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SUBJECT: **Alternative Services Priorities**

OBJET: **Priorités des Services parallèles**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

1. **Confirm three guiding priorities for alternative services:**
    a. **Inclusion;**
    b. **Discovery; and,**
    c. **Neighbourhood access.**

2. **Confirm continued investment in:**
    a. **Bookmobile;**
    b. **Mini bookmobile; and,**
    c. **Homebound services.**

3. **Approve no further expansion of Kiosk services; and,**

4. **Disband the Alternative Services Long Term Plan Ad-Hoc Committee.**

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RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

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

1. **Confirme les trois priorités qui guideront les Services parallèles :**
   a. **l'inclusion;**
   b. **la découverte;**
   c. **l'accès des résidents.**

2. **Approuve la poursuite des investissements dans :**
   a. **le Bibliobus;**
   b. **le mini Bibliobus;**
   c. **les Services à domicile.**

3. **N'approuve pas d'autre expansion du kiosque multiservice; et**

4. **Dissout le comité spécial de planification à long terme des Services parallèles.**

BACKGROUND

As per OPL Board ("the Board") policy OPLB-001, the Board has the responsibility to review and approve major strategies, plans, and decisions. This role is further refined within Board policy OPLB-002 Delegation of Authority item #16, with the Board having the authority to consider and approve strategic frameworks for key OPL services. In addition, the Board approves sites for bookmobile stops (Board policy OPLB-002 Delegation of Authority item #23).

Alternative services at OPL are comprised of:

1. Mobile services, namely bookmobile and homebound services; and
2. Express services, such as kiosks.

OPL has offered bookmobile service since 1953. This service visits neighbourhoods on a weekly basis, providing a mobile branch experience to residents who are unable to visit OPL's physical and/or virtual branches. OPL has provided homebound services since 1971 to customers confined to their homes due to age, illness, or disability. Kiosk services have been offered at OPL since 2010, providing a limited browsing collection and holds pick-up service in one location, in the Hunt Club Riverside Park neighbourhood.

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On September 14, 2015, the Board approved the Alternative Services Framework 2016-2020 (Report OPLB-2015-0071, "the Framework"), which identified key characteristics of alternative service units, and parameters for establishing new bookmobile, mini bookmobile, and kiosk locations. The parameters included population, service power, partnerships, location, and circulation, and are used when analyzing service optimization and augmentation. The Framework did not include strategic priorities for alternative services, nor did it include parameters for homebound services.

On April 11, 2017, the Board approved its 2017 Work Plan (Report OPLB-2017-0404), which included the completion of a multi-year Alternative Services Long Term Plan ("the Plan"). A need for the Plan was identified to support imminent business needs, such as replacing the Unit 2 bookmobile, addressing service gaps identified in the Library Facilities Framework and Growth Planning Study, and assessing the services in a holistic way with branches and departments. The Plan would also be key to guiding financial priorities among these services. At OPL, alternative services have evolved in a manner that is often siloed from other departments and branches. The goal of the Plan was to identify priorities for alternative services, and provide direction for long-term investment. Identifying priorities is crucial to managing current demand efficiently and responding to growth opportunities.

Services that involve facilities (for example, depots or other physical locations) were deemed out of scope for this Plan, as they are addressed through the Library Facilities Framework as required. A Board Ad-Hoc Committee ("the Committee") composed of Trustee Sweet, Trustee Wilkinson, and three staff was created to advise on the Plan. The Committee provided strategic guidance and input, by reviewing industry best practices and data from consultations, and assisting in the development of the proposed priorities.

This report provides four recommendations for alternative services at OPL. It presents background information about the long-term planning process, reports on milestones, and places the recommendations within a broader context. While the initial timeline of the Plan was projected for 10 years, staff will incorporate long-term planning on an ongoing basis as part of the Framework. As such, this report is the strategic element of the Plan, and provides four recommendations which, if approved, will inform long-term planning. This planning will include identifying future financial requirements, prioritizing operational services, and updating the Framework. The next iteration of the Framework is currently scheduled to be presented during the next term of the Board.

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DISCUSSION

OPL's alternative services provide collections, programs, and spaces in a mobile or express setting, currently consisting of:

1. Mobile services, which include:
   a. Two large bookmobiles serving 25 communities weekly. The bookmobiles reach customers with broad interests, who use the service for convenient access to the Library in their neighbourhood;
   b. The mini bookmobile, providing service at special events and programming. The mini bookmobile reaches residents who are often new or lapsed library customers; and,
   c. Homebound services, providing selection and delivery of library materials for approximately 600 customers around the city. This includes customers confined to their residence for a minimum of three months, as well as those with a print disability.
2. Express Services, which consist of kiosk services at the Hunt Club Riverside Park Community Centre, including lending machines, holds pick-up lockers, and a returns bin.

