

Report to / Rapport au:

**Ottawa Public Library Board
Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa**

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**SUBJECT: Ottawa Public Library Response to the Truth and Reconciliation
Commission's Calls to Action**

**OBJET: La réponse de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa à l'égard des appels
à l'action de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Receive this report for information;**
- 2. Direct staff to develop a position statement on Indigenous services for the Board's consideration; and,**
- 3. Direct staff to work with the City of Ottawa to develop protocols for the Board's consideration regarding verbal and visual land acknowledgements at library events and in library locations.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa :

1. **Prenne connaissance de ce rapport à titre d'information;**
2. **Charge le personnel de concevoir un énoncé de position concernant les services aux autochtones aux fins d'examen pour le Conseil d'administration;**
3. **Charge le personnel de collaborer avec la Ville d'Ottawa afin d'élaborer des protocoles aux fins d'examen à l'égard des reconnaissances verbales et visuelles du territoire autochtone dans les succursales et durant des événements de la Bibliothèque.**

BACKGROUND

Ottawa is located entirely within what is considered to be the Traditional Territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation. It was historically, and continues to be, a gathering place for Aboriginal people. Statistics¹ show that Ottawa serves the third-fastest growing Indigenous community in Canada.

Public libraries in Canada, including Ottawa Public Library (OPL), have been providing services to Indigenous customers for many years in varying degrees of scope. OPL has rich and varied collections, targeting all age groups, in multiple formats, reflecting a broad spectrum of Indigenous communities across the country, and their respective interests. OPL works with local Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners to provide holistic, culture-based programs and services to local Aboriginal communities, in an environment that promotes Indigenous languages, cultural teachings, traditional foods, and programs grounded in traditional knowledge.

In 2007, Ottawa City Council endorsed the creation of the Aboriginal Working Committee (AWC), a formal partnership with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition of urban aboriginal service partners and other public sector partners. The Committee was established to foster and build relationships with, and address the service needs of, Ottawa's urban Aboriginal communities. OPL is a member of the Aboriginal Working Committee, and receives input from the Committee on its services to the Indigenous community.

¹ City of Ottawa. Equity and Inclusion Lens. Diversity Snapshot: Aboriginal Peoples – First Nations, Inuit, Métis. 2010
(http://ozonehome.city.a.ottawa.ca/irj/servlet/prt/portal/prtroot/com.stellent.coo.wcmip.getwcmpage?did=I QCT_013317)

In June 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released its findings and 94 Calls to Action² aimed at redressing the residential schools legacy and advancing the reconciliation process in Canada.

In 2016, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) established a committee to review the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. The committee's mandate was to identify and promote initiatives that would allow Canadian libraries, archives, and cultural memory institutions to advance and support meaningful reconciliation. Committee members consisted of representatives from across Canada, spanning all types of libraries (e.g. public, academic, special) as well as representatives from CFLA member associations and Library and Archives Canada. Ottawa Public Library was represented through participation by the Deputy CEO.

The Committee's final report³ was released on April 24, 2017. It proposed 10 recommendations for consideration at the association, national, and local levels. OPL staff (comprising of both management and front line employees) reviewed the CFLA report, to determine how OPL could best respond to the recommendations.

On June 20, 2017, the OPL Board received a presentation on OPL's approach to Indigenous services. Staff committed to providing a report outlining OPL's response to the CFLA Truth and Reconciliation Committee's recommendations.

This report outlines the recommendations published in the CFLA Truth and Reconciliation Committee's Report (the CFLA Report), speaks to actions taken by OPL in response to each, and proposes further areas of exploration in order to continue on the path to reconciliation.

DISCUSSION

The CFLA Truth and Reconciliation Committee's Report proposes 10 recommendations for consideration at the association, national, and local levels. These are listed below, followed by staff comment on each recommendation.

