

To: Library Board Members
Date: June 17, 2020
From: Paul Takala, CEO/Chief Librarian
Subject: HPL Phased Reopening Plan

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INTRODUCTION

This plan is adapted from the *City of Hamilton's (CoH) [COVID-19 Recovery Plan – A Road Map to our New Reality](#)*ⁱ. Its development is also informed by Hamilton Public Library's [Working Assumptions and Phased Reopening Plan](#)ⁱⁱ and the *Canadian Urban Library Council's (CULC) [Toolkit on Recovery & Reimagined Public Library Services Post COVID-19](#)*ⁱⁱⁱ.

*Authors Note: This document takes significant text from the **Hamilton Reopens Plan** and adapts it for the Hamilton Public Library (HPL). The authors acknowledge the contribution of the individuals with the CoH who have strongly influenced this plan.*

A NEW LABEL FOR A NEW ERA

Before I start outlining our staffing strategy, I want to share with you how we are going to replace the term library customer with library member. When I started to work in libraries in the 1990s, we used the term patrons to describe the people who used the Library. That was replaced with the term customer in the 2000s. We needed to understand that in the digital age people had other options and that we needed to treat them like customers. I always felt the term patron was somewhat antiquated, but the term customer never fully captured our relationship with the people who use the Library.

Larry Pakin, a long-time HPL customer, is in his 80s and a member of the Gallery of Distinction. He recently said to me, “*I remember when I was a youth, we used to be called members*”. The term customer relates to transactions. Membership means being part of something larger than oneself. I have often said that we need to adopt the perspective of *doing things with people, not for them*. It is not that we do not provide services to people, it is that we do this because we value them as people, no matter the walk of life they come from. We learn from them and when we can look beyond differences, we see how other people enrich us as we interact with them. Therefore, I propose that as we enter this new era, we embrace tradition and replace library customer with the more encompassing term, **library member**.

HPL REOPENS

Our community will be forever changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts it has had on our families, our businesses, and our city. HPL Reopens is the Library’s phased plan in responding to the COVID-19 emergency. This document outlines a gradual, safe and measured reopening of Library facilities and restart of HPL services and programs.

Since COVID-19 began to spread in Hamilton in March 2020, HPL has followed the City’s lead. HPL has prioritized the health and safety of residents and employees. We closed library facilities and cancelled programming and events. We quickly pivoted to offer programming and services online and reached out to support the City and community’s emergency response.

The COVID-19 pandemic is not over. This virus will continue in our community for many months to come. HPL Reopens will serve as the roadmap during our new reality – one where COVID-19 is present in our community. It outlines the steps HPL will take to keep our residents and employees safe and provides a plan for the safe reopening of facilities and the restart of services and programs.

Alignment with the Hamilton’s and Ontario’s Reopening Framework

HPL Reopens is meant to align with the Province’s framework for Reopening Ontario after COVID-19. The City of Hamilton’s framework also uses a phased approach, enabling both the Province and the City to ensure appropriate measures are in place to reopen safely and limit risks to public health.

HPL will take guidance from the Province of Ontario as we move between phases. However, reopening in Hamilton will depend on the pandemic situation within our city, and may not align exactly with the Province’s phases. We may choose to move through the phases of reopening at a different speed than the Province, based on the conditions in Hamilton and advice from our local Medical Officer of Health.

PRINCIPLES

Note about Principles: *In this section highlighted text, reflects where CoH's plan has been adapted for HPL's context and approach.* Reopening of HPL's physical spaces will be gradual, safe and measured. This framework is guided by the following principles:

1. PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The health of residents and HPL staff continues to be our highest priority. We will provide opportunities to maintain safe physical distance from others and follow good public health and occupational safety practices when reopening Library facilities and restarting programs and services.

2. UNIVERSAL DESIGN AND FOCUS ON THE VULNERABLE SECTOR

The principles of *Universal Design*^{iv} will inform our approach to ensure our services are provided as barrier free as possible. We will prioritize providing access to technology and learning supports to those most in need.

3. MAINTENANCE OF HPL FACILITIES AND ASSETS

We will consider which facilities and assets require maintenance or other actions to support Library business and operations.

4. COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

We will prioritize the services most valued and needed by the community. We will work with trusted partners to ensure our services complement their efforts. We will strive to provide informed referrals to those seeking information or assistance.

