Clarington Library Museums & Archives

Date of Meeting: April 25, 2024

Report Number: A23-24

Report Subject: Welcoming Spaces Library Consultation Project Report

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Recommendation:

1. THAT the Clarington Public Library Board receive Administrative Report No. A23-24: Welcoming Spaces Library Consultation Project as information.

Background

In many communities, equity-deserving, unsheltered and elderly populations turn to the libraries as a safe haven. For some, libraries are the only place they can access a computer. For others, their only human contact each day comes from their library visits. Some customers may even seek refuge at libraries to escape the heat or cold of the outdoors. Libraries face challenges and struggles in their efforts to effectively balance support for the vulnerable sector while also ensuring the library is a safe and comfortable space for everyone.

Report Overview

The five (5) "lakeshore libraries" in the Durham Region (Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa and Clarington) engaged Hume McKenna Associates to assist in the gathering of information to develop recommendations designed to balance the needs of all library customers and staff. Appendix A presents a visual summary of the report.

During the Fall of 2023, information was collected from conversations with library leadership, library site visits, focus groups with all five (5) library main branches, a focus group with people with lived experience of homelessness, focus groups with staff and managers, interviews with key informants and community partners, and the review of policies and procedures related to customer behaviour expectations.

Through this comprehensive review, several consistent themes were identified and a series of recommendations were developed based on those themes and are included in the attached executive summary of the report entitled, "Welcoming Spaces Library Consultation Project: A Joint Project of the Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa and Clarington Library, Museums and Archives".

Action Plan from Welcoming Spaces Report

This Action Plan presented comprehensive actions, and suggested priorities and timeframes to assist libraries with their implementation processes.   The timeline below reflect CLMA's assessment of priorities. All Q1 2024 objectives have been completed. The next update to the Library Board will be in Q4 2024.

Library Action Plan for Implementation of Recommendations				
Implementation Action	**Suggested Timeframe**			
	Q1 2024	Q3 2024	2025	2026 +
Enabling Strategies				
The Project Team will map out a more detailed Implementation Plan that spans the next 6 months and present to the CEOs in time for their scheduled March meeting.	●			
In reviewing the recommendations, library leadership will: • Identify which recommendations they wish to adopt, • Which are best suited for individual implementation and where efficiencies can be gained through collaboration • Develop a resource allocation and/or funding plan to support implementation of the selected recommendations.		●		
Develop individual library Action Plans aimed at implementing recommendations from the report.		●		
Implement Collaborative Pilot Project Approach so that changes can be tested before scaling up at all libraries.		●		
Form Co-Design planning teams, at each library for ongoing evaluation and planning.		●		
Engage with or enhance engagement with multi-service community tables at municipal and regional levels to participate in planning & discussions about homelessness issues.	●			
Communication Strategy				
Communication Plan, to communicate the work of the 'Welcoming Spaces' report, will be developed for: • Staff • Public	●			

Library Action Plan for Implementation of Recommendations

Implementation Action	Suggested Timeframe			
	Q1 2024	Q3 2024	2025	2026 +
• Boards				
Develop a Library Collaboration Plan to guide a continued collaboration and inter-library communication process.	●			
Initiate and/or continue collaborative conversations with library partners and with community partners to facilitate information sharing and problem solving.		●		
Ongoing Learning and Development Strategies				
Identify opportunities for learning and initiate collaborative conversations with community partners that will expand library knowledge of community resources related to homelessness services eg/ By-Name List.		●		
Develop shared staff training plans and begin implementation		●	●	
Develop working group mechanisms for front-line staff from collaborating library systems to communicate, support, and problem-solve together eg/ Slack Channel		●		
Schedule field trips for library leadership to visit collaborating library sites to identify Best Practices that can be shared.		●		
High Priority and Quick Wins				
Establish priority relationships with: • Durham Region Police Services • Region of Durham Outreach Teams • Homelessness Specialist for staff training and support, including safety guard training.	●			
Provide Resource List for staff to use (Appendix One). Consider making this available as a community resource in libraries also and designating resources to update with season changes.	●			
Implement 'one-pager' for situation management	●			
Implement visible clocks and calendars. And simple supports for basic needs – hot or cold drinks, socks, and feminine hygiene products.	●			

Library Action Plan for Implementation of Recommendations				
Implementation Action	**Suggested Timeframe**			
	Q1 2024	Q3 2024	2025	2026 +
Implement Safety and Accessibility Recommendations including: • Signage (or other available messaging) with Overdose Prevention number • Ensure positive library expectations for behavior are clearly visible.	●			
Implement Safety and Accessibility Recommendations (quick wins) including: • Bedbug monitoring process • Remove or reduce use of plexiglass		●		
Implement Safety and Accessibility Recommendations including: • Electronic washroom monitoring in all locations • Develop an Accommodation Plan process with patrons and key service partners. • Enhance security guard training		●	●	
Implement Enhanced Support options for staff including: • Enhanced process for staff debriefing including space and time considerations	●	●		
Implementing Enhanced Support options for staff including: • WRAP training • Management Support for debriefing and support skills		●		
Higher Complexity				
Begin developing programming related to: • All-patron understanding, empathy and 'stigma busting' • Offering or enhancing mainstream library use and resources by people who are experiencing challenges related to homelessness		●	●	
Develop Survey Tool to measure and address user and staff perceptions of safety		●		

Library Action Plan for Implementation of Recommendations

Implementation Action	Suggested Timeframe			
	Q1 2024	Q3 2024	2025	2026 +
IHI Continuous Improvement training for selected managers through IHI		●	●	
Co-Design/Co-production training and mentoring for managers.		●	●	
Develop and Pilot (at limited locations): • Peer navigators • Changes to exclusion practices			●	
Develop and pilot, as a collaboration between libraries, a social worker or community health specialist to work with libraries.			●	
Research storage solutions and develop related facility adaptations in co-design process.		●	●	
Establish a dialogue with education institutions and community partners to pilot use of Social Service worker students for focused library support.		●		

Submitted By:
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