

Report to / Rapport au:

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

May 28, 2020 / 28 mai 2020

Submitted by / Soumis par:

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File Number: OPLB-2020-0501-SP

SUBJECT: OPL COVID-19 Recovery Priority 1 Plan

OBJET: Plan un de relance COVID-19 de la BPO – Priorité 1

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Receive the OPL COVID-19 Recovery Priority 1 Plan report;**
- 2. Approve opening curbside service and returns collection at the following:**
 - a. Six branch locations: Beaverbrook, Cumberland, Greenboro, Main, Nepean Centrepointe, and Ruth E Dickinson; and,**
 - b. Homebound Services at private residences;**
- 3. Approve the following start dates for services:**
 - a. June 8: Accepting returns; scheduling holds pickup appointments;**
 - b. June 15: Curbside service; Homebound deliveries and returns;**
- 4. Delegate authority to the CEO to:**
 - a. Amend opening hours for curbside service, including weekday, weeknight, and weekend hours; and,**

- b. Make any required adjustments to the delivery of curbside services to respond to changing conditions and circumstances;**
- 5. Approve the continued suspension of fees during Priority 1; and,**
- 6. Direct staff to bring forward a Recovery Plan for Priorities 2-5 at a date no later than the July 14, 2020 Board meeting.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

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

- 1. Prenne connaissance du plan un de relance COVID-19 de la BPO :**
- 2. Approuve l'ouverture du service en bordure de rue et la collecte des retours aux endroits suivants :**
 - a. Six succursales : Beaverbrook, Centrale, Cumberland, Greenboro, Nepean Centrepointe, et Ruth E Dickinson ; et**
 - b. Services à domicile dans les résidences privées;**
- 3. Approuve les dates de début de services suivantes :**
 - a. 8 juin : Début du retour des articles empruntés et début de la prise de rendez-vous pour la cueillette d'articles demandés**
 - b. 15 juin : Début du service de cueillette d'articles demandés, livraisons services à domicile**
- 4. Délègue l'autorité à la directrice générale à :**
 - a. Modifier les heures d'ouverture du service en bordure de trottoir, y compris les heures de la semaine, de la nuit et de la fin de semaine ; et,**
 - b. Apporter les ajustements nécessaires à la prestation des services en bordure de trottoir pour répondre à l'évolution des conditions et des circonstances**
- 5. Approuve le maintien de la suspension des frais pendant la priorité 1 ; et,**
- 6. Demande au personnel de présenter un plan de relance pour les priorités 2 à 5 au plus tard lors de la réunion du Conseil du 14 juillet 2020.**

BACKGROUND

Based on recommendations from Ottawa's Medical Officer of Health (MOH), the City of Ottawa (City) announced on March 13, 2020 the closure of recreation centres, cultural facilities, community centres, and events starting on March 16. Ottawa Public Library (OPL) aligned with this decision, and all branches, Bookmobile, and Homebound Services closed on March 16. On March 17, a Provincial State of Emergency was declared, including a requirement for all public libraries to close until March 30 (later extended until April 14, and then June 2). On March 25, the City of Ottawa declared a State of Emergency, which closed all the above facilities until June 30, 2020.

During the initial stages of the COVID-19 emergency situation, the OPL's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) operated under section 2.2 of the OPL Board policy 002-OPLB Delegation of Authority (DOA), last amended December 2018. The DOA clearly defines the decisions that must be made by the Board and those that may be made by the CEO or delegate. Section 2.2, Emergency or Special Circumstances, states that "in cases of emergency or special circumstances where it is necessary to act within or outside the normal mandate of the OPL, but such action is not strictly within the terms of a delegated authority, the CEO may take such action as necessary to rectify the situation and all such actions shall be reported immediately to the Chair and then the Board." The CEO provided updates to the Board at the April 14 and May 12 meetings regarding OPL's COVID-19 response.

At the May 12, 2020 OPLB meeting the CEO advised the Board that staff were developing a plan regarding the recovery of OPL services, and that this plan would include several priorities. The CEO mentioned that safety of staff and customers were key to the plan and that OPL would continue to follow the advice of the MOH and work with the City in providing services. At this Board meeting, a COVID-19 Ad-hoc Committee was also approved to assist and guide staff in the development of the strategies and plans for resumption of services.

