



Peterborough Public Library

To: Library Board of Trustees

From: Jennifer Jones, Library CEO

Meeting Date: May 11, 2021

Subject: Report PPL21-014
Library Services Review – Update

Purpose

A report to inform the Library Board on the status of the Library Services Review and to determine next steps.

Recommendations

That the Library Board approve the recommendations as outlined in Report PPL21-014 dated May 11, 2021, of the Library CEO as follows:

- a) That the report to inform the Library Board on the status of the Library Services Review (Review) be received for information,
- b) That an updated building condition assessment of the DelaFosse be completed,
- c) That a branch development plan with a community consultation component be completed, and
- d) That staff be directed to continue to explore options and alternatives to improve library services to the Peterborough community in line with the Strategic Plan and the Review feedback received.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are budget or financial implications resulting from the approval of the recommendation of this report. A building condition assessment is estimated to cost \$15,000 + HST. If a consultant is needed to complete the branch development plan, there would be costs associated with that process which are unknown at this time.

Background

Following up on the February 9, 2021 report (PPL21-001) to the Library Board, staff have used the information gathered from the Review process, the current strategic plan, available reports, and peer data to provide recommendations to the Board for consideration as next steps.

The peer data used (see Appendix A) was gathered from the 6 libraries closest to Peterborough in population served based on the information they submitted to the Ministry for the 2019 Annual Report.

The goal of the Review was to engage the community in a conversation about the Library's core services and to understand community and member themes. Two distinct areas emerged from this Review process as focal points – services and facilities.

Services

While Peterborough ranks high among our peers in material circulation and services provided to residence-bound community members, our rankings are less than favourable across the board in the other areas examined. The lowest rankings are found in the areas of staffing, programming, and operating hours.

The Review responses also showed support for longer operating hours and a wider variety of program offerings. These two areas are closely connected to the staffing levels and the staffing model in practice at the Library.

As part of the current strategic plan action areas of Valuing & Empowering Our People and Enhancing Administration & Resourcing, staff have already begun exploring community-led options for program development. An internal organization review is also in progress to address some of the concerns noted above. Both the short-term and possible long-term effects of the pandemic on library services should also be taken into effect when looking into any modifications or future service offerings.

Facilities

In 2013, a Feasibility Study (Study) was completed as part of the preparations for the Main branch renovation. A component of this Study was a functional analysis of existing facilities, which included information about the DelaFosse branch (see Appendix B). The information provided in this appendix remains true, except that the lower-level space is no longer rented out as of 2019.

A few other relevant excerpts from the Study highlight the poor physical state of the facility at that time as well as a summary of the community input sought as part of the study.

Executive Summary - Functional Analysis

The DelaFosse branch was found to have serious functional and technical shortcomings and is not recommended for long term retention in the system.

Facilities – DelaFosse Branch – Focus Group

Discussion about the DelaFosse Branch Library was brief, and opinion reflected that the branch serves its immediate community well as a reading room despite limited hours of operation. The main problems identified with the existing facility were the building's accessibility limitation (due to stairs), loading limitation (due to floor structure), and lack of comfortable seating, work, and program areas.

8.5 DelaFosse Branch Library

This building has significant accessibility and structural problems. Investment in upgrades is possible but would not be cost beneficial. It is recommended that the building be eventually replaced, and that branch needs and locational criteria be determined as part of an overall branch development strategy.

The peer data examined in Appendix A also shows a lack of physical service points in comparison to our peer libraries. Respondents to the Review survey noted that any decision with respect to additional branches should be based on a more formal/official study process and be sustainable to maintain long term. These decisions should also be driven by solid research around demographic, potential use, and expected growth patterns.

The recommended next steps in this process would be to develop an in-depth branch development plan. Supporting data for this approach can be found in the Study, including a discussion paper on branch development. Updating community information would be a vital component to this plan as well as acquiring more feedback from the community, which may require the expertise of a consultant.

Submitted by,

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Attachments:

Appendix A – Peer comparators 2019 Annual Survey Data

Appendix B – Functional Analysis Facility Review of the DelaFosse branch (except from the 2013 Feasibility Study)

Appendix C – Feasibility Study