



MANAGEMENT REPORT

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Meeting Date: June 28, 2017

TO: Library Board

FROM: Diana Guinn, Director, Neighbourhood and Youth Services

SUBJECT: BRANCH STAFFING MODEL - IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the implementation of the Library's branch staffing model.

PURPOSE

This report is for information.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board receive the report for information.

BOARD POLICY

There is no applicable Board Policy beyond the *Board Procedure Policy* that delegates the operations of the Library to the Chief Librarian.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

As a responsible and accountable public service, VPL must continuously review our approaches. Management and staff need to be constantly looking at how work is changing, work that needs to be done, or work that we anticipate needing to be done. Over the past seven years, VPL has taken a proactive and courageous approach to reviewing, streamlining, and redefining our processes, work, and services. The Branch Staffing Model Review conducted in 2016 was the latest of several

large and small reviews which have resulted in public service improvements, new work opportunities for staff, and the opportunity to pursue new roles for the library.

BACKGROUND

In June 2016, the Library received Western Management Consulting's (WMC) report ([link](#)) on the Branch Staffing Model Review which was subsequently shared with staff, the Union, and the Library Board. The report outlined 16 recommendations for consideration. In July and August 2016, members from the steering committee visited all staff units and branches to hear feedback and comments from staff. Subsequently, the Branch Staffing Model Working Group (Director, Neighbourhood & Youth Services; Director, Collections & Technology; Senior Manager, Services for Children & Teens; and Neighbourhood Services Managers) met to review the recommendations, analyze the staff comments, and formulate recommendations for the Directors Group.

The Directors Group considered 16 recommendations that were received from the Branch Staffing Model Working Group and based on the WMC Review Report. The Directors considered the recommendations using the following criteria: patron experience, core services, library values, and employee enablement, as well as staff comments received in the unit visits. Directors decided that 11/16 recommendations would proceed as originally outlined in the WMC report, two were approved to proceed with modifications, and two were not recommended to proceed. The remaining recommendation was a global recommendation in which the consultant advised that the library consider all recommendations within the context of the library's overall strategic plan.

Those decisions were shared with the Library Trustees for information at their meeting on October 26, 2016. ([link](#))

The implementation of the Branch Staffing Model is now underway and is included in the VPL 2020 Operating Plan as Initiative 7.5 Branch Staffing Model: Implement changes to the staffing model in VPL neighbourhood branches in accordance with the approved project plan. The timeline for implementation is Q1 2017 – Q4 2019.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of the following recommendations is complete:

1. *Determine and implement a minimized opening protocol based on current practice at Terry Salman Branch and Mount Pleasant - Completed January 2017*

The consultant's report noted that implementing a minimized opening protocol would provide an opportunity to extend opening hours and to align staff schedules more closely with public service hours.

A working group of eight staff from branches and the Central Library participated in developing the new opening protocol, which separates key tasks into those that must be completed before opening and those that can be completed after opening to the public based on customer service priorities and health and safety considerations.

This more efficient opening protocol will support the VPL 2020 Operating Plan Initiative 3.3: Creative Approaches to Extend Opening Hours.

2. Reassess the compressed work week impact on public service capacity and operational efficiency – Completed

The consultant's recommendation was limited to assessment of the operational service impacts of the compressed work week and did not speak to possible solutions. Management assessed the impact of the compressed work week on public service and operations, considering factors such as cost to replace staff on their compressed day off, scheduling complexity, and supervisor oversight.

Implementation of the following recommendations is in process:

1. Create two non-librarian public service positions in branches. In smaller branches these positions will replace the current Shelver, Library Assistant II and Library Technician II roles. In larger branches and in Central, have the two positions and a shelver role.

(Note: *This recommendation has been modified.* With the implementation of the living wage in April 2017, there is no longer a Shelver position. Staff who worked as shelvers transitioned to the new position of Library Service Assistant. This new role is now being considered along with the new public service roles).

The consultant's report noted that reducing hand-off of a patron from staff member to staff member should be a key consideration in developing these positions.

With the goal of improving the patron experience, three new public service positions (Public Service Associate 1; Public Service Associate 2 and Senior Public Service Associate) have now been developed. A working group comprised of nine representatives from branches and the Central Library provided valuable input into the development of positions; managers and directors were also consulted. The new positions include some intentional overlap in duties and responsibilities so that staff have the ability to assist with a wider range of patron needs.

In June 2017, all supervisors were briefed about the new positions and staff were provided with the opportunity to ask questions and provide further input into a Question and Answer document that they can then use with their staff. Unit and branch visits have also been planned for the remainder of June. A working group comprised of eight supervisors from

branches and the Central Library will develop a training plan to transition staff into their new roles.

