period, COVID-19 restrictions eased, allowing OPL to offer enhanced services starting on July 7<sup>th</sup> at 31 open branches. OPL returned to normal pre-pandemic hours at all locations on September 7<sup>th</sup> for the first time since March 2020. A return to typical operations and a shift towards pre-pandemic activities were critical factors that impacted the results for the period.

Below is the summary chart of all indicators for Period 1 and Period 2 2021 followed by individual charts and observations for each measure.

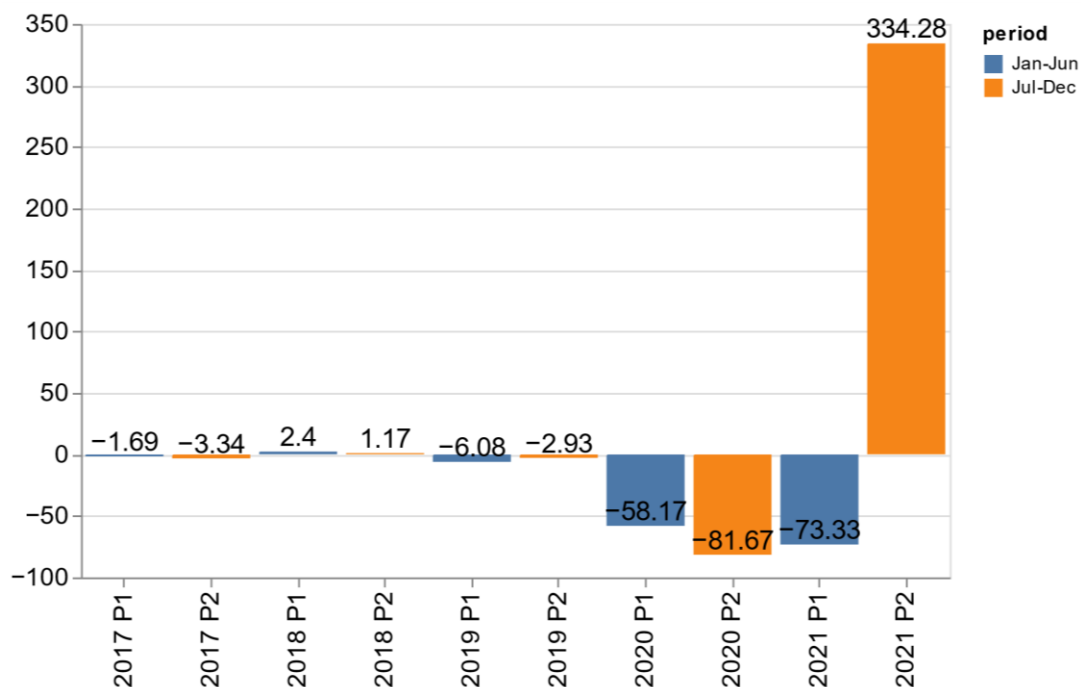
**Table 1. Period 1 (January-June) and Period 2 (July-December) from 2017 to 2021**

Period		Measure Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
1	C1	Cardholder Growth Rate	-1.69	2.4	-6.08	-58.17	-73.33
	C2	Total Twelve-Month Active Cardholders	230,993	245,878	239,390	231,217	232,959
	C4	New Cardholder Referral Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	23.68
	E1	Average Applicants Per Job Posting	62	66	97	47	58
	E2	Employee Turnover Rate	0.0073	0.0109	0.0074	0.0093	0.004
	E3	Employee Referral Ratio	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	E4	Active Cardholder to Full Time Equivalent Ratio	501.88	532.73	516.03	498.54	502.78
2	C1	Cardholder Growth Rate (%)	-3.34	1.17	-2.93	-81.67	<b>334.28</b>
	C2	Total Twelve-Month Active Cardholders	220,071	237,567	244,336	214,241	<b>233,378</b>
	C3	Economic Benefit per Cardholder	N/A	490.55	498.44	286.54	<b>473.46</b>
	C4	New Cardholder Referral Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	18.96	<b>17.47</b>

