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STAFF REPORT
INFORMATION ONLY

Bookmobile Service Review – 2017

Date:	June 19, 2017
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the annual bookmobile service review. Service will be enhanced with the launch of the new bookmobile this summer. No changes are being recommended to the bookmobile schedule for 2017 as staff will be focused on launching the new bookmobile. Furthermore, the technology on the new bookmobile will provide enriched data for evaluating performance and recommendations for service adjustments.

Outreach initiatives to shelters will continue to provide service to residents who are underserved and experience barriers to library service. New relationships have been established with partners through the community librarian initiative, such as visits to Toronto Employment Social Service locations and Toronto Community Housing Corporation buildings.

The bookmobiles provide access to safe space, collections, online resources, mobile technology and trained staff to support positive outcomes for underserved and isolated communities.

A map of the bookmobile stops is in Attachment 1.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report has no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Bookmobile service to underserved communities and shelters helps to achieve various strategic plan priorities, including breaking down barriers to access and driving inclusion so

that Torontonians from all walks of life have easy, local access to the library services they want and need. The new fully-wired bookmobile will also contribute to expanding access to technology.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Toronto Public Library currently operates two bookmobiles that provide library service at 28 permanent weekly stops across the city. Service is targeted to populations including young children, seniors and newcomers who face barriers to accessing local branches. The bookmobiles provide access to safe space, collections, online resources, mobile technology and trained staff to support positive outcomes for underserved and isolated communities.

Existing bookmobile stops are reviewed annually to determine overall performance. The evaluation is based on performance in terms of circulation per hour. Requests for new stops are also considered as part of this process. In evaluating any potential changes to existing stops and requests for additional stops, consideration is also given to priority neighbourhoods. The location of a bookmobile stop within a neighbourhood is also important to the success of the stop. The presence of a community focal point that draws potential customers from the neighbourhood is ideal.

The bookmobile also supports outreach to family shelters to reach individuals who experience barriers to library service and to offer library programming to an underserved group. Bookmobile and local branch staff visit the facility to provide the residents with an opportunity to learn about library services and enjoy literacy-based programming.

The bookmobile is also involved in the community librarian initiative through outreach to targeted audiences. New relationships have been established through planned visits to Toronto Employment Social Service locations and Toronto Community Housing Corporation buildings.

COMMENTS

No changes are being recommended to the bookmobile schedule for 2017 as staff will be focused on launching the new vehicle. In addition, the technology on the new bookmobile will provide enriched data for future performance evaluation and recommendations for service adjustments.

Criteria for Review of Service

The primary criterion for evaluating existing bookmobile stops has been limited to the circulation performance (circulation/hour).

The introduction of expanded technologies on the new bookmobile will allow for an improved process for evaluating the performance of individual stops. Automatic people counters will track the number of visits and Wi-Fi usage will be captured. Incorporating this additional data into the evaluation process will support stronger, evidence-based decision

making related to the location and hours for individual stops. In future, annual service reviews will be informed by these additional measures.
It is also anticipated that there will be opportunities to use technology to identify efficiencies related to the planning of routes and scheduling of stops throughout the city with a goal of reducing overall travel time, thereby maximizing public service hours.

New Bookmobile

Service will be enhanced with the launch of the new, fully accessible bookmobile this summer. The vehicle is currently being outfitted with new technologies that will allow customers to connect with their own mobile devices using wireless services and will provide enhanced opportunities to learn about and use TPL's e-content and resources. Other technologies include an LED screen to promote library services, recharging ports and electrical outlets for portable devices, and the provision of iPads for use on the vehicle.

Programming opportunities are enhanced in the new, larger space and flexible opportunities for outdoor programming and outreach are possible through the provision of shade and cover to create comfortable outdoor gathering places.

The new bookmobile has a strong visual identity and will serve as a dynamic promotional opportunity for TPL as it travels across the city and participates in community events. The electronic display panels mounted externally on the vehicle can be customized to promote bookmobile stops, library services, and city-wide events or activities.

The larger vehicle will require enhanced driver training for staff. Staff will also be trained on the new technologies that will be on offer for public use.

Planning for the purchase of a second new vehicle will commence later this year.

CONCLUSION

No changes are being recommended to the bookmobile schedule for 2017 as staff will be focused on launching the new vehicle and subsequent planning for another new vehicle later in the year. The new bookmobile will deliver reliable and consistent service at the stops it serves and, through its new technologies, will provide improved data for the evaluation of stops.

