



Report to County Council

From: Natalie Marlowe, Manager of Library Services

Date: April 8, 2025

Subject: Mobile Library Service Progress Report

Recommendation(s):

THAT the report titled “Mobile Library Service Progress Report” from the Manager of Library Services dated April 8, 2025, be received and filed.

Introduction:

In 2024, Elgin County Library launched a pilot project to bring bookmobile service to long-term care and retirement facilities. This report provides County Council and the public with an update and progress report on the Mobile Library Service for Elgin County Library and also provides a framework for next steps for the continuation of this initiative in 2025.

Background and Discussion:

From July to December 2024, Library branch staff delivered mobile library service to Terrace Lodge and Elgin Manor, commencing with these two County facilities as part of this pilot project. This pilot project gave additional hours to our part-time Library branch staff to perform this service when branches were closed and using the Library Van when it wasn't in use on its regular delivery route to move materials between branches.

Goals for this pilot project included to make library service available in a mobile and accessible way, and to reach residents of the County that were not directly served by our Elgin County Library branches. Service objectives included offering key library circulation service (new card creation and renewal; placing and renewing holds and holds pickup; checking in and checking out materials); Readers' Advisory services (recommending titles and/or authors); and providing a selection of library materials to residents. This mobile service pilot project functioned as an extension of our 'bricks and mortar' branch library service and our Elgin County Library mission and vision.

During this pilot project, library branch staff provided regularly scheduled visits, once monthly, to residents at Terrace Lodge and Elgin Manor. As guided by the Recreation teams at the two Homes, library staff were able to bring library service directly to

residents: in their rooms, in common areas, or even in recreational programs. Library staff engaged with residents and offered reading materials as well as engaged in conversations about books and reading.

Learnings from this pilot project include the following:

- that a mobile library service is appealing to both staff and residents;
- that this service is supportive of and adds value to the Recreation teams and Homes offerings;
- that this mobile service gives library staff the opportunity to connect residents with specific collections including more accessible audiobooks (e.g. Daisy CDs and players, Playaways, and Yoto Players) (see presentation attached, graph on slide 6 for “Number of Checkouts by Item Type”);
- that a mobile service model operated by one staff person (of a rotating group of nine Library branch staff) requires solid communication amongst the group;
- that Library materials can be easily misplaced and lost in a long-term care home setting and this requires additional strategies to minimize loss;
- that developing a mobile library service that operates like a library branch and with limited vehicle use is a collaborative library team effort;
- that interest and demand for this service is ongoing with requests from staff and residents for visits after the conclusion of the pilot project;
- and that the value of this service to staff working at the two facilities gained momentum late in the project and will only continue to grow.

Next steps for this initiative in 2025 are to continue to offer the key library services established in the pilot project, as well as expand on the service offerings, engagement opportunities, and community connections within the County.

Based on the service achievements of the mobile library service pilot project (see presentation attached), Elgin County Library staff are looking to further expand this mobile library service to other non-County facilities and locations, and other community retirement residences as extensions to the existing visits to Elgin Manor and Terrace Lodge.

The proposed framework for 2025 includes Library branch staff supporting mobile library service visits weekly, and commencing as early as April, and providing mobile service for up to 6 hours per week for the remainder of 2025. This proposal is subject to a Memorandum of Understanding with the union, and CUPE local. A similar memorandum was established with CUPE for the 2024 pilot project phase.

Subject to the Memorandum of Understanding, service goals for 2025 will include an increase (2%) to the number of materials checked out by the mobile service; and an increase (5%) in the number of people served by the service.

Financial Implications:

No additional funds are required to proceed with the proposed mobile library service framework, as outlined. 4 staff hours per week were allocated during the pilot project phase in 2024. The scope of service is being increased to 6 hours per week for the

next phase of the service. These additional hours were approved in the Library's 2025 operating budget.

Advancement of the Strategic Plan:

Strategy #3 - Service Excellence and Efficiency

This initiative serves the goal to “foster collaboration across departments to improve transparency, reduce silos, and drive outcomes”.

Strategy #5 – Community Well-being and Inclusivity

This initiative serves goals to “enhance access to health and social service information for seniors and diverse populations, using existing physical and online infrastructure” and “increase access to all health and wellness services, through increased utilization of our library system”.

Local Municipal Partner Impact:

Local municipalities will be kept informed on mobile library service visits to local facilities.

Communication Requirements:

Mobile library service visits will be included in the Library's social media and website communications and content.

Conclusion:

Staff are excited to move forward with the continuation of the mobile library service based on the service achievements during the pilot project in 2024, and subject to a Memorandum of Understanding with CUPE.

All of which is Respectfully Submitted

Approved for Submission

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