

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION DE LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE PUBLIQUE D'OTTAWA**

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Ref N°: OPLB-2014-0082

SUBJECT: Approval of Bookmobile Re-Tender Process

OBJET : Approbation de la Nouvelle Procédure d'appel d'offres concernant le Bibliobus

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the OPL Board receive the consultant's initial findings from the 2014 Bookmobile Service Review for information; and,

That the Ottawa Public Library Board approve the cancellation of Request for Tender 25614-07008-T01 for the supply and delivery of one bookmobile; and,

That the OPL Board direct staff to participate in a re-tendering process for a vehicle for a mobile library with options for front or rear engine design.

RECOMMANDATION DU RAPPORT

Que le C.A. de la BPO prenne connaissance à titre d'information des premières constatations du consultant relatives à l'examen du service de Bibliobus de 2014;

Que le C.A. de la BPO approuve l'annulation de l'appel d'offres n° 25614-07008-T01 pour la fourniture et la livraison d'un bibliobus;

Que le C. A. de la BPO demande au personnel de participer à une nouvelle procédure d'appel d'offres portant sur un véhicule qui servira de bibliothèque mobile, appel qui comporterait comme option le choix de l'emplacement du moteur à l'avant ou à l'arrière.

BACKGROUND

On October 15, 2013, the Ottawa Public Library Board (the "Board") approved a recommendation to support the replacement of Unit 1 Bookmobile, with final approval being made as a result of a tender process. Unit 1 Bookmobile is a 1995 model that was first identified for replacement in 2006. The 2011 approved budget included \$250,000 in capital funding for the replacement of Unit 1 bookmobile.

The request for tender for supply and delivery of a rear-engine bookmobile was issued on MERX by the City of Ottawa's Supply Branch, closing on May 15, 2014 following a two-week extension at the request of vendors. Twelve (12) companies downloaded the tender on MERX, with three bids received at closing; all exceeded the existing budget. Following the review and analysis of the bids by both Fleet Services and Supply Management, Bid #2 Harper Bus Sales was identified as the lowest responsive bid at a total cost of \$436,532.08 (\$428,982.00 plus \$7,550.08 HST). Bid #1, the lowest bid, was deemed non-compliant as it was based on a front-engine bus that exceeded the maximum length indicated in the tender.

In order to proceed with a contract award, OPL identified funding to close the \$200,000 gap between existing and required funds. A recommendation to purchase a new bookmobile was brought to the Board for consideration on July 7, 2014. The Board did not support the recommendation, and directed staff to:

- Evaluate the tender process;
- Evaluate whether the Bookmobile is the most effective and current mechanism to meet the needs of residents in the community it serves; and,
- Bring recommendations in September 2014 on the type of vehicle that could best serve OPL today and in the future.

In addition, the Board was advised in October 2013, that a Bookmobile Service Review

(the “Review”) was in development. The purpose of the Review was to analyze current bookmobile, branch, and kiosk locations to identify service gaps and present recommendations for a service plan. The Board is receiving the consultant’s initial findings as an attachment to this report (Appendix 1). These initial findings will be analyzed in conjunction with 2014 Bookmobile Services usage statistics and preliminary information from the Sprinter van pilot, in order to bring forward a recommended Bookmobile Service Plan in early 2015.

DISCUSSION

Service Delivery

The Bookmobile Service fills service gaps for Ottawa residents who do not have close access to a branch. OPL’s service territory is geographically broad; locations extend west to east, from Fitzroy Harbour Branch to Sarsfield Bookmobile stop, a distance of 82.5km, and north to south, from Rockcliffe Park Branch to North Gower Branch, 39.1km. Approximately 200,000 Ottawa residents, or 20% of the City’s population, currently live outside recommended service areas of a branch. If evaluated in service radii (distance bands served by Bookmobile only), the service area for current Bookmobile stops is 247.4km². Currently, two 40-foot vehicles operate a weekly schedule at 23 stops, providing 47 hours of library services per week to these underserved areas. Bookmobile service also provides outreach at community events. In 2013, OPL’s Bookmobiles travelled 36,982km in 2013, delivering 1983.5 service hours.

Library consultant Ken Roberts has said that “It is probable that by 2030 many public libraries will become true community meeting places [...] that creation and imagination will become the driving forces behind the next economy and that public space will become even more critical.”¹ A mobile library service provides community space in the neighbourhoods served. Bookmobiles are a key component of current library services, offering flexibility and a library experience nearest to that of a branch. In effect, our bookmobile operates as our mobile space.