The bookmobile schedule will continue to provide service at 28 weekly stops throughout the city. Service will be enhanced with the launch of the new, fully accessible bookmobile this summer as customers will have access to new technologies and learning opportunities, and expanded programming.

The distinctive design will increase TPL's profile as it travels into communities in every corner of the city.

Bookmobile service continues to provide a flexible and timely response to changing community needs. As community demands shift, the scheduling and location of stops can be

changed to provide service where the need is greatest.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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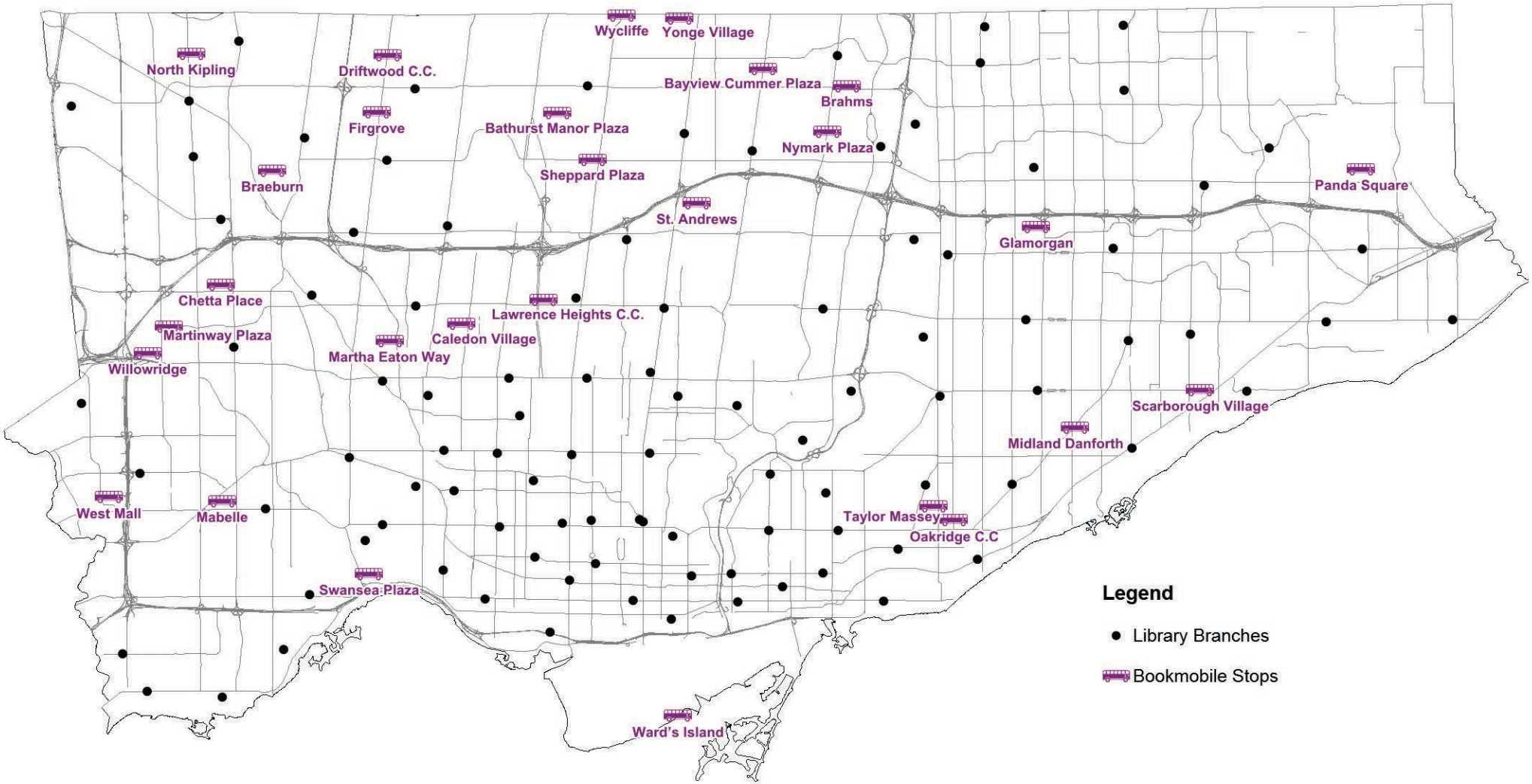
Vickery Bowles
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Toronto Public Library Bookmobile Stops

Toronto Public Library Bookmobile Stops



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