5. ECONOMIC RECOVERY

We will prioritize Library services and activities that contribute to the economic recovery of the City and the community. We will focus on supporting small businesses, job seekers and community members seeking information about supports and services available for them to help with their recovery. We will provide free online learning opportunities and supports (including technical support) to advance educational and skills advancement.

6. HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND PRODUCTIVITY

We will consider the health, well-being and productivity of employees when determining the most suitable location for them to do their best work. Through all reopening stages, staff will work remotely to support Hamilton residents. We will use specialized teams to maximize productivity and minimize staff exposure to other HPL staff members as we rapidly adapt our service model in response to COVID-19.

7. LEGAL OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

We will consider whether a municipal service or activity supports a legal or regulatory obligation of HPL or the City.

8. RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

We will consider the availability of resources such as staff, physical and financial resources, Personal Protective Equipment and more when making decisions. We assume a tight funding environment for 2020 and 2021 and beyond. Except for non-levy funding, any emergency expenditures we incur in response to COVID-19 will need to be self-funded by savings we accrue through service restrictions. Any loss in fee revenue will need to be offset by cost savings.

REOPENING PHASES

HPL Reopens plan includes three overarching phases, each aligning generally with the Province of Ontario's [Reopening Framework](#)^v.

Through each phase, the health and safety of residents and Library staff will be the primary focus, continuing to balance the needs of the community, City Council, municipal business and community partners. Our plans will follow Library Board directions and strategic priorities.

Reopening HPL's physical spaces and services will be gradual, safe and measured. **Each progressive step will include a continuation of the services provided in previous stages**, however, some services and activities will be reduced to ensure approved services are adequately supported.

HPL will follow the Province of Ontario's lead and take direction from the provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health, our local Medical Officer of Health and other public health officials. Advice from these professionals will determine the speed that we proceed through the reopening phases and will help to determine if health and safety measures need to be adjusted at any time. No dates are referenced for any of the phases.

Everyday actions to protect the health of residents and Library staff – like physical distancing, frequent hand washing and staying home if feeling ill – will continue through each phase.

If required, HPL is prepared to implement more stringent public health measures or move backward in the phased approach to keep residents and staff safe. Some elements may move between phases faster than others based on public health advice and the situation in Hamilton.

WORK ENVIRONMENTS

HPL's reopening strategy will be a multipronged approach to ensure the health and safety of our employees, members and our community a top priority. This strategy will focus on the following key areas – eliminating exposure through physical distancing, adjusting the workplace by redesigning or modifying spaces to enable physical distancing, adjusting processes such as health screening, increasing hygiene controls and educating and training employees on best practices for a healthy and safe work environment, and the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where previous measures are not possible or effective.

Enhanced cleaning will be standard when branches reopen. Washrooms will be cleaned a minimum of twice per day and when visibly contaminated, as per Public Health recommendations. Frequently touched surfaces or "high touch points" (e.g. handrails, light switches, door handles and knobs, elevator buttons, etc.) will be cleaned at least twice each shift and will increase/decrease as needed. Workstations and service counters will be cleaned at the beginning of each use and multi-use work areas where sharing can't be avoided (e.g. staff rooms, kitchen areas, photocopier areas, meeting rooms etc.) will be cleaned and disinfected between users/uses. Contract cleaners will maintain overnight cleaning duties and may supplement daily duties, as needed. HPL will refer to City of Hamilton document: "[Pandemic Response – Environmental Cleaning of Workspaces – COVID-19](#)" as needed.

HPL will follow the City of Hamilton's guidance on [Working Environments](#)^{vi}. Where HPL has unique situations not covered by City guidance, we will develop policies consistent with City direction. If we need to deviate in a significant way, we will seek prior permission from the City EOC and the Library Board. As City guidance is updated, we will adjust our directions accordingly.

