



MANAGEMENT REPORT

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Meeting Date: June 24, 2020

TO: VPL Board

FROM: Kurt Heinrich, Chair, Community Relations, Planning and Development Committee

SUBJECT: VPL Restart Phase 2 Update

SUMMARY

The Vancouver Public Library suspended the majority of operations in March in order to stop the spread of COVID-19 and enable the health and safety of its employees and the public. Now that the pandemic has stabilised in BC, and following the restart plan set out by the provincial health authority, the Library is resuming services to meet the needs of our users. In May, the Board approved a three phase plan that slowly expands library services while maintaining staff and public safety. Phase 1, which included a computer lab and a pilot takeout service, is in progress, and this report updates the Board on the work to prepare for Phase 2, which begins the re-opening of physical locations.

PURPOSE

This report is for information.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive this report for information.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

This report was received by both the Community Relations, Planning and Development Committee and the Services, Finance and Human Resources Committee. At the Community Relations, Planning and Development Committee, trustees inquired about safety protocols, including masks and other protective equipment, and communication planning for reopening.

POLICY

The library follows guidance from WorkSafe BC and public health authorities in this area.

BACKGROUND

On March 16, 2020, the Library suspended all in-person public library operations in order to stop the spread of COVID-19 and enable the health and safety of employees and the public. In May 2020, the provincial government announced that libraries would be included in phase two of the [BC Restart Plan](#), meaning that libraries would be able to reopen services to the public in accordance with WorkSafe BC and public health authority guidelines starting on May 19. Since that announcement, library staff have been working on safety, service, and budget considerations for a phased reopening of services.

The safety approach at VPL is guided by the hierarchy of controls provided by WorkSafe BC, and VPL has prepared the [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) as required by WorkSafe.

The library is implementing a phased approach to reopening, and Phase 1 began with the establishment of a computer lab at the Central Library and contactless pickup of takeout books on a rotating basis at 5 closed locations. These services began on May 25 and June 2, respectively.

DISCUSSION

In mid-July, VPL plans to re-open Central Library (Lower Level to Level 3) and four branches across the city (Britannia, Kitsilano, Renfrew, and South Hill) with limited services including short visits for purposes such as collection access and use of computers. At the same time, contactless takeout service will become available five days a week at five branches (Champlain Heights, Dunbar, Firehall, Hastings, Kensington) and service will expand to all remaining library branches over the subsequent four weeks. Depending on health and safety guidance and recovery progress, the Library will enter Phase 3 in September: all locations will be open regular hours, including Sundays where possible, with service limited to short visits and pre-booked computer access. Increased access for longer visits may be considered at Central Library and some larger branches. In November, if circumstances permit, all locations will return to regular hours, however, we expect some limitations on visit times, physical distancing restrictions and event size restrictions will continue until all health restrictions are lifted.

Staff have determined the services that we are able to restore beginning from the safety parameters. Restart work is predicated on the guiding principles and prerequisites for service restoration approved by the VPL Board on May 24, 2020.

Guiding Principles

1. Delivering service that meets or exceeds health and safety guidelines

2. Addressing urgent community needs
3. Restoring a feeling of normalcy
4. Aligning with goals of VPL 2020-2023 Strategic Plan
5. Bringing staff back to work as soon as possible based on health and safety precautions being in place

Prerequisites for Service Restoration

1. Staff workspace physical protective measures
2. Public space physical protective measures
3. Enhanced cleaning protocol
4. Security assessment
5. Staff availability
6. Communication plan for opening

Thirteen staff have been recalled and have returned to work to support our preparations for reopening and takeout expansion, and we anticipate that approximately 110 additional staff will be recalled in preparation for Phase 2. Where duties permit, staff continue to work from home.

VPL restart teams are considering safety, service delivery, changes required to our locations, and staffing. Staff with operational knowledge and experience are embedded within the recovery teams, and a staff survey with 416 responses has provided the opportunity for staff input into the planning work among those who are currently laid off.