On Thursday, May 14, 2020 the Provincial Government identified that libraries are eligible to resume services effective May 19, 2020, so long as services are limited to "curbside pick-up."¹ Additional guidance from the Southern Ontario Library Association (SOLS), the Ontario Library Association (OLA), and the Federation of Ontario Public

¹ "Detailed List of Stage 1 Openings." <https://files.ontario.ca/mof-detailed-list-stage-1-openings-en-2020-05-14.pdf>

Libraries (FOPL), endorsed by the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, indicates the following possibilities for curbside pickup service: “patrons arriving by vehicle, or patrons arrive at a specific walk-up spot outside the library, such as a front porch, to find their labelled packages full of their holds in labelled packages. The library could set appointment times for pick-up.”²

This announcement, and the related guidelines, expedited OPL’s plans to continue work in the “Prepare” phase and launch Recovery Priority 1, which was now deemed to be curbside service. OPL’s integrated plan for recovery include preliminary plans for later priorities, which at this point remain simply numbered Priorities 2-5; these plans will be developed and updated upon further direction from legislative authorities.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Library Board with an overview of OPL’s Priority 1 of its Recovery Plan, curbside services, as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. This plan outlines the components, locations, and requirements related to the provision of curbside services.

DISCUSSION

OPL has been working on an integrated recovery plan to COVID-19. This plan was developed with a project management approach, based on assumptions and risks identified (see Document 1: Project Assumptions, and Document 2: Project Risks). The plan focused on employee and customer health, and a gradual return of services. Four cross-departmental task forces were created to develop plans that will be integrated into one overall OPL plan.

Planning for the recovery of operations during COVID is complex. It is not the same as resuming normal operations. It is unprecedented for OPL and requires redesigning many, if not all, services to accommodate new requirements for safety, such as through physical distancing. Initial OPL Recovery Plans were not tied to any timelines given the Municipal State of Declared Emergency and Provincial Orders to not provide in-person services. The recent announcement by the Province to allow for curbside service now provides OPL with a timeframe upon which to shape its plan.

² “Pick-Up and Delivery Services: Guidance for Public Libraries.” http://fopl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Pick-Up_and_Delivery_Services_-_Guidance_for_Public_Libraries-Final-Final.pdf

The OPL Recovery Plan has five (5) priorities and includes a preparatory phase called “Prepare.” Priority 1 is the first component in a gradual return of services, and includes curbside pick-up, accepting customer returns, and providing Homebound delivery services to private residences. OPL’s virtual service offerings will continue during Priority 1, and employees not involved in the provision of curbside services will continue to work at home.

As previously stated, curbside service is an entirely new service for OPL, and as such the “Prepare” phase was key to its success. Given the extended closure of OPL branches, there is a tremendous amount of logistical work required to prepare for the Priority 1, as outlined below.

- Preparations for returns: Currently 25% of OPL’s materials are checked out to customers. This represents 500,000 items or 11,000 bins of material. Normal processing volume for the system (all locations) is approximately 500 bins per day; as such, current checkouts and anticipated returns represent a significant volume of material. Planning for returns also includes a new consideration: the requirement for material to be quarantined, safely, for 72 hours, and the required space to store material during this time.
- Preparations for holds pickup: Generally, 30% of OPL’s circulation is due to holds. There are currently 14,000 existing holds on branch shelves for approximately 8,000 customers. These customers must be contacted regarding transferring their holds to a location offering curbside services (if applicable) and scheduling a pickup time. Staff estimate it will take a minimum of two weeks of curbside service for most customers to pick up their existing holds.
- Technology adjustments: OPL’s returns and holds services are automated to the degree possible with items automatically checked in upon return, and customers immediately notified that holds are available for collection. Quarantining of materials and the use of curbside service required new technological processes to be developed in alignment with library systems.
- General preparations: Developing timelines and new standard operating procedures, safety plans, staffing plans (returning employees to physical services and orienting them on new procedures), communications plans, liaising with City partners for shared service delivery (e.g. facility cleaning), liaising with other partners on a variety of subjects (sourcing gloves and masks, accessibility

considerations), and processing newly-purchased physical collections in preparation for subsequent Recovery Priorities.