STAFFING STRATEGY

There are two key planning assumptions that informs our strategy around staffing:

Working Assumption # 6 Taking Care of Staff and Proactively Helping the Community states: *Our intention is to minimize staff layoffs during the emergency. We are focused on keeping staff working productively so we can maintain our dedicated staff and ensure, as an organization, we can stay focused on being a positive force in the emergency response and then the recovery. Depending on the duration and other changing circumstances this may need to be revisited. If that happens, we will need to work closely with the City of Hamilton and CUPE 932 to ensure we minimize negative personal and organizational effects of laying off staff.*

Principle # 8 of HPL's Reopening Plan addresses **Resource Availability** says the following: *We will consider the availability of resources such as staff, physical and financial resources, Personal Protective Equipment and more when making decisions. We assume a tight funding environment for 2020 and 2021 and beyond. Except for non-levy funding, any emergency expenditures we incur in response to COVID-19 will need to be self-funded by savings we accrue through service restrictions. Any loss in fee revenue will need to be offset by cost savings.*

Both our commitment to our greatest resource, HPL staff, and being realistic about available funding will need to be balanced as we progress through the pandemic and then the recovery. There are many unknowns, and there are some things we can see clearly. As we move forward, we will strive to provide as much clarity as we can, recognizing achievements and being realistic about the situation we are facing. It is critical that during this time of uncertainty we commit to transparency and ensure we provide timely and frank updates to changing circumstances, whether positive or negative.

We will quickly develop new service delivery models based on necessary restrictions that are placed on how we can operate safely while the pandemic remains a threat to both staff and residents. As we develop, understand, refine and improve our new models, we will need to embrace innovation and support our staff to focus on assigned teams, so they are not overloaded with multiple new things to learn at once. As we progress through different phases of our plan, we will adjust to changing public health and CoH direction, as well as adapting to the evolving situations we face. As an organization, our most important focus is positively impacting and helping residents and the community get through the pandemic, and then helping the community recover from the economic, social, personal wellness and learning challenges COVID-19 has brought about.

As a public library that has a long history of partnerships, we need to ensure our services and programs complement other efforts from the City and trusted partners. We need to focus on filling gaps and helping to improve the coordination of the community response.

During the pandemic, we will assign staff to ensure we maximize positive community impact and maintain the strength of HPL and its mission:

Overall Staffing Levels

Thanks to support from the City of Hamilton, HPL has managed to avoid the same extent of layoffs that many other public library systems have faced; I know this is no comfort to our valued call-in staff and library pages who are currently not working. It is probable but not certain that we will not need to lay off additional staff. We will continue to be proactive about supporting critical City and community needs to reduce the likelihood of this happening.

Regarding recalling staff currently not working, we will call back staff as we are able. The reality is that the City of Hamilton (CoH) is facing extreme financial pressures, as are other municipalities,

and we will do this in a measured way based on funding and ensure a positive impact with our activities.

Adapting to Incorporate in Person Services Again

Until now, we have been very limited in what we can deliver in-person. As this begins to change, many staff will be reassigned from FreshDesk remote information service, programming and other duties to support our phased reopening. For staff pulled from these duties during the pandemic, as operations stabilize, we will re-engage these activities as circumstances allow.

We need to evolve service delivery in new ways and we don't yet know the staff resources required to deliver these services using the new models. The most effective way we can reliably gauge staff capacity required for each service is by dedicating specific staff teams to deliver these services. Should we find some services require more staff, then we will add to those teams. Alternatively, if we find some require less than planned, we will refocus that capacity on increasing our impact in other ways.

Compressed Planning Cycles and more Specific Duty Assignments

In the coming months, we face both fundamental challenges and great opportunities to cement our relevance in a post COVID-19 world. One challenge we face is compressed planning cycles. In a crisis like this, we do not have the luxury of standard planning cycles to think through services, test and train before launching. In our phased approach, we will start services (such as taking-out materials in a phased way) to learn and refine before adding other locations.

We have moved to a unified remote member support system (FreshDesk) that has significantly improved our ability to remotely support members system-wide. This has been critical for our ability to respond to an online-only environment and this innovation affords us the opportunity to work smarter, together. In the coming weeks and months, as we slowly reopen our physical spaces, we will use this ability to effectively schedule pick-up times for those who are unable to self-serve. It will also be critical as we safely provide support to members looking for public computer and printing assistance, while maintaining physical distancing.

During the last number of years, we have focused on supporting staff development. This ensured residents interacting with HPL receive a consistent level of service, regardless of location. To address compressed planning cycle challenges, we need to think differently about how we manage our work in this rapidly evolving environment. We need to take a pause on widely training staff to ensure members have a uniform experience and instead have staff working in teams on specific tasks, while we use our new-found system capabilities to ensure we triage questions based on skills. When things start to stabilize in *Phase 3-Our New Reality*, we will assess where we are and return to an increased focus on staff development and skills diversification.