The services we will provide in Phase 2 will include:

- Self-serve access to the majority of collections at branches, and on Level 2 and in the Children's Library at Central Library
- A browsing collection for "grab and go" on Level 2 at Central Library and access to the remainder of the collections via staff
- Access to computers at all open locations
- Information service with an emphasis on virtual delivery
- One-to-one appointments with an emphasis on virtual delivery
- Advanced digital library troubleshooting and technology support provided by virtual delivery
- Staff mediated printing with contactless handover at feasible locations
- Circulation service primarily through self-serve checkout, including in-person options for registering for library cards, updating accounts, and waiving fines and fees

Safety for Public Service

Key elements of the Safety Plan include the following:

- **Occupancy limits:** All locations will be subject to occupancy limits based on one person per 5 metres of unencumbered space. Staff will monitor to ensure that occupancy limits are not exceeded. Patrons will be able to make short visits to the library for limited collection access, to use computers, to receive assistance with computers, and to access circulation services such as obtaining a library card. In the first phases of reopening, patrons will not be able to linger in the space or stay and read recreationally.
- **Barriers at Service Points:** Service desks where in-person interactions take place will have plexiglass barriers installed to enable staff and patron safety. Patrons will be encouraged to access information services, including one-on-one appointments, through email or chat or by phone.
- **Computer Use:** Patrons will be able to book and use computers at Central and branches. Computers will be spaced out or separated with plexiglass barriers. Staff support will be provided via remote desktop where possible.
- **Cleaning:** Cleaning protocols for high contact surfaces will be implemented per BC Centre for Disease Control guidelines.

Safety for VPL Staff

It is essential that the library provide a safe and secure work environment for staff. The VPL safety approach is guided by the hierarchy of controls provided by WorkSafe BC. An overall safety plan is in development, and individual safety plans are being prepared for each service area that is planned for restoration.

Staff workspaces are being reconfigured and protocols and training put in place to ensure that staff are able to safely distance from other staff members and from the public as they carry out their work. The Library is working with Homewood Health to put support and resources for mental health and wellness in place for staff as they return to work at what remains an extremely difficult time for many.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Library's approved 2020 budget is provided below, along with a forecast for 2020 based on the Library's phased re-opening plan. Delivering takeout service five days per week at all locations, introduced at two week intervals from mid-July to mid-August, and continuing enhanced services required until the Library re-opens all locations, requires total funding of

\$1.18M in addition to the funding for the phased re-opening of locations. The cost of these alternative service approaches are included in “Incremental COVID support below”.

<u>2020 BUDGET</u>	<u>2020 Budget \$</u>	<u>2020 Forecast \$</u>	<u>Variance \$</u>
Cost Recoveries, Grants & Donations	-2,488,300	-2,319,712	168,588
Fines & penalties	-791,000	-153,694	637,306
Other Library revenue	-454,700	-110,219	344,481
Rental, Lease & Other	-1,198,000	-304,389	893,611
TOTAL REVENUE	-4,932,000	-2,888,014	2,043,986
Building Occupancy & Mtce	3,446,011	2,878,876	-567,135
Equipment & Fleet	582,704	423,923	-158,781
Internal Allocations	2,480,775	2,083,441	-397,335
Other Expenses	970,278	700,204	-270,074
Professional Fees	12,400	52,696	40,296
Regional Utility Charges	1,000	1,399	399
Salaries & Benefits	41,605,335	33,195,244	-8,410,091
Supplies & Materials	6,035,805	6,035,971	166
Transfers	113,857	281,244	167,387
Incremental COVID Support (takeout, lab etc.)	0	1,180,400	1,180,400
TOTAL EXPENSES & TRANSFERS	55,248,165	46,833,398	-8,414,768
TOTAL NET OPERATING BUDGET	50,316,165	43,945,384	-6,370,782

FINAL REMARKS

VPL is committed to a reopening process that enables a safe return to work for staff and a safe resumption of service for our community. The restart work currently underway supports the phased reopening approach approved by the Board in May, and ensures that services will be resumed in full compliance with WorkSafe BC guidelines and public health authority guidance.