

REPORT

Oakville Public Library Board – Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 17, 2024

FROM: Oakville Public Library

DATE: July 9, 2024

SUBJECT: 2025 Operating Budget – July 17, 2024

RECOMMENDATION:

That the 2025 Operating budget report be received for feedback.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- OPL has been advised via the “Draft Mayoral Direction to Staff regarding the preparation of a balanced 2025 Annual Budget report” (Appendix A) that OPL is to prepare its budget submission to the town based on overall increase not to exceed 5.5% (\$670,00) inclusive of growth-related impacts.
- Several drivers influencing the creation of the 2025 operating budget include inflation, collection budget pressures and staffing pressures related to population growth and the opening of the permanent Sixteen Mile Branch.
- The opening of Sixteen Mile, a 18,000+ sf. branch, will have a significant impact on the operating budget for 2025 that will only be fully realized in 2026. OPL is recommending 4 growth positions, outside of regular branch staff, to ensure OPL can continue to maintain service levels as Oakville’s population grows.
- At the June 20, 2024, board meeting, it was requested that a special board meeting be held to thoroughly review the 2025 budget options including different service levels options for Sixteen Mile.
- Appendix B is an excel spreadsheet loaded with the different options and allows the board to make various combinations and see the total cost and impact to the 2025 budget. This will be used during the July 17th board meeting.

BACKGROUND:

The first 2025 Town of Oakville budget committee meeting was held on June 17 where the mayor provided his 2025 budget report (Appendix C) and direction (Appendix A) for staff in preparation of the 2025 budget. For 2025, the mayor has directed that town of Oakville staff prepare “an operating budget with spending levels predicated on an overall tax levy increase of up to 4.00% to accommodate priorities from the Council Strategic Plan and the use of Performance Based Program Based budgeting methodology to identify efficiencies.”

The report also advises Oakville Public Library to prepare its budget submission to the town based on an overall increase not to exceed 5.5% inclusive of growth-related impacts.

At the June 20, 2024, board meeting, OPL staff presented a Budget Driver’s report that highlighted the key pressures influencing the creation of the 2025 operating and capital budgets. The main pressure for the operating budget is the opening of the permanent Sixteen Mile branch.

The permanent Sixteen Mile branch is expected to open in September 2025. This branch will become OPL’s second largest branch at approx. 18,000-sf. The design of branch offers two floors of space including the following amenities:

- **Creation Zone** - Commonly referred to as a makerspace, the Creation Zone will serve as a hub of innovation and creativity by providing community access to a variety of creative technologies and equipment. The space is designed to encourage members of the community to participate in the creative economy, be a catalyst for grassroots invention, and build a connection between community and learners.
- **Tinker lab** - This space would be for children ages 5-12 to build STEAM based skills collaboratively in either a workshop setting or an open creative session. It should be located within the children’s department as an alcove, with the potential to be closed off as a separate space. It would have seating for both children and adults for an intergenerational experience.
- **Audio/video Cove** – This 2nd floor space will be available for customers to record audio or video such a podcast, music or even a commercial. One section of the space is a sound-proofed booth, and the other is the control room with computers, equipment, and software to manage the recording process. Recording can occur in either room, so that customers can record either on their own or with a partner or group.
- **Quiet Study** – A 2nd floor space for customers to read and study with minimal distractions.
- **Reading Room** – A space for customers to sit and read and is located near windows and access to the collections.

- **Study/ Meeting Rooms** – bookable rooms on the 2nd floor for customers to use for studying and small in-person or virtual meetings.
- **Children’s area** – dedicated space for children’s filled with children’s books, interactive toys and reading spaces.
- **Children’s outdoor space** – a contained outdoor space with interactive activities and will be used for children’s programming.
- **Magazine and newspaper reading area** – located on the 2nd floor, this space provides a sitting area for customers to access newspapers and magazines.
- **Public Computers** – Public access computers (with desktops and laptops) are available for customer use.
- **Collections** – a central space filled with vast variety of physical collections.