E1	Average Applicants Per Job Posting	33.79	39.72	72.89	78	<b>84.63</b>
E2	Employee Turnover Rate	0.0073	0.0145	0.0093	0.0079	<b>0.0074</b>
E3	Employee Referral Ratio	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>0</b>
E4	Active Cardholder to Full Time Equivalent Ratio	476.85	516.7	526.55	461.71	<b>505.22</b>

Please note that certain measures are marked with 'N/A' where historical data is not available. These measures include “New Cardholder Referral Rate (C4)” and “New Employee Referral Ratio (E4)”. Future PMF reports will begin to reflect this data.

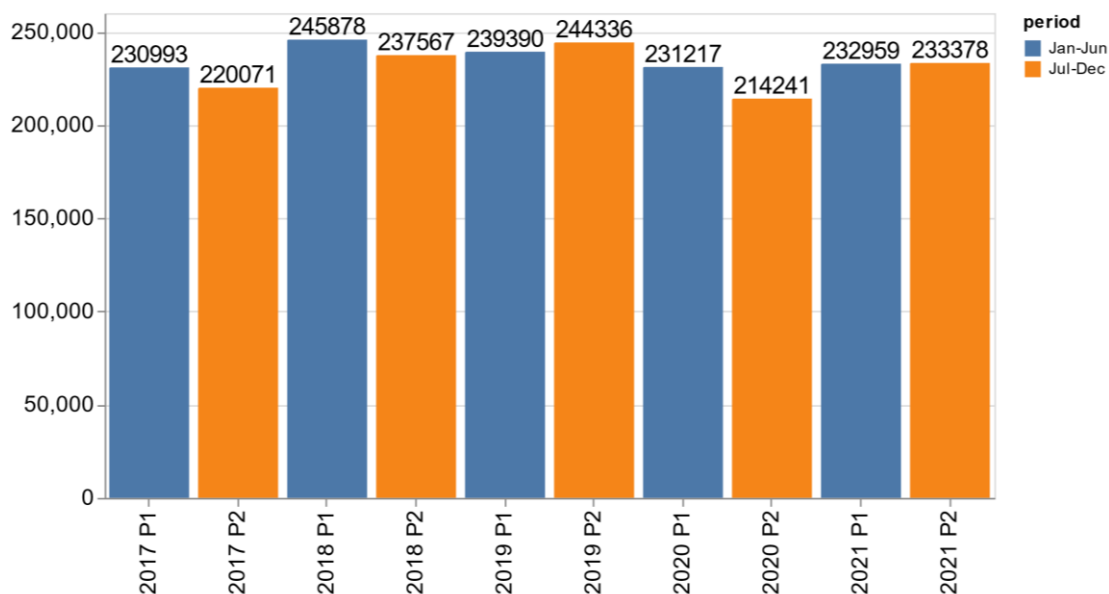
### C1- Cardholder Growth Rate (%)



The 'Cardholder Growth Rate (C1)' was 334.28 percent in Period 2 2021 and represents the creation of 19,000 new memberships created in-person and on-line for full and temporary library services. The surge in new membership creation occurred throughout September, October, and November as pre-pandemic hours were restored. A normal seasonal dip in membership creation occurred during the December holiday period. Online memberships accounted for almost 1 out of 4 new memberships, and the balance being created in-person at OPL branches.

During the October Library Month campaign, OPL used social media outlets to encourage the public to discover their neighbourhood library and to explore the power of a new library card. In addition, the increase reflects a new practice whereby participation in children's programming now requires that each child hold a unique card. While originally introduced to support contact tracing during the pandemic, there is a certain pride that comes with card membership. OPL will continue this practice moving forward as it is a better reflection of library need and use. While the total number of new memberships created did not reach pre-pandemic levels, the large increase demonstrated a desire for access to Library services.