¹ Robert, Ken. “FACING THE FUTURE: A Vision Document for British Columbia’s Public Libraries.” <http://commons.bclibraries.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Facing-the-Future-A-Report-on-the-future-of-libraries-for-the-Province-of-British-Columbia.pdf>

The 1995 bookmobile (Unit 1) was scheduled for lifecycle by Fleet in 2012 and has travelled 161, 814km. This unit is beyond end of life, experiences regular mechanical issues, and has significant wear and tear. Today's vehicles are designed to support delivery of modern library services. A new vehicle will offer:

1. Spaces: Broad collections serving heterogeneous populations can be stocked, and a variety of transactions can be made, including borrowing, returns, and holds pickup. A flexible floor plan allows for future modifications to decrease floor space dedicated to collections as service delivery methods and services warrant;
2. Technology: Public Wi-Fi allows customers to use library Chromebooks, and facilitates staff in supporting downloading of OPL materials on customer-owned devices. In addition, access to staff networks allow for customer training on new modes of library services using library-owned devices;
3. Discovery: Customers can effectively interact with staff on the vehicle to access a range of services, including research and technology assistance, as well as attend small-scale library programming; and,
4. Reliability: A new, mechanically-sound vehicle will provide consistently reliable service. Frequent service disruptions mainly due to Unit 1 malfunctions were the primary reason for an approximate 4% decrease in circulation in 2012 and 2013, as well as customer frustration and significant staff time to mitigate the disruptions.

A variety of vehicles and other alternative units with different tolerances and abilities to support mobile service delivery were considered. This included: tractor trailer, rear-engine custom bus, front-engine custom bus, modified transit bus, sprinter van, smaller van, modified car/mini multi passenger vehicle, and kiosk. Working with Fleet Services, it was concluded that OPL's service requirements are best met by a rear-engine custom bus or a front-engine custom bus. A detailed summary of alternative units, including rationale, is provided as Appendix 2. As a result, staff recommend that the Board

approve the cancellation of the initial tender, and direct staff to re-tender using these broader parameters.

Prior to the spring 2014 tendering process, expert advice was obtained through Speciality Vehicle Services (SVS), which also provided assistance when the last bookmobile (Unit 2) was purchased in 2004 at a unit cost of \$402,000 US. The current process involved development of specifications and cost estimates. Preliminary projections validated in November 2013 by the consultant suggested that the market for vehicles of similar size (approximately 32') with rear engines were in the range of approximately \$250,000 USD. With this advice, OPL worked with Fleet Services and Supply Branch to tender for a new rear-engine bookmobile in April 2014.

Evaluation of the spring 2014 tendering process identified areas for improvement, including provision of options to bid on a front or rear-engine vehicle, extensive revision of standard contract elements that may have increased costs, and direct notification of the tender to the bookmobile industry to encourage an increased number of bids.

The Review confirms that existing bookmobile service points are equitably distributed throughout the urban, suburban, and rural areas of the city, complementing branch services. It also confirms that staff criteria for the selection of locations are valid. The Review supports the need for bookmobile services, but goes further to recommend OPL review other options as a means of offering alternative services in a combined approach. As a result, the need for a reliable vehicle to provide service across a vast geographic area remains a key piece of OPLs service offering. Where OPL can focus forward is determining the composition (type, size, etc.) of mobile spaces and the variety of means required to deliver services. This will be on the OPL 2015 corporate work plan.

CONSULTATION

All elements of the tender process have been reviewed with the OPL senior management team, including the CEO, the City's Financial Services Unit Manager, and the City of Ottawa Fleet Services and Supply Branch.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Given current needs, a Bookmobile has been validated, as detailed in this report, as the recommended option for continued provision of mobile services at this time. While smaller vehicles can address some of OPL service needs, they cannot provide the same breadth of service options. If this option is not pursued, then current bookmobile services will be affected in 2015 due to increased risks of mechanical failure leading to reduced services. The second large bookmobile (Unit 2) will reach expected end-of-life in 2016; however, it is anticipated that its life span can be extended for a few years. Prior to its replacement, further research to review other modalities of service will be undertaken in response to recommendations of the Bookmobile Service Review. There is risk that the retendering process will not result in a responsive and affordable bid. Further delays in ordering a new bookmobile to replace Unit 1 increases the level of risk to continuity of services.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There is no accessibility impact associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPACTS

There is no technology impact associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

BOARD PRIORITIES

“Services that are customer-centric” and “Spaces for community, collections, and creation” were approved by the OPL Board as key strategic directions 2014-2016 Strategic Plan.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

1. [Appendix A: Alternative Units Chart](#)
2. [Appendix B: Ottawa Public Library Board, Doc 4, Bookmobile Service Review, October 15, 2013](#)

DISPOSITION

Pending Board approval of the recommendation to cancel the outstanding tender and initiate a re-tendering process for a bookmobile with options for front- and rear-engine design, OPL will work with the City of Ottawa Fleet Services to cancel the existing RFP process and finalize the criteria and specifications for the modified tender. It is believed that this revised tender process will result in a larger number of more affordable bids.

The request for tender for supply and delivery of a bookmobile will be issued on MERX by the City of Ottawa's Supply Branch on, or before, October 2014, closing within 30 days. Bids will be received and evaluated by Supply Branch, Fleet Services, and OPL. The result of the tender process is planned to be come forward to the Board for consideration in December. If no responsive bids are received within the existing funding envelope, the Board will be advised and staff will recommend alternate courses of action.

Contingency plans have been developed to provide continuity of service until the new

bookmobile can be delivered and deployed, and to test alternative service delivery using the Sprinter van. These plans include maintenance and repairs on Unit 1 to ensure it remains road-worthy and the development of a schedule to serve certain regular stops with a smaller unit if required.