1. That CFLA create a permanent Standing Committee on Indigenous Matters.

² Full version can be found by following this link: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

³ Full version can be found by following this link: http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/indigenous/trc_report/

OPL response: The CFLA established a permanent standing committee in 2017. OPL staff are monitoring its activities and outcomes, and will respond as required. Should a vacancy on the committee arise, OPL will consider serving.

2. That CFLA Truth and Reconciliation Committee support and endorse the CFLA Position Statement⁴ regarding Library and Literacy Services for Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) Peoples of Canada.

OPL response: The CFLA Truth and Reconciliation Committee have endorsed the Position Statement in question. OPL staff is exploring two actions to the above recommendation:

- Developing an OPL Board Position Statement on Indigenous Services, building on the CFLA's statement. Staff will engage with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition and others on its development to ensure it reflects the local Indigenous communities' desires. The position statement will serve a two-fold purpose: demonstrating OPL's commitment in promoting a respectful and culturally-sensitive vision of library service delivery to the Indigenous communities of Ottawa, as well as a commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
- Examining current practices at other public libraries, the City of Ottawa, and other organizations to determine the feasibility and appropriateness of pronouncing land acknowledgement statements at the beginning of each Board meeting and/or high profile library events.

Any recommendations requiring Board approval will be brought forward at a later date.

3. That CFLA encourage libraries, archives and cultural memory institutions to implement the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada 94 Calls to Action, several of which were identified as having a direct impact on libraries.

⁴ Full version may be found by following this link: <http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/guidelines-and-position-papers/library-literacy-services-for-indigenous-first-nations-metis-inuit-peoples-of-canada-position-statement/>

OPL response: Recommendations as to how best to respond to the 94 calls to action have been prioritized in the CFLA Report. OPL tasked its internal Aboriginal Working Group and key staff to review the recommendations of the CFLA report and determine where action may be taken. Actionable items have been implemented, many of which have been highlighted in this report. Further actions continue to be examined and will form part of departmental work plans.

Any recommendations requiring Board approval will be brought forward at a later date.

4. That libraries ensure accessibility by reminding stakeholders that material produced, and programming planned in the future, should be accessible to all Canadians, through such organizations as the Center for Equitable Library Access (CELA) and the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS).

OPL response: Building on the Board's core value of Access and Inclusion, current practice includes working with these institutions to ensure access to information.

5. That libraries, archives and cultural memory institutions decolonize access and classification by addressing the structural biases in existing schemes of knowledge organization and information retrieval.

OPL response: Staff are actively monitoring discussions and developments emanating from Library and Archives Canada and the University of British Columbia with respect to terms used in classifying and cataloguing materials produced by, or about, Indigenous communities in Canada and around the world. As subject headings and search terms evolve, these will be incorporated into OPL's catalogue, with retrospective corrections to existing subject headings occurring over time.

6. That libraries, archives and cultural memory institutions decolonize space by recognizing and supporting Indigenous cultures, languages, and knowledge through culturally appropriate space planning, interior design, signage, art installations, territorial acknowledgement of geographic-specific traditional territories and public programming in collaboration with local Indigenous

stakeholders.

OPL response: OPL staff is exploring options to the above recommendations, including:

- Implementing a visual land acknowledgement program at all OPL facilities to publicly recognize the ancestral territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation.
- Creating opportunities to consult with representatives of the Algonquin Anishinabe community, and the local urban Aboriginal community in the development of the Ottawa Central library.
- Including Indigenous art in OPL facilities.

Any recommendations requiring Board approval will be brought forward at a later date.

7. That libraries, archives and cultural memory institutions enhance opportunities for Indigenous library, archival and information professionals through culturally appropriate pedagogy, recruitment practices, professional and continuing education, and cross-cultural training.

OPL staff identified three responses to the above recommendations:

OPL response A: OPL has few employees who have self-identified as having Indigenous ancestry. OPL will continue to promote the library as a safe space and encourage self-identification. To foster interest in the library profession among Indigenous people, OPL will work with Indigenous service agencies to encourage teens and adults to become OPL volunteers, where they will learn about OPL services, programs, and collections. Staff will also work with the City of Ottawa to ensure that recruitment practices are inclusive, and free of systemic barriers.