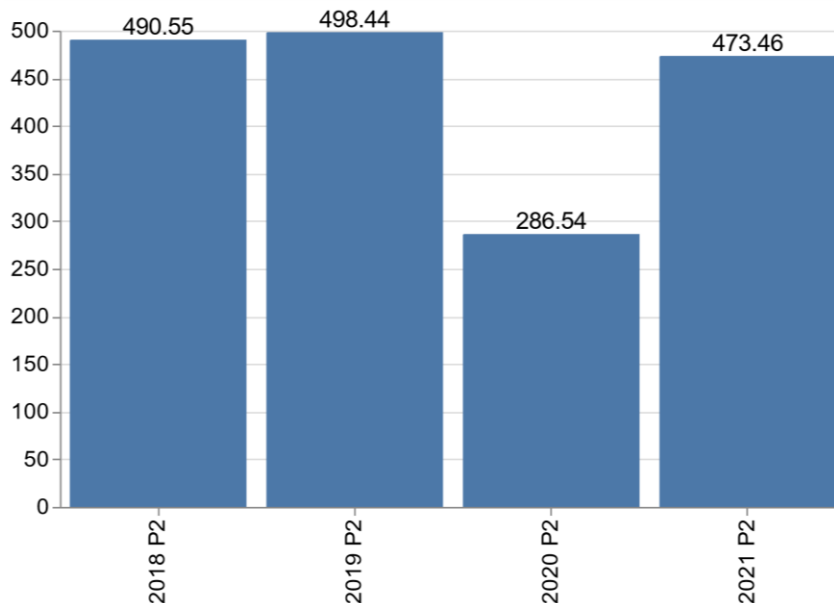
## C2 - Total 12-Month Active Cardholders



During the measurement period, "12-Month Active Cardholders (C2)" remained stable when compared January to June 2021. This result, in addition to new memberships and a return to in-branch usage, can be linked to a combination of other factors. OPL

continued to see membership renewals as customers returned or paid for lost materials as part of the Materials Recovery Model. During all of 2021, almost 80 percent of customers who had borrowed physical materials in the past continued to use the library through online resources. Although the retention of library cardholders relies heavily on access to in-person services, online use continued to grow and provided great value to the community. While there is significant overlap between customers using OPL's physical and digital services, it remains crucial to emphasize the importance of providing reliable digital services, access to physical spaces, and customer service interactions to promote customer retention.

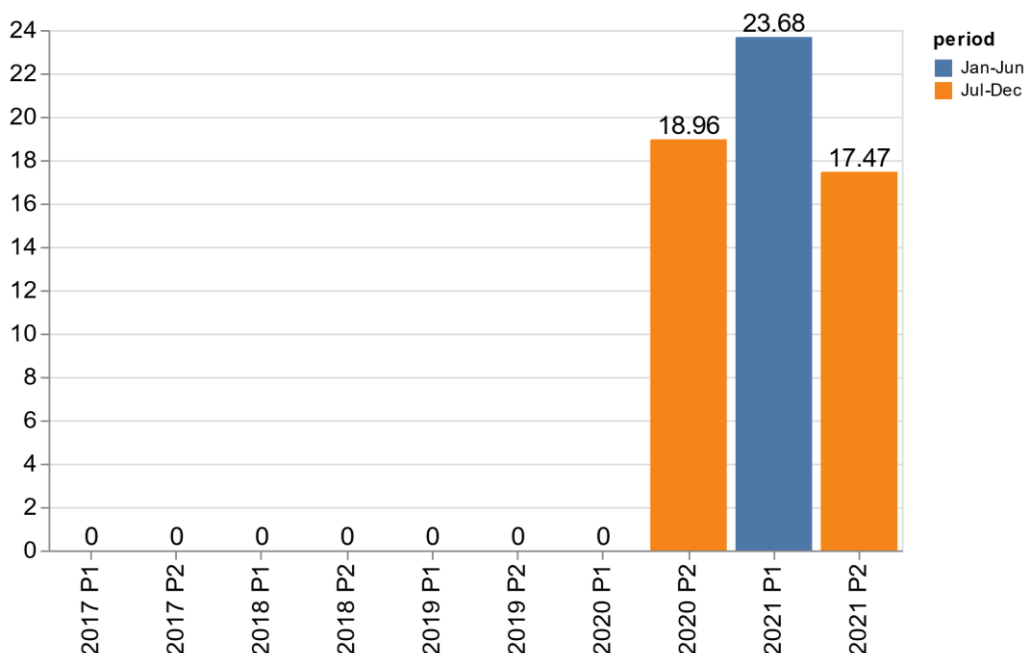
### C3 - Economic Benefit per Cardholder