Practical Information for Staff

- As we are able to perform more services in our spaces, more staff will be assigned to teams supporting work in the branches.
- Permanent staff will remain at their current level and status (Full-time & Part-time) and be assigned to appropriate teams based on their skills, job level and job description.
- Staff will be asked for geographic preferences, within operational constraints, although there is no guarantee we will try and accommodate staff to align with their preferences as best we can.
- PT staff assigned to in branch teams will spend most of their time focused on that activity. FT staff assigned to in-branch teams will spend a significant amount of time supporting those operations. Both FT and PT staff will report to the Manager responsible for that team.

- For worktime not covered by in-branch duties, staff will be assigned to other teams doing work remotely or to support another in-branch team. Where appropriate, this will include time for staff development. As the situation stabilizes the opportunity to dedicate time for staff development will be incorporated more consistently, to support work that needs to be done.
- While we are unable to provide in-person group events, specific staff will be assigned to program teams to deliver programs. Many staff previously engaged in programming will be assigned to other needed operational tasks.
- Staff who have concerns about being assigned to a specific team are asked to contact HR so we can work together on solutions that address both individual circumstances and HPL's operational needs.
- During phase 2, we are focused on keeping the same team of staff working together. There will be some exceptions to this.
- If an individual team has unplanned absences, we will reassign people to support, as needed.
- The team assignments will likely last until well into 2021. We will monitor activity levels and service impacts and increase staff to respond to increased demand as needed.
- After the pandemic is over, we will ensure staff are assigned based on the circumstances we are facing at the time, not assignments pre-COVID-19. This will likely mean that not everyone will return to their pre-pandemic location. Many will, but we do not want to create the expectation that it will be true for everyone.
- As we move into the post-pandemic period, we will not replicate pre-pandemic services. We are looking to create a greater degree of consistency in service hours system wide. This does not mean that all locations will have identical hours, however, we should anticipate greater consistency and it does mean that we will balance staff resources based on community needs and impacts at the time, and not pre-pandemic levels.

PHASE 1 – THE EARLY STAGES

Phase One of HPL Reopens is focused on delivering the highest priority Library services. Phase One, HPL operations include:

- All HPL facilities and offices remain closed to the public.
- In-person Library programs, events and room bookings remain cancelled.
- Limited return to the workplace for staff delivering high-priority services and prepare for future stages. Staff work in teams to limit exposure to multiple staff members. Many staff continue to work from home.
- Library staff redeployed to COVID-19 emergency response support efforts continue in their temporary positions.
- Restrictions on the number of people gathering to follow or surmount Provincial restrictions.
- Outdoor Wi-Fi service remains available at all HPL locations. We will monitor use to ensure this service does not encourage large gatherings in violation of physical distancing rules and provincial order.
- HPL's enhanced online services continue. Details of our services and emergency response are found in the [Report on HPL COVID-19 Response](#)^{vii}. Phone, email, chat and online support is provided through the Library's new member support system that enables staff to support member from home. Service hours during this phase: Monday to Friday: 8 AM to 10 PM, Saturday: 8 AM to 5 PM, Sunday: 1 PM to 5 PM.

Phase 1 – Early Stages

Phase	Permitted Activities and Services	Key Considerations & Requirements
1A – Online Only <i>CURRENT PHASE.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FreshDesk remote support • Friendly calling • Delivery to City Housing & Food Banks • Activities approved by ER Team and EOC work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work from home, support for staff who require tech support for home access • Implementation of Freshdesk
1B – Online & Take-out Only <i>SCHEDULED FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 15, PENDING EOC & BOARD APPROVAL.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled pick-up of library material • Materials handling to support holds system • Preparation of physical distance measures in all locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New cleaning standards in place • All locations will follow the CoH's 1-week plan of facilities restarting so cleaning and HVAC systems are reset • Planned hours Tuesday to Thurs 11:30 AM to 6:30PM; Friday, Saturday 11:30 AM to 4:30 PM • Quarantine library materials for 72 hours before handling • Branch couriers accelerate shipping
1C – Add Take-out of Print Jobs AFTER 1B WHEN SYSTEMS IN PLACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes paper & 3D print jobs • Members picking up activities guides for youth to support learning and discovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print management system • Increased free printing in place and online payment

PHASE 2 – GRADUAL REOPENING

Phase Two of HPL Reopens is focused on safely expanding Library services available to residents and returning more staff to work. Phase Two, HPL operations include:

