

**Extended Open Hours Pilot Project – Implementation Plan**

<b>Date:</b>	September 25, 2017
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Public Library Board
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian

**SUMMARY**

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The purpose of this report is to update the Toronto Public Library (TPL) Board on the status of the Extended Open Hours Pilot project. As communicated in March 2017, the pilot will increase open hours at two of TPL’s smallest library branches, Swansea Memorial and Todmorden Room. Self-service and security technologies will be installed at these two branches that will allow customers to safely and securely enter the branch, use computers, and borrow collections. Implementation is expected in the late fall, with a go-live date early in 2018. TPL staff have discussed the initiative with community centre staff, including management, at each of the two locations: Swansea Town Hall, which is managed as an Association of Community Centres (AOCC) and East York Community Centre, which is managed by Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PF&R).

A memorandum of understanding is being developed for both locations to ensure there is clarity for all parties as to the terms and conditions for the use of the space and the service, ensuring safety and security of all staff and customers, and minimum impact on the staffing and operations of the community centres. This initiative will not replace existing staffed hours or staff and is only intended to provide limited library service beyond the current open hours at these two locations.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The implementation of Extended Open Hours technology will cost approximately \$100,000, and is included in the Multi-Branch Renovation Program budget.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Library’s strategic plan identifies expanded open hours as a key strategy to increase access and drive inclusion. The pilot of extended open hours with self-serve access at select branches is an integral part of this strategy.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

At its June 22, 2015 meeting, the Library Board approved a resolution to request that staff explore additional options for pop-up and alternative community-based services as part of the strategic planning process. The report identified and included the option to implement extended open hours technology that would greatly expand access to library service beyond staffed hours.

<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2015/sep21/04-Minutes-June-22.pdf>

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

Community consultation for this initiative occurred during the consultation process for the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan, in accordance with the TPL Board's Consultation Policy. One of the clear messages from this consultation was public interest in improved access to branches and services. TPL is responding to this feedback in a number of ways, including additional Sunday hours, the kiosk at Union Station, and the implementation of a pilot to extended open hours at Swansea and Todmorden, the two branches with the lowest number of open hours in the system.

Staff researched various solutions and technologies, and spoke with other library systems that have implemented similar services to access outcomes and impacts. Following this research, a Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued in December 2016 and awarded in March 2017. The successful proponent was Bibliotheca, a leading provider for library self-service technology. Subsequent meetings with the vendor and library staff to discuss implementation have taken place. TPL staff have also consulted with staff at the Swansea Town Hall and the East York Community Centre. Staff at both locations have agreed to work with TPL on the pilot project, and a memorandum of understanding is being developed with both locations to ensure there is clarity for all parties as to the terms and conditions for the use of the space and the service. Staff will continue to engage and include community partners throughout the implementation and pilot stages of this project.

## **COMMENTS**

The Extended Open Hours initiative is an opportunity for Toronto Public Library to leverage new technological options to increase access at the two smallest branches with the lowest number of open hours (28 hours/week) in the system. The year-long pilot is intended to provide additional and more convenient access for customers to pick up their holds, borrow material and use onsite electronic resources and WiFi. This initiative will not replace existing staffed hours or staff and is only intended to provide limited library service beyond the current open hours at these two locations.

Significant media interest in the pilot was triggered in March 2017, generating a number of questions from the public, staff and TPL partners. Reaction from the public and on social media was mixed, with both support and concern raised about the pilot. Most of the concern

was with respect to loss of staff and safety of the space. TPL responded and affirmed that this initiative will not be used to replace existing staffed hours, and that security considerations are an integral part of the pilot implementation, including provisions for video surveillance and registered customer card access. TPL's partners at Swansea Town Hall and East York Community Centre also had specific questions regarding roles and responsibilities and incident management (including emergency response), and TPL staff have provided clarification and addressed the issues that were raised.

Retrofit of the spaces to support the efficient and secure operation of both branches during extended hours will be required as part of the installation of the self-service technology. Staff have been conducting branch audits and working with both PF&R and Swansea Town Hall staff to evaluate both sites from a physical and operational perspective. Implementation is expected in the late fall, with a go-live date for both locations expected early in 2018.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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