Further details about OPL's alternative services are included in Document 1.

The goal of OPL's alternative services is to reach residents who are at risk of exclusion at their point of need, and reduce barriers to accessing core services by providing customers with alternate means of service delivery, as indicated in the Alternative Services Logic Model (Document 2).

A logic model is a visual representation of the resources, activities and anticipated outcomes of a particular service, and assists in evaluating the effectiveness of the service. The Alternative Services Logic Model illustrates how the Library's key services are delivered through alternate means. OPL "inputs" resources in order to deliver services or products (activities, or "outputs"). These activities have an effect on the people reached by OPL's alternative services: these are the effects, or "outcomes," of alternative services. For example, the Alternative Services Logic Model identifies inputs such as human resources, collections, programs, technology, and financial resources. Outputs include bookmobile stops, homebound delivery, and request pickup, while outcomes include reduced barriers to accessing OPL, increased awareness and use of

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OPL, and increased community connections. The inputs and outcomes of Alternative Services at OPL are the same as in OPL's physical and virtual branches; it is the means of delivering these resources to residents (the "outputs"), that are "alternative."

Alternative Services in Other Libraries

In 2016, staff undertook an environmental scan of alternative services in North American public libraries using a best practice questionnaire, benchmarking exercises, staff and management consultations, and a customer questionnaire. This research informed the establishment of the recommendations presented in this report.

General findings: Libraries anticipate increasing these services in the coming years, due to community demand, increased programming initiatives, and the prioritization of residents experiencing social barriers to library use. There are five high-level observations from this environmental scan:

Observation 1: Overall, alternative services are strongly tied to community development work. The Community Development initiative at OPL is built on staff engagement with the community to help define barriers to library service, identify solutions and work together to implement new initiatives. Many libraries are implementing similar initiatives, and prioritizing alternative services to residents at risk of exclusion. For instance, Toronto Public Library has invested in replacing both their large bookmobiles, and extends services to family shelters. Meridian Library District (ID), Medina County District Library (OH), and Arapahoe Libraries (CO) all use similar priorities to determine bookmobile stop locations, including consideration of socio-economic factors, presence of newcomers, children and older adults, school lunch programs, and proximity to subsidized housing and housing for people with disabilities. The size of staff complements engaged in alternative service work varies widely among libraries, and sometimes include both branch employees and centralized staff. At OPL, alternative services reach many residents at risk of exclusion, and regularly incorporate data from tools such as Statistics Canada, Environics Analytics, and the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study. Staff in Alternative Services engage in library community development work on an ongoing basis, particularly during bookmobile schedule reviews, homebound programming, and programming with the mini bookmobile, such as at family shelters.

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Observation 2: The majority of libraries (68%) offering bookmobile services continue to operate large bookmobiles. Libraries with large bookmobiles often serve a broad geographic area and population size, including urban, suburban, county, and rural areas, with 95% reporting that the vehicles are less than 10 years old. At OPL, two large bookmobiles visit 25 communities on a weekly basis, in urban, suburban, and rural areas. One bookmobile was replaced in 2016, and the other will be replaced in the next few years. Stops are reviewed every two years, and the flexible nature of the service allows OPL to respond to demographic changes.

Observation 3: Libraries with no history of bookmobile service, or those who had previously discontinued their bookmobile service, are opting to use a small bookmobile. Many libraries have purchased Sprinter vans or similar small vehicles in the last few years. For instance, Calgary Public Library launched two book trucks in 2016, after discontinuing its bookmobile service in 1992. King County (WA) launched six Library2Go! Vans in 2011. The City of Repentigny (QC) operates a seasonal Sprinter at the local train station. OPL uses the mini bookmobile as a backup for the large vehicles, and for special events. In 2016, OPL piloted the mini bookmobile at regular stops. Circulation declined more than 50% and usage decreased 75%. Staff observed that most customers, particularly newcomers and those in other groups at risk of exclusion, were uncomfortable on the smaller vehicle; customers enjoy the privacy to receive assistance from staff (book recommendations, assistance with personal research, homework help, and assistance with electronic resources) and the personal space that is possible on the larger vehicles. Staff concluded that service outcomes are best achieved by replacing large vehicles with the same size. The mini bookmobile, however, remains popular at special events, for programming initiatives, and as a back-up for regular stops when large vehicles are undergoing maintenance.