- Library facilities and offices reopen to the public in stages to enable physical distancing measures and health screening upon entry.
- In-person Library programs and events remain cancelled. (In later Phase Two stages, we may allow access to program rooms for partners working with vulnerable individuals, provided all safety measures are in place.)
- Where required, staff will return to the workplace under enhanced health and safety guidelines with strict adherence to physical distancing, health screening upon entry, and restrictions on gatherings. Many staff continue to work from home.
- Staff who were redeployed to support COVID-19 emergency response efforts will continue in their temporary positions.
- Restrictions on the number of people gathering to follow or surmount Provincial restrictions.
- Outdoor Wi-Fi service remains available at all HPL locations. We will monitor use to ensure this service does not create large gatherings in violation of physical distancing rules and provincial order. HPL's enhanced online services continue to be available online.
- In person service will be provided with enhanced health and safety measures in place for staff and residents accessing Library facilities and services.

- Giving priority to seniors and other vulnerable during the first hour or two of opening is a potential measure we are investigating.
- Throughout Phase Two, computers stations will be cleaned by staff between each session. We are exploring ways to do this, including allowing 50-minute sessions, then spending 10 minutes cleaning keyboards, mice and other touched surface before the next set of people can use them.
- Support contact tracing during all stages of Phase Two.

Phase 2 – Gradual Reopening

Phase	Permitted Activities and Services	Key Considerations & Requirements
2A – Phased Reopening as Cooling Centres WHEN THE COH MOVES TO STAGE 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a safe Cooling Centre for Residents • Quiet study with safety measures • Access to public computers with safety measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strict physical distancing enforced • Enhanced cleaning of shared services • Remote support for public computers
2B – Relief Support DEPENDING IF NEEDED BY THE COH AND/OR HAVE PARTNER'S SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick-up of food baskets and other relief supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with CoH and/or other trusted partners. Our geographic spread would enable us to support these efforts in all or parts of the City.
2C – Limited Browsing Collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to browsing collections, book kits and other physical materials • Resume print orders and serials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bins distributed throughout the Library to ensure items that members touch but do not check out are put in quarantine
2D – Programs for vulnerable group(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLS, pilot mail service • Supports for at-risk individuals working with partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit new volunteers for VLS (rely less on older adults who are at greater health risk)

PHASE 3 – OUR NEW REALITY

Phase Three of HPL Reopens focuses on continuing to deliver Library services in a safe and responsible manner while the risk of COVID-19 infection remains in our community. Phase Three will continue until a COVID-19 vaccine or other treatments are available and in widespread use. Phase Three, HPL operations include:

- Library facilities and offices reopen to the public with measures to enable physical distancing and health screening upon entry.
- Most library programs continue to be offered virtually. In-person programs and training that can be provided under enhanced health and safety guidelines will be gradually introduced.
- More staff may return to the workplace under enhanced health and safety guidelines. As much as possible we will schedule staff to work in cohorts of teams, working with the same individuals. The locations that people work at will try to accommodate staff preferences; this may not be their previous work location. Priority will be given to staff who require public transit to get to work. This staff will be assigned to locations safest for travel.

- Some staff continue to work from home.
- Staff redeployed to COVID-19 emergency response support efforts may continue in their temporary positions.
- Restrictions on the number of people gathering to follow or surmount Provincial Orders.
- Outdoor Wi-Fi service remains available at all HPL locations. We will monitor use to ensure this service does not create large gatherings in violation of physical distancing rules and provincial order.
- Many Library services are available both online and in-person with health and safety measures in place for staff and residents accessing services.
- Giving priority to seniors and other vulnerable during the first hour or two of opening is a potential distancing measure.
- Contact tracing may be relaxed depending upon direction from Public Health.
- Sometime during Phase Three we will likely be able to provide Oxivir wipes to members to supplement periodic cleaning of shared computers.

Phase 3 – Our New Reality

Phase	Permitted Activities and Services	Key Considerations & Requirements
3A - All Branches Open with Enhanced Safety Measures WHEN THE COH MOVES TO STAGE 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local History and Archives • Service Desks are open, practicing physical distancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated digitization of LH&A • Continue enhanced online services and programming
3B - Extended Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Access service provided at FR, LY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure physical distancing is enforced and monitored
3C - Phased In-person Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomer Learning Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs focusing on high needs, partner provided
3D - Coordinated Outreach for Collection access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resume bookmobile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members pick-up holds and request items • Members not permitted on the Bookmobile
3E - Interlibrary Loan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of materials with other Library systems and suggested purchases form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will partly depend on what other systems are doing. Depending on capacity, this may start earlier.