The measure “Economic Benefit per Cardholder (C3)” is reported annually in the Period 2 PMF report. During Period 2 2021, the benefit per active cardholder was \$473.46. This is a significant increase from 2020 (\$286.54) when library services were more impacted by the pandemic. Physical and digital circulation of OPL collections accounts for more than 90 percent of the economic benefit. This result continues to highlight the primary importance of circulating materials in OPL's physical and virtual collection. The result for the period can be attributed to increases in physical circulation, particularly from October to December. Additionally, increased online resources usage, timely availability of requested materials, and access to in-person programming helped restore the average value per cardholder to within five (5) percent of pre-pandemic values.

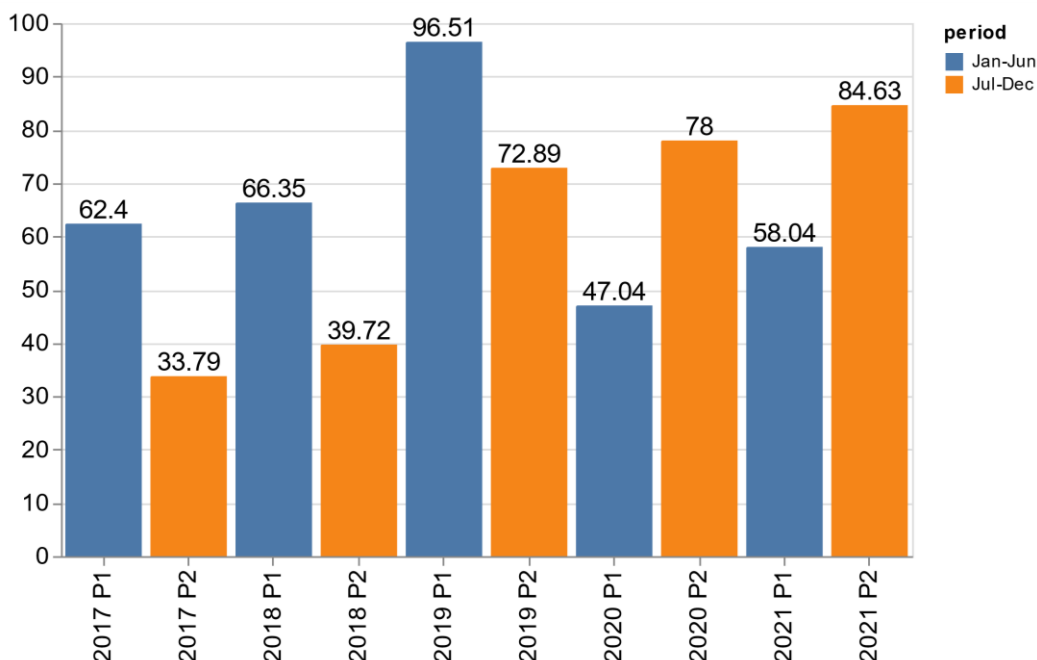
While the total increase of circulation remains below 2019 totals, individual cardholders are borrowing more materials on average.

