

**Bookmobile Service Review – 2016**

<b>Date:</b>	June 27, 2016
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Public Library Board
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian

**SUMMARY**

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The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the annual staff review of the bookmobile service schedule, which includes the relocation of an existing stop effective September 2016. Library staff have contacted the local Councillor and advised customers affected by the relocation. A map of the bookmobile stops is in Attachment 1. An update on the Outreach to Family Shelters initiative is also provided.

The successful Family Shelter Outreach initiative will continue to provide service to residents who are underserved and experience barriers to library service. A total of eight shelters have participated to date. Bookmobile and local branch staff will continue to work co-operatively to deliver this outreach initiative.

Bookmobile service continues to provide a flexible and timely response to changing community needs. As community demands shift, the scheduling and location of stops can be changed to provide service where the need is greatest. Service will be enhanced with the delivery of the new bookmobile later this year.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There is no financial impact to this report.

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

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN**

Bookmobile service to underserved communities and shelters helps to achieve various strategic plan priorities, including breaking down barriers to access and driving inclusion so that Torontonians from all walks of life have easy, local access to the library services they want and need.

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

Toronto Public Library currently operates two bookmobiles that provide library service at 28 permanent weekly stops across the city. Service is targeted to populations, including young children, seniors and newcomers who face barriers to accessing local branches.

Bookmobile stops are reviewed annually to determine overall performance. The evaluation is based on performance in terms of circulation per hour. In evaluating any potential changes and additions, consideration is also given to priority neighbourhoods. The location of a bookmobile stop within a neighbourhood is important to the success of the stop. The presence of a community focal point that draws potential customers from the neighbourhood is ideal.

Outreach to Family Shelters was implemented as a pilot in September 2014 to reach individuals who experience barriers to library service and to offer library programming to an underserved group. The bookmobile staff and a librarian from the local branch visit the facility to provide the residents with an opportunity to learn about library services and enjoy literacy-based programming. To date, eight homeless shelters whose mandate includes the provision of services to women and their children have participated.

## COMMENTS

### Criteria for Review of Service

The primary criterion for evaluating existing bookmobile stops is the circulation performance (circulation/hour). However, when the circulation/hour is low, other criteria are considered:

- proximity to other stops and/or branches;
- the existence of geographic or other barriers for accessing branch service;
- demographic changes in the area, including presence of vulnerable populations such as low income households, seniors, young children and newcomers;
- extent to which staff have promoted the stop in the community, including whether the stop was introduced within the last three years;
- public consultation by survey forms distributed to bookmobile customers and/or local residents, or by attending a community meeting for stop feedback.

When automatic people counters are installed on the bookmobiles, number of visits throughout the year can also be reviewed.

The review of service changes to the schedule are outlined below. The current schedule, which includes 28 weekly permanent stops, is maintained. The number of service hours provided is adjusted slightly downwards by .25 hours to 41 hours per week. The highest performing stop averages approximately 80 items per hour.

Minor changes were implemented in 2015; one minor change took effect earlier in the year; the other one will be implemented in September 2016. Library staff have contacted the local Councillor and advised customers affected by the changes.

### Stop Schedule Adjustment

The timing for the stop on Ward's Island was reduced by 15 minutes to allow enough time for the bookmobile to get to the ferry on time.

### Stop Relocation

The Midland Danforth stop is located in Ward 35 (Councillor Michelle Holland) at Greystone Plaza. Service to this stop began in September 2011. The stop is located in close proximity to the Kennedy/Eglinton (2.2 km) and Albert Campbell (2.6 km) branches. Midland Danforth is a low performing stop with a circulation of 8 items/hour. Customers were consulted about the change through a recent survey.

Relocating the stop from Greystone Plaza to Gordonridge Place, also located in Ward 35, will allow the stop to be more accessible to residents in a high density area. Gordonridge Place is just one block north of Greystone Plaza off Danforth Rd. There are four high-rise apartments and a daycare in the immediate area. Parking has been identified and recommended by the City's Parking Consideration Office and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation Property Management Office.

### Outreach and Partnerships

Bookmobile staff worked collaboratively with staff from the shelters and staff from local branches to bring library service and literacy-based programming to shelter residents. The shelter visits take place on Thursday evenings on a rotating basis, with three to six visits per shelter.

Since the pilot began, a total of eight shelters have been visited: Birkdale Residence, Ernestine's Women's Shelter, Beatrice House, Family Residence, Rosalie Hall, Massey Centre, North York Women's Centre, and Yorktown Shelter for Women. Since January 2015, there were 41 shelter visits, staff engaged with 445 residents, and 173 new library cards were issued.

Based on the success of the pilot, the initiative will continue to be offered in collaboration with the bookmobile and local branch staff, and will expand to include new shelter locations throughout the city.

The Bookmobile also provided service to the Syrian refugees located at the Toronto Plaza Hotel where staff registered more than 70 new library customers.

A new partnership was formed this year with the Toronto Fire Services to distribute fire prevention materials on the bookmobile and to have Toronto Fire Services staff conduct outreach at selected bookmobile stops.

### **New Bookmobile**

The new bookmobile is currently in production and is scheduled to arrive in August 2016. New technologies on the bookmobile will allow customers to connect with their own mobile devices using wireless services and provide enhanced opportunities to use and learn about

TPL's e-content and resources. Modular shelving will support merchandising and promotion of collections with a focus on the community being served.

## **CONCLUSION**

The bookmobile schedule continues to provide service at 28 weekly stops throughout the city.

The successful Outreach to Family Shelters initiative will continue to provide service to residents who are underserved and experience barriers to library service. There are plans to expand the outreach from family shelters to other types of shelters, including those for men, women, and refugees.

The new bookmobile is expected to arrive in August 2016 and will offer enhanced services to the 28 communities visited.

Bookmobile service continues to provide a flexible and timely response to changing community needs. As community demands shift, the scheduling and location of stops can be changed to provide service where the need is greatest.

## **CONTACT**

Moe Hosseini-Ara; Director, Branch Operations and Customer Experience;  
Tel: 416-395-0820; E-mail: [mhoss@torontopubliclibrary.ca](mailto:mhoss@torontopubliclibrary.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

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Vickery Bowles  
City Librarian

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Map of Bookmobile Stops and Neighbourhood Improvement Areas – June 2016