APPENDIX I – BOARD APPROVED WORKING ASSUMPTIONS AND REOPENING PLAN

Date: Approved Library Board - May 20, 2020
To: Chair and Members of the Board
From: Paul Takala, CEO/Chief Librarian
Subject: **Working Assumptions and Reopening Plan**

This plan was approved by the Library Board at its May 20, 2020 Library Board meeting. The principles articulated in this document have been incorporated into the HPL Reopens Plan. The HPL Reopens plan has been developed based on the City of Hamilton's template. The principles articulated in this plan will continue to inform HPL's response to the pandemic and recovery.

INTRODUCTION

With COVID-19, our normal business planning processes have had to be set-aside temporarily, as we focus on responding to the public health emergency. In planning for our response, we have identified working assumptions to help us manage this effectively and provide some context for staff and the public around our thinking. These assumptions are not predictions. With the situation evolving quickly, these will need to be continually evaluated and updated to reflect changing circumstances and directions from the City and the Province. HPL will closely align our reopening plans to the City of Hamilton's. Throughout this period, we will work with the Library Board to ensure it is regularly informed of HPL's emergency response and the Board will play a critical role in establishing our programs and services when we are able to reopen.

WORKING ASSUMPTIONS FOR THE REST OF 2020

1. 1st Priority Supporting the Emergency Response

HPL's highest priority during the emergency needs to be supporting the City's and Public Health's response, assisting with relief efforts and preparing to assist with the recovery.

2. Solidarity with the City of Hamilton

We will follow direction and advice from Public Health and ensure our decisions align with the City of Hamilton's. Doing otherwise would cause confusion and would not be helpful for clear messaging to support public safety.

3. Pandemic will not be a Brief Disruption, Phased Reopening

When we can reopen will depend on how effective mitigation efforts are, the amount of testing that happens and the state of the pandemic in Hamilton and other places. The likely timeline we will be following is a carefully phased reopening from June to September 2020, with enhanced restrictions in place well into 2021. The Ontario Government has released a *Framework for Reopening our Province*^{viii}. The restart of the economy will be gradual, the restart phases will be accessed every two (2) to four weeks (4). After each phase, depending on progress being made, we need to be prepared for a continuation of the existing measures, further relaxing of restrictions, or step back to more restrictions. HPL will follow a similar approach, aligned with steps taken by the City of Hamilton.

4. New Measures in Place when we can Reopen

When we do reopen, we will need to have in place physical distancing and enhanced cleaning and other measures to ensure we minimize the risk that our spaces become a vector of virus spread. These measures will need to remain in place until well in 2021. Some measures, such as enhanced cleaning, will likely be beneficial to continue after the pandemic threat has passed. With a limited

ability to do in person programming we will need to re-direct some staffing resources.

5. Rapid Shift to Online

After supporting the response to COVID-19, HPL needs to focus on enhancing online services, support and staff development.

6. Taking Care of Staff and Proactively Helping the Community

Our intention is to minimize staff layoffs during the emergency. We are focused on keeping staff working productively so we can maintain our dedicated staff and ensure as an organization we can stay focused on being a positive force in the emergency response and then the recovery. Depending on the duration and other changing circumstances HPL will adjust as needed. We will continue to work closely with the City of Hamilton and CUPE 932 to ensure we minimize negative personal and organizational effects of laying off staff.

7. Pivoting to a New Normal

HPL needs to look at the COVID-19 crisis as a turning point^x. As an organization, our ability to adapt to changes brought on by the pandemic will be critical to maintaining our support after the public health emergency passes. HPL will need to work with the City and other partners to support the economic recovery process.

PHASED RE-OPENING PLAN

Just like our *Working Assumptions*, our *Re-opening Plan* will be updated monthly. The plan will be revised as evidence emerges about the virus. We will work closely with the City of Hamilton and Public Health to ensure the steps we have in place are consistent with their direction. HPL is participating in work the Canadian Urban Library Council (CULC) is doing to establish standards around safely reopening libraries. The standards established by CULC and City will be adapted to work in each location.

1. Safely Providing Service

While HPL will strive to provide as much service as possible to members and the community, however, we will only do things in ways that do not put the staff or the public at undue risk. Our standards will meet or exceed current direction given by Public Health.