OPL response B: All OPL employees are required to attend a cross-cultural awareness training session, and have opportunities to further develop their knowledge and skills through a variety of initiatives. Since 2016, staff heard from Senator Murray Sinclair, the Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,

Indigenous youth activist Cindy Blackstock, local elders from the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, and Feather Maracle Luke, reference librarian at the Timmins Public Library.

OPL response C: As part of the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries' (FOPL) sponsorship of First Nations' Library initiative, OPL has sponsored the Sheshegwaning First Nation Public Library for the past two years via a small financial contribution.

8. That libraries, archives and cultural memory institutions implement Indigenous Knowledge Protection protocols and agreements with local and other Indigenous groups, who have holdings in libraries, archives and/or cultural memory institutions, to respect the Indigenous cultural concept of copyright with regard to Indigenous history or heritage. CFLA is also called on to actively participate in reforming the Canadian Copyright Act so as to include protection of Indigenous knowledge and languages.

OPL response: This recommendation is not applicable to OPL as it currently has no such holdings in its collections.

9. That CFLA establish an online database to highlight existing Best Practices of Indigenous Services in libraries, archives and cultural memory institutions.

OPL response: CFLA has established the database in question. Information within it has been circulated to OPL's leadership team. Best practices include, but are not limited to: establishing homework help clubs with local Indigenous community groups, providing support to conversation groups, ensuring culturally- and age-appropriate collections are made available, providing culturally-appropriate programming, and involving parents and elders. OPL staff are reviewing best practices to further inspire the current and future design and delivery of services to Ottawa's Indigenous communities.

10. That CFLA maintain a database of Indigenous organizations or groups committed to preserving cultural memory primarily, but not limited to, libraries, archives, language preservation, and cultural history/museums.

OPL response: The CFLA Report includes an online Relationship and Contact database available to all interested. OPL staff consult the database on an as-required basis as it serves as a useful reference tool in on-going dialogue with Ottawa's Indigenous communities. In addition, OPL also works with members of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition, comprising of urban aboriginal service providers.

In summary, OPL has recognized Ottawa's Indigenous communities as key groups and partners. OPL strives to work collaboratively with Indigenous literary artists to plan and deliver meaningful services to the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. The publication of CFLA's Report on the Truth and Reconciliation's Call to Actions has provided a framework by which staff can validate the work done to date, and acknowledge that the road to reconciliation is a journey with opportunities to reframe service design and delivery.

CONSULTATION

Representatives of OPL's Aboriginal Working Group, OPL Senior Management, and colleagues in Community and Social Services of the City of Ottawa, who manage the Aboriginal Working Committee portfolio, were consulted in developing this report. In addition, consultation with Indigenous communities will be included on specific projects and services on a go-forward basis.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility impacts associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications with this report.

BOARD PRIORITIES

This report aligns with the Board's Strategic Directions and Priorities, including Services that are customer centric and Spaces for community, collections, and creation, as well as the Board Value with respect to Access and Inclusion.

DISPOSITION

Upon receipt of this report, staff will continue to explore actions to be considered in response to the CFLA Truth and Reconciliation Report, including the development of a Board Position Statement on Indigenous Services, and verbal and visual protocols with respect to land acknowledgment. Any recommendations requiring Board approval will be brought forward at a later date.

Further, staff will work with colleagues at the City of Ottawa, specifically in Community and Social Services, Cultural Development and Initiatives, Human Resources, and the Diversity and Inclusion team, to ensure OPL initiatives align with those being established in other parts of the city.

Finally, staff will work in tandem with the City of Ottawa to continue to build and foster relationships not only with local Indigenous service providers, but also with representatives of Ottawa's First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.