#### C4 - New Cardholder Referral Ratio



Period 2 2021 is the third PMF report featuring the "New Cardholder Referral Ratio". Data collection for the measure began in July 2020. During Period 2 2021, the new cardholder referral ratio was 17.47 percent, a decrease of 1.49 percent from Period 2 2020. Referrals are collected manually during the creation of new memberships online and in-person. The number of responses to the referral question was higher for online registrations than for in-person registrations. This could be indicative of time urgency in each situation with online registrations occurring from the comfort of the registrant's home in most cases. As branch services are expanded and more Library card memberships are created in-person, the baseline measurements for both online and in-person referral responses are expected to stabilize at a higher rate.

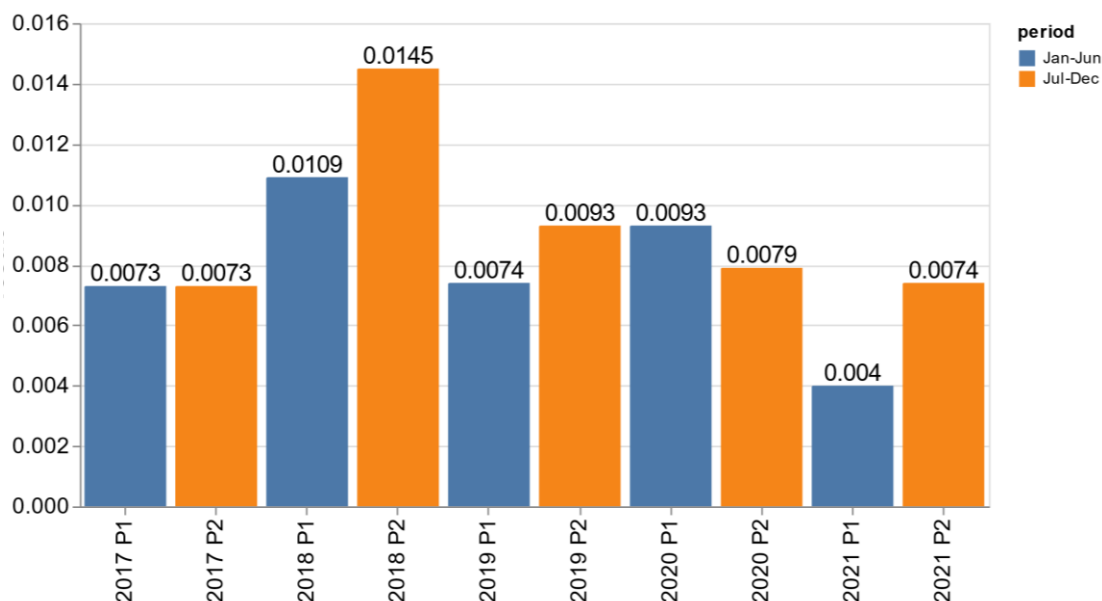
**E1 - Average Applicants per Job Posting:**



During Period 2 2021, the “Average Applicants per Job Posting (E1)” increased to 84.63. Results for the measurement period were at their second highest since Period 1 2017. In Period 2 2021, there were 50 job postings around the system representing a particularly high level of recruiting activity compared to previous periods. Accordingly, there was an increase in the number applications throughout the period bringing the total applications back to pre-pandemic levels. Results for this period indicate a strong interest in library jobs and employment with OPL.

During the measurement Period, new employment opportunities at OPL were promoted online through various social media channels to reach a larger audience of prospective candidates. Also, the addition of a dedicated page on the OPL website promoting OPL-specific jobs may have contributed to the increased total number of applicants. Reaching a wider audience helps attract new talent and more diverse candidates.