It is anticipated that implementation of the new roles will be complete by the end of 2017.

2. *Extend the Supervisor responsibilities to cover operational oversight for all (non-Librarian) staff in the Branch (Library Assistants and Library Technicians) subject to funding source.*

Now that the new branch public service job descriptions are complete, a plan for the review of branch supervisor responsibilities is underway, which will include the creation of updated job descriptions. A working group comprised of seven representatives of branch heads, branch supervisors, and library technicians has been selected and will meet in mid-June to provide input into this process to Managers.

3. *Review the requirements and staffing alternatives for technical support for patrons*

To determine the requirements for technical support for patrons, management reviewed documents and data including the Information Services Review, feedback from the VPL 2020 public and staff consultation process, and records of questions and requests received in Information Services, Digital Services, Branches and Systems. Working with the Director of Collections and Technology, managers confirmed the range of support that VPL will provide and divided it into categories such as VPL tools and resources, personal devices, and using a computer. Support which will be provided by branch staff has been incorporated into the job descriptions for the new branch public service roles. Training needs for these tasks will be considered and incorporated into the training plan to transition staff to these new responsibilities.

4. *Review and redesign administrative process and systems such as scheduling to optimize branch efficiency*

Work has started on determining the requirements for scheduling software. Further steps will include research, planning, contracting with a supplier, configuration, and finally implementation. It is expected that scheduling software will be in place by the end of 2018 or early 2019.

5. *Reset the current reporting requirements and employee expectations to work in a specific branch or branches to a more flexible workplace in which employees expect assignments across multiple branches, either system-wide, or within a particular geographic region.*

While all positions are hired as VPL system employees and not unit employees, most staff are assigned to one work location (exceptions are positions such as Community Librarians, Children's and Teen Services Librarians, and building maintenance workers). Guidelines are

being drafted which will clearly identify that for some positions, it is the Library's expectation that the position will serve a neighbourhood or more than one unit. We currently already have a practice of having staff change location based on the Library's operational needs.

6. *Exercise flexibility in scheduling as determined by management.*

Given our seven day operation, the Library requires flexibility in the scheduling of work with a healthy balance of full time, part time and posted part time hours. Guidelines will be prepared for supervisors and managers to consider when developing schedules so that appropriate oversight of locations is provided during opening hours and that the appropriate mix of staff positions are matched with activity levels and service requirements. An expectation is that this process will be monitored and assessed on a regular basis and modifications made.

7. *Investigate, review and upgrade Maintenance and IT Services to better serve branch requirements.*

A need for additional support for the Manager of Facilities and Purchasing has been identified and a job description is being developed for this new role. In addition, a process to track maintenance requests is underway.

Implementation of the following recommendations has not yet begun:

1. Reduce the number of individuals filling part-time positions in a branch through consolidation of hours
2. Rebuild schedules and staffing to fully integrate evenings, Saturdays, and Sundays into all branch staff schedules and the assigned classifications.
3. Review community engagement processes and activities to optimize effort and to enable branches to deliver on organizational goals.

NEXT STEPS

The development of the public service job descriptions and roles has been the most significant milestone completed to date. Training and ongoing transition planning for staff affected by this change is the next critical step and as mentioned above, a working group has been formed to address this important phase. In addition to this stage, management is committed to ensuring that our staffing complement in branches is appropriate to address our public service priorities and activity levels, and schedules may be adjusted to address these shifting trends.

As with all significant changes implemented at VPL, Management will consider options to achieve outcomes in a manner that has the least impact on employees. Management regularly shares information with the Union and works with the Union to try to address concerns as reasonably possible as implementation progresses.

The timeline for implementation of all recommendations is from Q1 2017 – Q4 2019.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At the October 26, 2016, meeting the Board approved a transfer from reserves, as needed, to second an internal project coordinator to assist with the implementation of the recommendations in the Branch Staffing Review. Further operational impacts of the recommendations must be cost neutral to VPL, but it is hoped that some effort may be reassigned to support emerging strategic priorities. As further analysis is undertaken as part of the implementation planning, costs and savings will be determined.

FINAL REMARKS

Since the last update received by the Board in October, 2/16 recommendations have been completed and a further seven are underway. Three have yet to be started.

The implementation of the Branch Staffing Model is an important initiative in our VPL 2020 Strategic Plan under organizational strength. It is important that VPL is positioned to respond to evolving community needs, and that our staff are equipped to respond to the shifting service trends.