Observation 4: Libraries offering homebound services are showing considerable flexibility in responding to customer needs. Many libraries are incorporating programming, partnerships with community agencies, and technological supports into homebound services. While a variety of service models are in place at different libraries, the core work of homebound services remains building relationships with elderly and often isolated customers, and

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continues without much technological innovation. At OPL, the majority of homebound customers are aged 80 or older, and do not have Internet access. Half of OPL's homebound customers do not receive assistance from family or friends, and 26% only receive assistance, in an average month, from their doctor or OPL staff.

Observation 5: The market for and usage of kiosk services has not grown as significantly as expected over the past decade. Only 7% of libraries who responded to OPL's questionnaire indicated that they offer kiosk services. Libraries that OPL consulted did not expect this service to expand. While some libraries are adding kiosks, others, such as Edmonton, are discontinuing them, due to technical issues, low usage, age of the units, and vandalism. Anecdotal evidence indicates that residents at risk of exclusion are unlikely to use a machine without human intervention.

The performance of OPL kiosk services is consistent with other library systems. Staff completed a survey of material in the lending machines in Spring 2018, and the service is not performing as was initially expected: usage has not increased over the seven years the machines have been in place. Despite increased promotion and changes to the types of material on offer, fewer than 300 customers use the kiosk on a regular basis (i.e. more than six times per year), representing less than 30% of the kiosk's total customers. Materials in the lending machines circulate 60-90% less than in a branch location, and 85% of the service's customers also use a branch or bookmobile stop. Kiosk circulation does not meet the circulation parameter from the Framework, of 8 items / hour minimum; currently, the lending machine and locker circulation are both below 2 items / hour. Close to half of the kiosk customers live further than 2.5 km from the kiosk location. There are two bookmobile stops within 1 km of the community centre. These stops are identified by 247 customers as their home location, and approximately 40 customers use the stops on a regular basis during a total of 3 hours service per week. The average circulation at these stops is 10 items / hour, also below the parameter from the Framework of 30 items / hour minimum. Of note, the Board approved Library Kiosk Pilot Project Evaluation report in 2011 (October 17, 2011, Document 8), which recommended no further expansion of the current kiosk service model, and that further recommendations be brought forward to the Board in 2012 as part of the Service Delivery model update. No

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further reports came to the Board regarding the kiosk, as the Service Delivery model update was folded into the Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) Plan.

The Context for Alternative Services in Ottawa

In Ottawa, two characteristics underline the need for alternative services:

1. Demographics: Alternative library services often reach residents who are at risk of being excluded. These may include, but are not restricted to:
   a. Seniors: The number of seniors in Ottawa is expected to rise from 14.5% of the population in 2016 to 20.3% in 2031.[1] The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives recently highlighted that "supportive services that prevent isolation are a key determinant of seniors' quality of life, health and independence."[2]
   b. Residents with a disability: 18% of Ottawa residents live with a disability, and numbers in this group have increased 20% between 2001 and 2006. One third of persons with disabilities are over the age of 65.[3]
   c. Residents living in poverty: 12% of Ottawa residents were living in poverty in 2015, based on the Low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT). [4]
2. Geography: The City of Ottawa's total area exceeds the combined areas of Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, and Edmonton. [5] According to OPL's 2013 Bookmobile Service Review, 20% of Ottawa residents live outside the catchment areas of a branch; this population is served in part by bookmobile stops. Flexibility to serve multiple locations without a branch is key to the success of alternative services in Ottawa. However, even with approved parameters within the Alternative Services Framework, OPL still requires clearly-defined

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[1] City of Ottawa. Growth projections for Ottawa 2006-2031- overview. https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/get-know-your-city/statistics-and-economic-profile/statistics/growth-projections-2006-2031/growth-projections-ottawa-2006-2031-overview#growth-projections-ottawa-2006-2031
[2] Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. "The facts: Enhancing Social Support for Seniors Living in BC." https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2013/05/CCPA-BC_Seniors_Fact_Sheet_Social_Support.pdf
[3] Social Planning Council of Ottawa. "Disability Profile of the City of Ottawa." 2010. https://www.spcottawa.on.ca/sites/all/files/pdf/2010/Publications/Disability-Report.pdf
[4] Statistics Canada. "Census Profile, 2016 Census Ottawa, City." http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Geo2=PR&Code2=01&Data=Count&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&TABID=1&B1=All&Code1=3506008&SearchText=ottawa
[5] Ottawa Start. "Ottawa is greater than Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton combined." 2011. (http://ottawastart.com/ottawa-is-greater-than-montreal-toronto-vancouver-calgary-and-edmonton-combined/)

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priorities for alternative services, supported by its values, in order to make informed decisions about new initiatives.