Recommendation 2: Approve opening curbside service and returns collection as follows:

- a. Six branch locations: Beaverbrook, Cumberland, Greenboro, Main, Nepean Centrepointe, and Ruth E Dickinson; and,**
- b. Homebound Service at private residences**

In order to phase in the new curbside service, and best manage protocols to ensure the health and safety of customers and employees, six locations were identified for Priority

1. These locations were selected based on the following criteria:

- Health and Safety: All are larger facilities that can accommodate quarantined returns, transferring of holds from closed locations to open locations, and employee physical distancing requirements;
- Geography: There is coverage around the city of Ottawa based on its overarching geography;
- Equity: Two of the locations have a very high percentage of households living in low income as measured by the Low-Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT);
- Usage: All locations currently have above average holds on the shelves; and,
- Accessibility: All locations have adequate parking (on-site or nearby) and transit access.

OPL's commitment to customers extends beyond the six physical locations proposed for returns and curbside service. To offer material access to as many customers as possible, those with holds on shelves at locations other than the six identified above will have the opportunity to change the pick-up location of their items.

Similarly, OPL will resume Homebound Service to private residences. A November 2018 Board report, "Alternative Services Priorities" (OPLB-2018-1102), observed that many Homebound customers are "elderly and often isolated, aged 80 or older, and do not have Internet access. Half do not receive assistance from family or friends, and 26% only receive assistance, in an average month, from their doctor or OPL staff." Deliveries to shared living facilities such as retirement homes, long-term care homes, and hospitals are unlikely to resume soon. However, OPL is committed to resuming services

to some of the City's most vulnerable populations by delivering materials to Homebound customers in private residences.

Recommendation 3: Approve the following start dates for services:

- a. **June 8: Accept returns; scheduling holds pickup appointments; and,**
- b. **June 15: Curbside pick-up service; Homebound deliveries and returns**

Given the preparatory work that must be undertaken before launching the new curbside model, these dates present the earliest opportunity to launch services. In keeping with the phased-in approach to service, the dates are staggered to allow employees and customers to adapt to each new service.

Recommendation 4: Delegate authority to staff regarding curbside services to:

- a. **Amend opening hours for curbside service to staff, including weekday, weeknight, and weekend hours; and,**
- b. **Make any required adjustments to the delivery of curbside services to respond to changing conditions and circumstances**

Both Document 1 Project Assumptions and Document 2 Project Risks observe that services may change. Flexibility is key to OPL's COVID-19 emergency response, and it is difficult to predict various elements of the curbside service. As a result, staff may need to adjust the curbside service delivery model based on changing circumstances. It is difficult to predict several elements including the availability of staff due to other obligations such as childcare, illness, etc., patterns in customer use, the reliability of the technology involved, or the pace at which changes to legislation may impact curbside or other Recovery Priorities. Hours for curbside service may need to be adjusted to respond to any of these possibilities.

It should be noted that further adjustments to hours of operation and services will go through the Ad hoc Committee prior to being implemented and will be communicated to the Board.

Effective June 15, public hours of operation will be as follows:

- Mondays from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- Tuesdays from 1 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- Wednesdays from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

- Thursdays from 1 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- Fridays from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Saturdays from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Recommendation 5: Approve the continued suspension of fees during Priority 1.

In recognition of the difficult financial circumstances faced by residents of Ottawa amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and the fact that some customers will be unable to visit one of the six curbside locations, staff recommend continuing to suspend fees during the Priority 1 component of the recovery phase. A recommendation regarding fees in Priorities 2-5 will be brought back to the Board at a date no later than the July 14, 2020 Board meeting. Loan periods for all material checked out via curbside service will be four weeks; loan periods for Homebound clients will remain the same as per their delivery schedule.

Recommendation 6: Direct staff to bring forward a Recovery Plan for Priorities 2-5 at a date no later than the July 14, 2020 Board meeting.