With the addition of the recreation center and library as well as two additional lit sports fields (one with artificial turf), cricket field, skateboard park, bike pump track, basketball courts, splash pad, children’s playground, a fieldhouse and washroom facility, Sixteen Mile Sports Complex will be a go-to location in Oakville. As a result, Sixteen Mile Branch is expected to become the one of OPL’s busiest branches from day one.

The inclusion of three creation themed spaces (Creation Zone, Tinker Lab and Audio/Video Cove) reflects the learnings and demands from Glen Abbey’s Creation Zone as well as customer feedback. On Friday, July 5, OPL received comments provided via the Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan survey that closed on June 28, 2024 that speak to OPL’s creation spaces:

- “The city of Cambridge also offers access to craft and woodwork machines at the library - e.g. sewing machines, cutting machines, etc. - with support staff to monitor. This is such a beautiful idea and a great way to promote more interaction and use at the library.”
- “There are not enough workshops and activities for elementary school-aged kids”
- “With the advancement of technology libraries are not use to their full potential use the facilities to offer additional programming for teens and older adults”
- “Ability to check out crafting/ art materials from the library would be cool too!”
- “Difficult to get spots on events, limited options for families with school age children, more tech and robotics”
- “Encourage arts within libraries. Painting etc. Poetry writing classes, writing a novel, working with polymer clay etc.”
- “A visit to Iroquois Ridge or Glen Abbey demonstrates how the "creation zones" are a poor use of space. They never seem staffed.”

OPL currently has two full-time Creation Zone staff that support the Creation Zone spaces through program design/delivery, staff training, and customer assistance. They support not only Glen Abbey and Iroquois Ridge but all branches. Post-COVID OPL has been actively tweaking the Creation Zone to deal with ongoing frustrations from customers about the lack of staff support. The Sixteen Mile Branch staffing options #2 and #3 were created to address these ongoing challenges.

COMMENT/OPTIONS:

The 2025 operating Budget for OPL is being drafted to address rapid population growth and its impact on service levels as well as ongoing collection budget pressures. Below are the key drivers impacting the development of the 2025 budget:

Personnel and Inflation Costs:

Personnel costs resulting from contract renewals, step/merit increases, and benefits as well as inflation on current contracts are estimated at \$400, 960 (3.29%) for 2025.

Sixteen Mile:

The new Sixteen Mile branch is scheduled to open in Q3 of 2025. This approx. 18,000 sf. facility will require a full staffing complement to deliver on the vast array of services being offered. OPL staff have created three different service level options for board consideration. Based on a Q3 2005 opening, 2025 costing reflects the minimum hiring and onboarding time needed for positions. Full year costs will be realized in 2026.

The Core Service level (option #1) is the minimum needed to provide current service levels. Option #2 and/or #3 and the identified growth positions can be bundled with Option #1 to increase service levels and provide increased activation of the branch amenities.:

Option #1 – Core Service Level

Budget Impacts: \$590,290.41 in 2025 (4.85% increase) and \$645,781 in 2026

All new branches are designed to be unique destinations that meet the current and future needs of the local community. While the appearance, layout, and specific amenities may change, OPL is committed to maintaining consistent and high-quality core services.

OPL requires a core staffing complement to support current library services and a single makerspace, including circulation and information services, library and community-based programming, and instructional and inspiring support with current and emerging digital technologies.

This budget impact includes personnel, operating expenses, and facility maintenance costs beyond the current budget for temporary Sixteen Mile.

Option #2 – Activation of all Creation Spaces

Budget Impacts (in addition to option #1): \$208,606.04 in 2025 (1.71% increase) and \$98,509 in 2026

The permanent Sixteen Mile branch was designed with a focus on inspiring and engaging the community with current and emerging technologies. With three makerspaces (Creation Zone, Tinker Lab, and Audio/Video Cove), OPL can play a significant role in advancing digital literacy as well as digital inclusion to ensure that all residents have equitable access to technology.

OPL requires specialized staffing to support technology services across all three of these makerspaces. Staff will provide access to low- and high-tech tools and equipment for free, teach people how to use tools, and introduce them to new techniques and skills through workshops, training, and educational programming.