Residents of Ottawa may face numerous barriers to using Library facilities such as age, illness, disability, or lack of transportation. Alternative services at OPL often reach residents who fall into one or more of the groups at risk of exclusion, as identified in the City of Ottawa's Equity and Inclusion Lens, particularly residents living in poverty, those living with disabilities, and older adults.[6] Similarly, these services reach residents who face barriers to accessing OPL's online resources. As recently described in OPL's Wi-Fi Hotspot Lending Pilot report (OPLB-2018-0502), the term "digital divide" is used to describe the discrepancy that exists between people who have access to information and communication technologies and the benefits they provide compared to those who do not. By bringing services and programs to customers, including print and multimedia collections, employee assistance, and free Wi-Fi, OPL's mobile alternative services assist in promoting digital inclusion.

Building on the environmental scan, consultations, and local demographic research, and working with the Committee, staff arrived at the following recommendations. These recommendations are based on confirming the importance of alternative services at OPL, and focus on how to prioritize and guide services.

Recommendation 1: Confirm three guiding priorities for alternative services: inclusion, discovery, and neighbourhood access.

Given the unique Ottawa situation and based on the observations and research above, the three recommended Priorities are: Inclusion, Discovery, and Neighbourhood Access, as defined in Table 1.

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[6] City of Ottawa. "Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook."
https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents.ottawa.ca/files/ei_lens_hb_en.pdf

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Table 1: Alternative Services Priorities

Rank	Priority	Description
1	Inclusion	Reach key groups at risk of exclusion, as identified in the City of Ottawa Equity and Inclusion Lens.
2	Discovery	Provide city-wide discovery of, and engagement with, OPL at events.
3	Neighbourhood access	Provide library services to targeted geographic areas of the city experiencing legacy gaps, in alignment with the Facilities Framework and Growth Planning Study, and the Alternative Services Framework.

The recommended priorities help better meet the needs of the community and align with OPL's values. Alternative services increase access and foster inclusion among citizens experiencing barriers to receiving Library services, deploying the most efficient and fiscally responsible delivery modes. OPL's alternative services are innovative, regularly reviewing best practices, service plans (the Framework), and existing locations, and they leverage technology to improve the customer experience. Alternative services provide full service offerings, including potential for community development and programming. Lastly, alternative services respect customers' right to privacy by providing suitable indoor spaces and locations to allow customers to browse collections, receive assistance from staff, and participate in programming, in a comfortable environment.

Recommendation 2: Confirm continued investment in bookmobile, mini bookmobile, and homebound services.

Following the review of the Priorities against OPL's resources and values, staff and the Committee ranked OPL's alternative service modes. The rankings, and a description of each service mode, are contained in Document 1. This table also highlights OPL's recent investment in the fleet, including lifecycling the Unit 1 bookmobile, purchasing the mini bookmobile (Sprinter van), and lifecycling the Homebound Services van. The Unit 2 bookmobile lifecycle replacement will be ordered this year (2018), and the kiosk van will also be lifecycled this year. Continued investment in delivery of OPL's mobile alternative services (bookmobile, mini bookmobile, and homebound) is recommended. In light of

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Ottawa's demographics and geography, these services are the best alternative service modes to fulfil the outcomes OPL seeks to achieve, and meet the proposed Priorities. They align with OPL's values, allow us to provide full service offerings to ensure customer service excellence, and provide opportunities to create and maintain community relationships, including face-to-face customer interactions. They can be delivered with adequate existing resources (financial, staff, and partnerships), and offer the most flexibility to respond to Ottawa's demographic and geographic situation. Continued investment in mobile alternative services allows OPL to most effectively meet customer needs by reaching those who are unable to visit branches.

1. **The large bookmobile** provides access to full services, while providing privacy and personal space for customers to interact with one another and staff. With strong partnerships, the service can engage with the community to support programming and outreach initiatives. With significant investment in this fleet in recent years, additional budget requests are not expected until 2025 or later, and will come forward as part of the existing budget process.