As the COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, staff continue to develop and integrate all areas of OPL into the final plans for Priorities 2-5 of the Recovery Plan. Staff anticipate bringing a report forward in July with information and recommendations.

CONSULTATION

OPL Senior Management Team; OPL Operations Task Force; OPL Customer Service Task Force; OPL Employee and Finance Task Force; OPLB Ad hoc Committee on COVID-19 (Vice-Chair Kathy Fisher and Trustee Riley Brockington); Occupational Health & Safety; City of Ottawa Service Recovery Task Force; City Recreation, Culture, and Facilities Services (RCFS); Ottawa Public Health; City Accessibility Office; the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB); Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC).

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Several risks were considered in the development of the approach to Priority 1 plans. Risks have varying degrees of likelihood and impact; in some cases where the risk was determined to be minimal, it was accepted with mitigating controls established. See Document 2 for a list of risks identified to OPL COVID-19 Recovery Plan as a whole (seven elements of the “Recovery” phase).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic will have an impact on the 2020 budget in terms of both revenue and expenditures. It is also anticipated that the 2021 operating and capital budget will be impacted. Prepare and Priority 1 expenditure impacts are estimated at \$100,000 to accommodate the new model for curbside services, and employee health and safety.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

Accessibility was considered when developing the parameters for curbside service, including for customers with physical disabilities such as vision loss, hearing loss, or reduced mobility.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

The offering of curbside services as well as the need to quarantine returns requires significant technological modifications to OPL’s integrated library system as well as minor changes to OPL’s website to allow for appointment bookings.

BOARD PRIORITIES

The Ottawa Public Library Board is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the organization, as well as approving changes to hours of operation.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 Project Assumptions

Document 2 Project Risks

DISPOSITION

Upon approval of Recommendations 1-6, staff will implement the COVID-19 Recovery Priority 1 Plan. Staff will bring forward a Recovery Plan for Priorities 2-5 no later than the July 14, 2020 Board meeting.

Project Assumptions

#	The following is assumed:
1	Legislation: Comply with Provincial and MOH directives; align with City when possible.
2	Operate under Delegation of Authority: Board approval is required for changes to hours of operations, fees, or significant permanent alterations to service.
3	Think long-term: "Normal" or full recovery will not occur in the near term, likely until a vaccine is available.
4	Preparation is key: Required before locations open to the public; IT or Facilities-related upgrades and modifications will be prioritized in the prepare phase before locations re-open to minimize disruption for the public; limited staff will return to branches mapping to the phased re-opening plans.
5	Health and safety is paramount: Safety protocols for employees and members of the public will be required.
6	Services will change: Some services will be permanently altered, and new services may need to be developed. It is a priority to get returns in an early recovery phase; we will also prioritize services that customers have told us they wish to use. Plans will consider socio-economic and geographic equity.
7	Human resources: Negotiations will be required with the Union; non front-line employees will continue to work from home.
8	Financial impact: Additional costs may be incurred to provide services post-COVID-19; impacts to 2021 operating budget; potential reduced revenues due to legislative impacts (such as meeting rooms) and potentially due to OPLB decisions (late fees).
9	Consequences: The pandemic will influence revisions of many policies, procedures, and processes.

Project Risks

#	The following risks are identified:
1	Legislation: Insufficient notice from authorities to scale up recovery.
2	Long-term implications: Demands for new services; Inability to meet targets for strategic goal / Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
3	Preparation: Insufficient safety resources (gloves, masks); Public frustration re slow pace of phased-in plans; Plans are not responsive to public needs.
4	Health and safety: Loss of public trust if safety issues not addressed appropriately before moving to next phase.
5	Services will change: May experience any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in use of physical materials, spaces due to ongoing COVID-19 concerns;• Capacity issues due to increase in use of physical materials, spaces versus pre-COVID usage;• Decrease in program attendance, due to ongoing COVID-19 concerns; and/or• Capacity issues due to increase in program attendance versus pre-COVID activities.
6	Human resources: Increased absenteeism.
7	Financial impact: Insufficient funds to support recovery.
8	Technology: Insufficient bandwidth on servers to process volume of customer requests; potential for hacking of virtual programming platforms.