Option # 3 – Meet Community Engagement/Outreach Demand

Budget Impact (in addition to options #1 and #2): \$86,538.85 in 2025 (0.71% increase) and \$70,668 in 2026

Oakville's growing population creates new opportunities and pressures on OPL to diversify its approach to programming (e.g. multi-lingual, increase teen and older adult) and to play a more active role in their community networks.

OPL requires additional staffing to support outreach initiatives within the community and meet the growing demand of schools for library visits and library outreach to schools.

Requested Growth Positions

OPL is also requesting 4 growth positions, outside of the branch staff in the options above, to ensure OPL can continue to maintain service levels as demand on library services expands Oakville's population grows.

- **Project Management** (approx. \$107,006 annually) – as the complexity and volume of large operating and capital projects increases, OPL requires a growth position (1 FTE) to provide internal project management services to better support the senior leadership team with ongoing and future projects including construction of new library branches, library master plan initiatives, task management, internal communications, vendor management, consultant services, purchasing, document management, and metrics and reporting.

- **Service Delivery** (approx. \$107, 006 annually) – the Service Delivery department is responsible for supporting branch services, courier services, express locations, and performance measures. With only 1 FTE equivalency within this department, OPL requires a growth position (1 FTE) to support the development and implementation of system-wide service delivery as well as expanding alternative services, maintaining comprehensive community profiles, and implementing a customer retention plan as outlined in the strategic plan.
- **Performance and Metrics** (approx. \$92,129 annually) – the public library continues to be transformative force within our community, as we shape, impact, and enrich the lives of Oakville residents every day. As OPL expands to meet the town’s growing needs, the organization requires a growth position (1 FTE) to ensure there is dedicated staffing support to collect, analyze, and report on performance and key metrics to ensure that OPL leadership is making informed, data-driven decisions.
- **Community Engagement** (approx. \$107, 007 annually)– the Community Development and Engagement department’s current staffing model is structured to support Halton Information Providers (HIP), Information Oakville, and Fundraising, however the department requires a growth position (1 FTE) to better meet the growing demand on OPL to develop community engagement plans and strategies to establish partnerships with new groups, organizations and agencies that enhance the library’s mission, strategic goals, and ability to support community-led programs and services.

Website Updates and Enhancement Budget Request - \$30,000

For the past 3 years, OPL has requested \$30,000 as part of the capital budget to assist in ongoing development, improvement, and maintenance of OPL.ca as both OPL and the Town of Oakville lack the in-house technical expertise required for ongoing website maintenance and security enhancements. However, for 2025, the Town asked OPL to move this capital request into operating to better reflect the nature of the ongoing work it represents.

Collections Budget Request - \$100,000

In the June 15, 2023, Collection Development Update report, OPL asked for an additional \$100,000 to be added to the collections budget annually for the next 5 years. The requested \$100,000 was added to the 2024 budget. Another \$100,000 would continue to address issues such as increased costs related to digital

collections, replacing aged collections (e.g. Children's books) and supporting the growth of the Library of Things and multilingual collections. As mentioned above, OPL received comments provided via the Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan survey that closed on June 28, 2024. Below are comments that stood out in respect to OPL collections:

- "Oakville's libraries are very short on book supply."
- "The most important need is an increased supply of e-books!"
- "The selection and availability of e-books and downloadable audiobooks need to be improved"
- "More books in circulation at the library"
- "Books my kids want to read (9-12 years and teen fiction) rarely available."

Appendix A is an excel spreadsheet loaded with the different options and allows the board to make various bundles and see the total cost and impact to the 2025 budget. Appendix A will be used during the board meeting as part of the discussion.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A - Draft Mayoral Direction to Staff regarding the preparation of a balanced 2025 Annual Budget

Appendix B – 2025 Operating Budget Options and Impacts

Appendix C - Draft Mayoral Direction to Staff Regarding the Preparation of the 2025 Annual Budget

Prepared and submitted by:
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