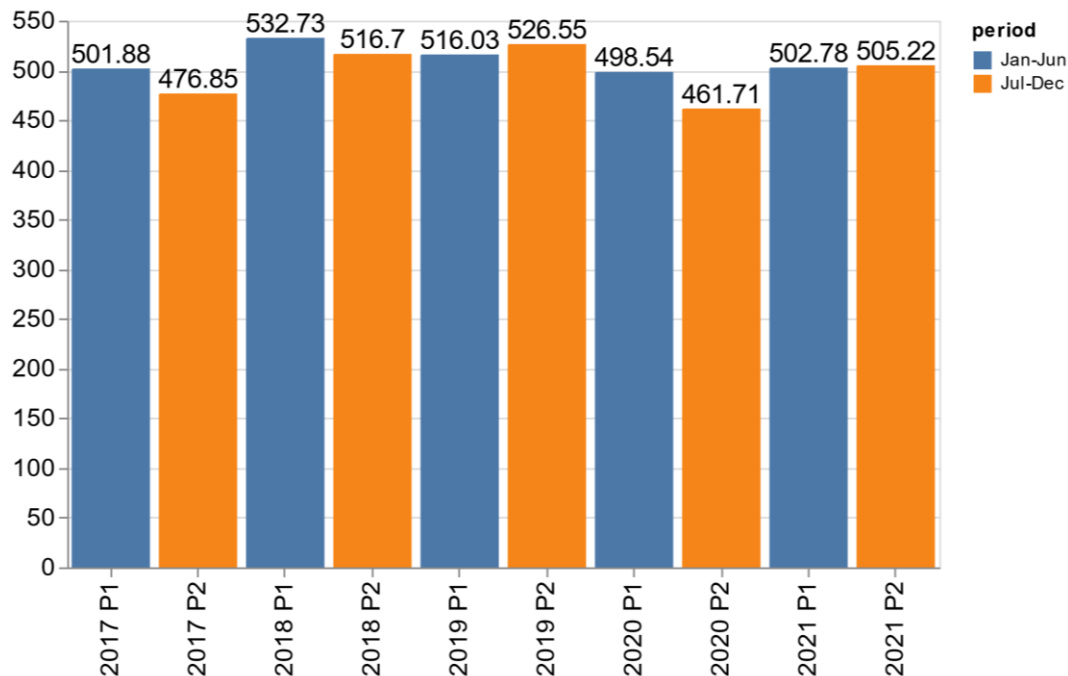
## E2 - Employee Turnover Rate:



“Employee Turnover Rate (E2)” results in Period 2 2021 were below 1 percent and consistent with previous period results. Regrettable employee turnover, as a sub-category of turnover, is historically low at OPL and occurs most frequently in entry-level positions.

As a note of correction, charts previously provided for this measure in past performance reports were overstated due to the inclusion of several temporary positions in 2018. By definition, this measure is to include only permanent positions. The chart has been corrected in this report by reducing Period 1 2018 from 0.0199 to 0.0109 and Period 2 2018 from 0.0217 to 0.0145. Monitoring this measure is important to see the potential lasting impact of large organizational changes or environmental factors on job satisfaction and tenure at OPL.

### E3 - Active Cardholder to Full-Time Equivalent Ratio:



A slight increase in the “Active Cardholder to Full-Time Equivalent Ratio (E3)” from Period 1 2021 was the result of an increase in the total 12-month active cardholders. Generally, Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) remain stable when compared to other human resource metrics such as employee head counts. FTEs are the metric through which the Board may be asked to approve additional employees or positions and are more directly relatable to finance. To that end, as services are reintroduced and cardholder counts change, this measurement will provide some indication of the employee to customer ratio and that financial provision for customer service is present.

### E4 - New Employee Referral Ratio:

During Period 2 2021, there were no reported employee referrals for the “New Employee Referral Ratio (E4)” measure. The data for the measure is unique to OPL and captured through the job application site hosted by the City of Ottawa. Due to a technology issue that impacted the collection of data within the site, staff are unable to confirm the result for this measurement period. Staff are working to resolve the issue, and to corroborate the results with new employees going forward, staff will implement a process post-hire to ensure this measure accurately reflects the results. Additionally, staff endeavour to make the response a mandatory requirement for future applicants.

