

REPORT

Oakville Public Library Board

Meeting Date: August 21, 2025

FROM: Oakville Public Library

DATE: August 12, 2025

SUBJECT: 2026 Capital Budget – August 21, 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the OPL Board approve the merger of the 2026 Strategic Plan and Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan (PRLMP) Recommended Strategies capital projects into a single integrated initiative with a budget of \$300,000; and
2. Subject to the approval of recommendation 1; That staff be directed to submit a revised capital business case for the merged project to the Town of Oakville as part of the 2026 capital budget process.

KEY FACTS:

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

- A 2026 Operating and Capital drivers report was provided to the OPL Board in June. The report highlighted existing capital projects within the 2025 10-year capital forecast but did not include any new requests for 2026. Both the Strategic Plan project and the PRLMP Recommended Strategies project are both identified for 2026 in the 10-year forecast.
- Upon review of the Strategic Plan and the PRLMP Recommended Strategies projects, potential synergies between the two projects were identified, leading to the proposed merger of the two projects.
- A review of similar projects by other libraries identified that the initial budget for both projects is not sufficient to meet the updated deliverables and has been updated to reflect market costs.

BACKGROUND:

Both the Strategic Plan and the PRLMP Recommended Strategies projects are listed as separate capital projects in the Oakville Public Library's 10-Year Capital Forecast, with initial timing projected for 2026. This forecast was endorsed by the OPL Board and approved by Council as part of the 2025 budget process.

The 2026 Strategic Plan project will support the development of the library's next four-year strategic plan, replacing the current plan that concludes at the end of 2026. The PRLMP Recommended Strategies project aligns directly with the strategy recommendations from the Parks, Recreation and Library Facilities Master Plan, which was approved by the OPL Board and Town Council in Fall 2025.

The PRLMP recommendations included:

- Service Model review
- Collection Development Strategy
- Technology Strategy
- Newcomer Strategy
- Inclusion Strategy
- Climate Action Strategy

Rather than undertaking each of the reviews individually, it is proposed that OPL complete a robust service delivery review that will include a lens for the strategies listed above.

Both projects are intended to be comprehensive and organization-wide, with significant public and stakeholder engagement.

COMMENT/OPTIONS:

Given the aligned timing and overlapping scope of the two initiatives, OPL believes there is an opportunity to improve outcomes and maximize the value of the investment by merging the projects.

The merged project would include a full review of all key service areas with a lens to understanding the appropriate resourcing and value/outcomes for each service resulting in recommendations that would be used as a starting point for the new strategic plan.

Key considerations for this recommendation include:

- **Integrated Engagement:** Both projects require robust community and staff consultation. A unified approach would streamline the engagement process and reduce redundancy.
- **Strategic Sequencing:** Conducting the service delivery review first and using its recommendations to directly inform a new Strategic Plan will strengthen the clarity, focus, and relevance of the plan.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Merging the two projects will reduce administrative effort and allow for a single procurement, project management and change management process.

- **Cost Effectiveness:** Consolidating the two scopes may reduce duplication in consultant work (e.g., research, data gathering, facilitation), while still preserving the integrity of each deliverable.
- **Narrative Alignment:** A merged project offers a compelling strategic narrative — reviewing current service delivery to plan effectively for the future.

Should the Board approve this approach, OPL will submit a revised capital business case to the Town for the merged project as part of the 2026 budget process. A follow-up report detailing the project scope, phasing, and timelines will be brought forward to the Board for approval in early 2026.

Financial Implications

The original forecasted capital allocations were:

- Strategic Plan: \$85,000
- PRLMP Recommended Strategies: \$100,000

For the 2026 budget process, OPL reviewed the estimated budgets for each project based both on refined scopes and against budgets from recent similar projects undertaken by other libraries. During this process, it was identified that the budgets for both were under funded. The updated budget for the merged project has been identified as **\$300,000**.

APPENDICES:

N/A

Prepared and submitted by:
Tara Wong, CEO