

Memorandum

Date: June 9, 2020

To: Members of Council

From: Colleen Lipp, CEO and Chief Librarian, Caledon Public Library

Subject: Phased Library Recovery Plan

The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the Caledon Public Library's phased recovery plan in advance of the launch of Contactless Holds Pickup Services on June 16, 2020.

Prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, in-house library services were halted, and all branches of the Caledon Public Library were closed to the public as of March 14. As per the detailed list of Stage One services released by the Province on May 14, public libraries were able to provide delivery and pickup services as of May 19, 2020. The province's staged plan for reopening indicates that public libraries could ultimately return to regular operations within Stage Three. This timeline has informed the Library's recovery planning. Efforts have also been made to align with the Town's comprehensive recovery strategy, public health recommendations, as well as best practices identified across the public library sector.

The Library's recovery planning has been based on a number of assumptions. Most notably, that some level of services will resume while the virus remains active within the community and that a resurgence of the virus may prompt a return to a previous phase or other reduction in services. Additionally, the timeline by which the province has indicated libraries' ability to deliver services does not necessarily reflect our readiness to do so. The Library's desire to resume services is tempered by our responsibilities to do so in a manner that is safe for both residents and staff.

The Library has developed a multi-phased recovery roadmap. Given the quickly changing nature of the COVID-19 crisis, it is anticipated that each phase will be initiated as resources permit and may include any number of steps towards a given phase. As such, library staff have opted to define phases by service type or level rather than numerically. It is also expected that this approach will eliminate any possible confusion resulting from discrepancies between the Library's multi-phase approach and the Province's three-stage plan.

An overview of the Library's phased recovery plan is reflected below:

Virtual Services - March 16

- All branches closed
- All staff working remotely
- Programs and collections available online

Library Returns - June 3

- Small number of staff working on site to process returns and prepare for holds pickup
- Full virtual services to continue
- No public access to branches

Contactless Holds Pickup - June 16

- Small number of staff on site at 3 branches to support holds pickup
- Full virtual services to continue
- No public access to branches

Limited Patron Access

- Public access to specific areas of branch only
- Reduced occupancy and limited time spent within the branch
- Branches and hours of operation to be determined
- Full virtual services to continue

Modified Service Delivery

- Increased public access in alignment with public health recommendations
- Increased hours of operation
- Reintroduction of small group in-branch programs.
- Some virtual services to continue

Return to Regular Service

- Return to regular hours of operation at all branches.
- Regular services resume with all necessary public health protocols in place
- Some virtual services to continue

It is likely that there will be some cross over between phases and that services within the Limited Patron Access and Modified Service Delivery phase will be rolled out incrementally. Further details of each phase are referenced below:

Virtual Services

As a result of the branch closures, access to library collections have been limited to those available for download or streaming. Library programs and patron support services are provided fully online by staff members working from home. Employees typically tasked with delivery of front-line services to the public and who are unable to undertake meaningful work remotely, were placed on unpaid leave in April. This represents approximately 69% of all of those employed by the Library.

Library Returns

While external book drops remained open throughout the closures, residents were advised to hold on to borrowed materials and loan periods were globally extended to June 3, 2020. Recent communication to borrowers has confirmed that materials can now be returned to any branch and that no overdue fines will be accrued until regular services resume. In alignment with best practices across the sector, library materials will be quarantined for 72-hours before being shelved or recirculated. This period may be reduced pending the results of studies currently underway by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

A small number of employees previously placed on unpaid Declared Emergency Leave have been recalled to process library returns. Recalled staff will receive training on material quarantining procedures, physical distancing, personal protective equipment (PPE) use, public health protocols and training on the procedures required to deliver Contactless Holds Pickup Services.

Contactless Holds Pickup

The availability of Contactless Holds Pickup Services will once again allow residents access to the Library's physical materials, including books and DVDs. Services will be provided for four (4) hours daily from Tuesday to Saturday at the Albion Bolton, Caledon Village and Margaret Dunn Valleywood branches. Service locations were selected to ensure distribution across the municipality and sufficient work space to support physical distancing by staff on site. Customers with holds at closed locations will be contacted to determine their preferred location for transfer to allow them to participate in holds pickup. Instructions and frequently asked questions have been drafted and shared via the Library's website, social media channels and direct email.

Requests for materials must be placed in advance and patrons will be notified by email or phone when items are available for pickup. Patrons will be asked to line up in designated areas and maintain appropriate physical distances from each other and staff. No requests will be accepted on site and no public access will be provided to the facilities. Demand for services and staff capacity will continue to be monitored to determine any need to recall additional staff from leave. Staff working remotely in support of our virtual services will continue to do so.

Limited Patron Access and Modified Service Delivery

Limited Patron Access and Modified Service Delivery will be considered as per the Province's phased recovery plan, in consultation with the Town's Emergency Operation Centre and in alignment with the recommendations of Peel Public Health. Progression to these phases is reliant on the opening of municipal recreation facilities and public access to school buildings. Limited Patron Access will allow only small numbers of residents to access the areas immediately adjacent to the service desk. Strict public health protocols and additional physical protection measures for staff, including the use of plastic screens at all service points will be required. Modified Service Delivery will expand this access more broadly across the branch, though may restrict the amount of time a resident can stay within the branch and how the Library's public technologies can be used. Furniture layouts may be adjusted, and public workstations removed or relocated to allow for physical distancing. Some small group meetings or programs may be allowed. Virtual programming and services will continue to be offered.

The size and layout of each branch will dictate the feasibility of the branch's inclusion within a particular phase. As such, Limited Patron Access may be provided at select branches while Contactless Holds Services remain in place at others. The launch of Limited Patron Access would necessitate the recall of additional staff on leave and may prompt the return of select staff who are currently working from home in preparation for an eventual return to regular service.

It is difficult to predict how the pandemic and the resulting economic crisis will impact demand for library services. Efforts to develop a strategy for addressing residents' evolving expectations of the Caledon Public Library will be ongoing and will be a focus of the Library Board's strategic planning work in the coming months.