2. Enhanced Cleaning

We need to have in place frequent cleaning in our spaces that provides staff and members with confidence that they will not come in touch contact with surfaces that might have virus traces that have a small probability of infecting them or others.

3. Access to Sanitizers and Appropriate PPE

To complement enhanced cleaning and reduce risk further, we will provide staff and library members with hand sanitizers, and wipes to give people the opportunity to protect themselves. We will follow guidance from the City of Hamilton regarding access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff and the public.

4. Physical Distancing

When we reopen, we will have in place physical distancing measures to ensure we do not put people at risk. We will align our measures with current direction and standards developed by Public Health. Elements of our physical distancing will include:

- **No group activities** in our spaces, until we are advised group activities are safe

- **Physical separation** of people enforced by reduced density of seating and computers
- **Reduced number of visitors** at any one time. We will assess each location and establish a new maximum number of individuals that can be in our spaces. This may require us to establish time limits on individual locations if the demand for visits exceed capacity. The established restrictions will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

5. Enforcing Safety Rules & Supporting Contact Tracing

Enforcing necessary safety rules will be critical for the duration of the pandemic. Being able to support contact tracing is a critical public health strategy to contain the pandemic. During the pandemic HPL fully support public health efforts. We will have in place appropriate measures to ensure that staff and members of the public are screened to ensure those that have potential symptoms of COVID-19 do not enter our spaces. We will be requiring individuals to have a library card to enter our space. Individuals that violate any safety measures that we have in place will be required to leave.

6. Reducing the Risk of Member Contact through Shared Devices

We will support member's ability to ensure library computer keyboards and peripherals, self-check machines and other surfaces can be cleaned before they come in contact with them. This will be supported by our enhanced cleaning and the availability of cleaning products.

7. Preventing Virus Contact through Library Materials

Although the risk of virus spread maybe relatively low, we know that COVID-19 can remain viable on surfaces. Hard surfaces like DVD cases and plastic book covers are a higher risk than paper and hardcover books. To ensure library materials do not become a vector of virus spread, we will employ the following strategies:

- **Ensuring staff have proper PPE** for emptying drop boxes and receiving material returns.
- **Sequestering returned material** for the recommended period so that individual coming in contact with materials in our spaces will not be a risk of exposure to latent virus.
- **Additional Steps** may be needed to provide members with reassurance that it is safe to take home library materials. Self-service disinfecting machines that use ultra-violet (UV) light could be helpful for reassuring concerned individuals. These devices that are used in libraries in Asia and Europe could provide an additional protection. These could also be used to disinfect cell phones and other small items that are shared.

8. Protecting Staff at Member Service Points

Reducing the risk that staff do not contract or spread the virus, we will establish necessary measures to keep everyone safe. Steps to ensure this, currently under investigation:

- **Establishing physical distancing** at member service points to ensure staff are able to maintain distancing between each other and members. Plexiglass barriers would complement other measures.
- **Limiting sharing of phones and other equipment** so that staff don't come into contact with the virus through shared devices. Staff will be required to disinfect devices at the start of their shift.
- **Limiting the use of cash** could assist with potential contact with the virus. We will need to ensure this does not create undue barriers to individuals that do not have ready access to debit/credit methods of payment.

9. Other Measures

A crisis like COVID-19 requires creativity and experimentation. We will investigate, pursue and test promising steps not identified yet in this report that others are adopting. We will need to ensure that we assess the costs of measures compared to the potential benefits. We will also need to ensure we base decisions on the best available evidence and be prepared to adjust our response as needed.

HELPING HAMILTON ADAPT TO NEW CHALLENGES

The COVID-19 Pandemic is creating huge challenges to public health and the health of our economy. HPL has a long history of adapting to community challenges. It is likely that the changes brought on by the COVID-19 Pandemic will have some long-felt impacts. Our ability to adapt to help the communities we serve get through the crisis and then help with the economic recovery will be essential. One of our core strengths as a public library is our capacity to rapidly adapt our program and services to respond to current and future needs. That strength will be needed now more than ever. Core elements of strategies we will be following:

1. Rapid Shift to Online Only during the Crisis

During the closure we have been shifting to online programs. We will use this experience to see how practical and effective they are and will continue to offer after we reopen where appropriate.