2. **Homebound services** provide access to full or targeted services to some of Ottawa's residents most at risk of exclusion, in two ways:
    a. **Mini-library pop-ups** in communal living facilities provide access to full services, while providing privacy and personal space for customers to interact with one another and staff. With strong partnerships, the service can engage with residents on-site to support programming and outreach initiatives.
    b. **Home reader services** provide limited services to residents in their own homes. Customers have some interaction with staff in person, when items are dropped off, and extensive contact with staff by phone and email. Staff offer access to programming via collections such as the iCanada at OPL, and via partners such as the Good Companions' Seniors Centre Without Walls.

   Continued investment in homebound services may result in requests for new resources (employees), given the demographics served. Any such requests will be guided by data regarding the service, and will come forward as part of the existing budget process.

3. **The mini bookmobile** provides access to limited services, in a smaller space with reduced accessibility. Its use is limited during the winter; however, it has proved successful as a back-up vehicle, at special events, and in supporting

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programming and outreach initiatives. This vehicle is not expected to reach end of life until 2024. The lifecycle replacement will be included in the long-range financial plan, and any requests will come forward as part of the existing budget process.

4. **Kiosk services** do not meet the proposed Priorities, or align with OPL's resources and values: discovery is limited to existing cardholders, limited services are available, and there is no staff presence on site for community development or programming. Neighbourhood access is limited, and expansion to other neighbourhoods would cost at least 3 times as much as mobile service. Lastly, the technology is challenging, does not improve the customer experience, and is inhibited by the lack of staff support on-site. The lending machines were recently lifecycled, and the lockers are relatively new; these pieces of equipment are not expected to reach end of life before approximately 2020 (lockers) and 2022 (lending machines).

Recommendation 3: Approve no further expansion of Kiosk services

Kiosk services at OPL have not performed as expected, are composed of complex technological elements, and do not allow OPL to meet its values or the proposed Priorities. Furthermore, equitable expansion of these services would not be fiscally responsible. No further investment in new kiosk locations is recommended; any subsequent recommendations regarding kiosk services will come forward to the Board. OPL will continue to support the existing kiosk services location at the Hunt Club Riverside Park Community Centre for the lifecycle of the existing machines.

Recommendation 4: Disband the Alternative Services Long Term Plan Ad-Hoc Committee.

The Alternative Services Long Term Plan Ad-Hoc Committee will disband, as the work of the Committee is completed. OPL thanks them for their expertise and time.

CONSULTATION

Input was collected from North American public libraries, including Toronto, Halifax, Burlington, Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver. Staff and customer consultations were also conducted, as well as consultations with the management team at OPL. The Plan was developed in consultation with City of Ottawa colleagues in various departments, including Building Better Revitalised Neighbourhoods and Ottawa Neighbourhood Study

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experts, and a Board Ad Hoc Committee comprised of Chair Tierney, Trustee Sweet, and Trustee Wilkinson, along with several members of the Library's Senior Management Team. The Board Ad Hoc Committee endorsed the recommendations herein.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with this report. The adoption of the recommendations in this report will allow for responsible and transparent long-term management of OPL's alternative services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. Approving the recommendations in this report will inform financial long-term planning for alternative services, and any future requests will come forward via the annual budget process. Capital funding for the Bookmobile Unit 2 replacement was secured as part of the 2018 capital budget.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

Approving the recommendations in this report will affirm OPL's commitment to providing access to people with disabilities, seniors and other groups at risk of exclusion, as identified in the City's Equity and Inclusion Lens.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

BOARD PRIORITIES

The recommendations are aligned with OPL's core values, as well as with the following Board Strategic Priorities:

1. Services that are customer centric, and that provide physical and digital collections that are responsive to customer demands and community needs;

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2. Spaces for community, collections, and creation, collaborative and flexible physical spaces across the Library system;
3. Strengthen and promote the Library's reach and value.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 Alternative Services Definitions and Ranking

Document 2 Alternative Services Logic Model

DISPOSITION

Upon approval of the recommendations, staff will:
1. Develop an implementation plan for mobile alternative services;
2. Incorporate the following elements into the next Alternative Services Framework review, to be completed in the next term of the Library Board:
   a. Alternative services priorities; and,
   b. Homebound services;
3. Explore alternative service options that meet OPL's Priorities on an ongoing basis, and incorporate these findings into subsequent Framework documents. This work will ensure services remain relevant and responsive, and will include:
   a. Reviews of performance of existing services;
   b. Research into emerging technologies; and
   c. Environmental scans of best practices.
4. Review emerging express technologies and existing OPL kiosk services, and present recommendations to the Board at a later date.
5. Disband the Alternative Services Long Term Plan Ad-Hoc Committee.