## **CONSULTATION**

Internal consultations were conducted to analyze the data and determine compensatory actions taken by staff to improve services and, therefore, KPI results.

## **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

Ottawa Public Library supports and considers the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (2005)* in its operations. There are no accessibility impacts associated with this report.

## **BOARD PRIORITIES**

This report is prepared in compliance with OPL Board Policy OPLB-0010 CEO Reporting and Board Monitoring.

## **BUSINESS ANALYSIS IMPLICATIONS**

Business analysis implications are as identified in the body of the report.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

## **INDIGENOUS AND GENDER EQUITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no indigenous and gender equity implications associated with this report.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

## **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Document 1     Update on Materials Recovery Model – 2021 review

**DISPOSITION**

The next Semi-Annual Performance Measurement Report will be brought to the Board in October 2022 and will present results from January 1, 2022, to June 30, 2022.

### **Update on Materials Recovery Model – 2021 review**

As part of the Materials Recovery Model (MRM) Report (OPLB-2020-1004) that was presented in October 2020, the Board approved the elimination of late fees starting January 1, 2021, taking concrete action in removing systemic barriers and moving forward OPL's commitment to social equity.

With the implementation of the MRM in January 2021, outstanding late fees were removed from 155,000 customer accounts. Approximately 95% of accounts with lost materials were cleared by the end of Q1 2021, with items either returned or paid for, resulting in over \$500,000 worth of recovered materials.

Staff also committed to reporting on the following metrics as part of the October 2020 MRM Board report. The below reports on data from 2021, as compared to 2020.

- Increase in circulation (overall):
  - 22% increase in circulation overall
  - 39.5% increase in circulation in areas of the city with lower income markers
- Number of items converted to “lost”:
  - 60,348 (30% increase) throughout 2021. The increase is a result of the MRM, in which items are moved to a “lost” status 21 days after their due date. Prior to 2021, items were moved to a “lost” status 35 days after their due date.
  - 94% of items converted to lost in 2021 were subsequently either returned or paid for
- Average number of days materials returned beyond due date:
  - 99% of materials are returned on time or within 3 weeks of the due date
- Increase in active cardholders in areas of the city with lower income markers:
  - 9% overall increase in active cardholders, with a 3% increase in active cardholders in areas of the city with lower income markers.

- 65% overall increase in new memberships, of which 26% was in areas of the city with lower income markers
  - 68% increase in new memberships in areas of the city with lower income markers
- Total number of cardholder accounts blocked (owing \$50 or more) / collections (owing \$50 or more after 90 days):
  - 1433 accounts were blocked at the end of 2021, similar to previous years based on number of cardholders. As a result of the MRM, accounts became “blocked” more quickly because items move to “lost” after 21 days instead of 35 days.
  - Although OPL has not yet resumed the use of a recovery agency, 383 accounts would have qualified for collections in 2021, a decrease of 74% over the previous three (3) years.

Additionally, customers provided positive feedback in response to the MRM. The following is a snapshot of the comments:

- “Hi! I definitely welcome the change regarding late fees. I love the library and am really pleased with the wide variety of services and materials that I have access to. Thank you”
- “Thank you @opl\_bpo - libraries are essential community resources. Thank you for making our library more accessible.”
- “Nice work OPL Board! What is a library if it is not for everyone to enjoy.”
- "I like that you've considered the equity piece!"

The above data and customer feedback demonstrate the success OPL has seen in eliminating barriers to service, some of which may be attributed to the implementation of the MRM. Materials are being returned in a timely manner despite the elimination of late fees, and customers are extremely appreciative that OPL is no longer charging fees for overdue items.