2. Focusing on Partnerships to Respond to the Crisis

HPL has a long history of successful partnerships. We need to embrace trusted partners and ensure we can act collaboratively with them to ensure our efforts are filling gaps and not duplicating efforts.

3. Addressing Current and Future Needs

We need to ensure our services and programs continue to focus on addressing the challenges individuals and families are facing today and tomorrow. The changes brought by the COVID-19 pandemic will require us to pivot quickly to ensure we are addressing urgent needs. We need to build on the past work that has been done but not be timid in adapting to new challenges.

4. Maintaining our Positive Impact

The circumstances we are facing today and will be facing in the coming months require a clear focus on ensuring our positive impact on the communities and individuals we serve are not diminished. Our ability to proactively help with the emergency and the following recovery is essential to our future ability to maintain support in the coming years.

REFERENCES

ⁱ City of Hamilton Recovery Roadmap - <https://www.hamilton.ca/reopens>

ⁱⁱ HPL's Working Assumptions and Phased Reopening Plan - <https://www.hpl.ca/sites/default/files/20-05-HPLWorkingAssumptionsfor2020.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ CULC Think Tank Tool Kit - <http://culc.ca/advocacy/thinktank/>

^{iv} Universal Design - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_design

^v Ontario Reopening Framework - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario-after-covid-19>

- vi Hamilton Reopens Direction on Work Place Environments - <https://www.hamilton.ca/reopens/work-environments>
- vii HPL May 2020 Report on COVID-19 Response: <https://www.hpl.ca/sites/default/files/20-05-HPLReportonCOVID-19Response.pdf>
- viii <https://files.ontario.ca/mof-framework-for-reopening-our-province-en-2020-04-27.pdf>
- ixix <https://blog.hypeinnovation.com/how-crisis-driven-innovation-can-help-your-organization>

Date: June 17, 2020
To: Chair and Members of the Board
From: Paul Takala, Chief Librarian/CEO
Subject: HPL's Phased Reopening Plan - PT - Attachment #7.2

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Library Board endorse HPL's *Phased Reopening Plan*.

That the Library Board direct staff to work closely with the City of Hamilton to ensure HPL's phased reopening continues to align with the City's.

That the Library Board authorizes the Chief Librarian/CEO to execute on the reopening plan, provided it is in compliance with direction from Public Health and the City of Hamilton and is consistent with Library Board direction

That the Library Board authorizes staff to implement temporary changes including service hours, changes to material loan periods and other operational changes that support a phased reopening that protects the safety of staff and the public while also maximizing our impact as we proceed through the next phases of the pandemic. Further, that staff report back on status and impacts of the temporary changes and in Phase 3 works with the Library Board to implement more permanent service standards and rules that support the community needs going forward.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are significant financial, staffing and legal implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. In regards to the operating budget, we will continue to work closely with the City of Hamilton. For 2020, the primary source of funds for any needed expenditures to respond to the crisis will be redirecting funds that are saved because of restrictions to our operations. Staff will continue to ensure we prioritize protecting health and safety and we follow all rules and regulations that may emerge as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds. Staff will work with the City of Hamilton, the Library Board and CUPE 932 to effectively manage changes in staffing required to respond to the crisis.

BACKGROUND:

The attached *Phased Reopening Plan* has been updated since the May Board meeting to ensure it follows the City of Hamilton's reopening plans and follows their template. The *Working Assumptions & Phased Reopening Plan* approved by the Library Board in May will continue to provide guidance as we work through different stages based on changing circumstances. As we execute on this plan, we will need to remain flexible and responsive to changing circumstances and direction. The plan identifies what different phases of reopening will look like, but not attach specific timelines to the phases.

Staff are directed to regularly report to the Library Board on progress on the implementation of the plan. We anticipate bi-weekly updates to the Board supplemented with updates when important developments occur.

No summer Board meetings are scheduled at this time. Although the scope of this plan necessarily provides for leeway in its implementation, staff will request, through the Board Chair, a special meeting if unforeseen circumstances require additional Board direction. Also, if Board members are concerned that the direction staff are taking is not consistent with the principles of the plan, Board members are encouraged to contact the Library Board Chair and Chief Librarian/CEO to request clarification and if necessary, a special Board meeting will be scheduled to ensure alignment between the Library Board and the Chief Librarian/CEO responsible for operations.

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Upload Date	Type
HPL Phased Reopening Plan	6/12/2020	Cover Memo