



Facilities Framework

(September 2023)

**A Guide to Facilities Planning
and Management**

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Strategic Linkages

There are several overarching documents that guide OPL in high-level decision making. The Service Delivery Framework (2022) (SDF) is one document that informs the Facilities Framework, and the Financial Framework (2021) is used to better inform financial implications.

The Service Delivery Framework identifies three channels for OPL services: Virtual, Mobile, and Facility. The Facilities Framework is intended to codify OPL's approach to facilities to support the delivery of in-person services at OPL locations. In addition, the SDF identifies the services offered by OPL in five categories. The service categories are Collections, Expertise, Programs, Tools, and Spaces. Each of the service categories is supported by a strategy that includes an outcome statement, defined standards or guidelines, a description of how services are delivered via each channel, a decision instrument to add new services, and an evaluation tool. Although each service category strategy will incorporate the facility channel – and by extension, the Facilities Framework – of particular importance for the Facility Channel are the collections, tools, and spaces strategies.

The Facilities Framework works in tandem with the Board-approved Financial Framework, which identifies parameters and guidelines for prudent financial management and planning in assessing impacts of potential decisions.

Introduction

OPL's vision is to *build community and transform lives* and its mission is to *inspire learning, spark curiosity, and connect people*. The vision and mission are built upon OPL's core values of Community, Inclusion, Integrity, Intellectual Freedom, and Literacy.

OPL is a shared public service that aims to provide social and economic benefit to the city, communities, and residents of Ottawa. Ottawa residents use OPL facilities as gathering hubs, places to learn and study, and places to relax and work. Since amalgamation in 2001, OPL's presence throughout Ottawa has been a pillar to the city's diverse culture and has provided an environment for refuge. OPL contributes significantly to the city's overall health by providing access to collections that facilitate literacy, information services that provide support to residents, programs that promote learning, access to spaces to connect with each other, and tools that foster creativity, and support productivity. In addition, as community infrastructure, OPL facilities may be used (from time to time) to provide space for emergencies, as areas of refuge.

The OPL network of facilities consists of 33 branches, the James Bartleman Library Materials Distribution Centre, as well as administrative space at both the Main branch and Nepean Centrepointe branch (within the Ben Franklin Centre). The total space allocation across these various facilities represents more than 450,000 square feet. Library facilities are either owned or leased by the Board or owned by the City. In total, nineteen (19) facilities are stand-alone, ten (10) are co-located with City facilities, and four (4) are leased (three (3) within retail locations).

Facilities activities are carried out by three full-time internal resources (one manager, two staff), who are responsible for the whole range of facilities lifecycle, described by the following stages: strategy and planning (frameworks, standards, analysis), facility creation / acquisition (buy, build, lease), operation (management, maintenance, repair / lifecycle, monitor, evaluation), and disposal (sell, demolish, terminate lease).

OPL staff undertake the following work with City supports:

- Infrastructure and Water Services (IWSD)
 - Asset Management: infrastructure planning, asset assessments, lifecycle programs.
 - Design and Construction: project management services on renovations and new builds.
- Planning and Economic Development (PED)

- Corporate Real Estate Organization (CREO): real estate services such as leasing and land sale/acquisition.
- Recreation, Culture, and Facility Services (RCFS)
 - Facility Operations Services (FOS): facility maintenance, repair, cleaning, security, and access, including 24/7 emergency coverage.
 - Parks and Recreation: joint facility planning and development.

In other areas, OPL staff undertake work independently:

- Corporate Design Standards: The development, maintenance, and implementation of design standards to be used throughout OPL facilities when renovating or building a facility, or when moving or building new facilities. The subsection to the design standards is the procurement of furniture, fixtures, and equipment, including the procurement of all library shelving, service hubs, staff workstations, etc. The Corporate Design Standards align with the Service Delivery Framework and OPL’s branding strategy.
- Accommodation Management: furniture moves, reconfiguring spaces, redesigning spaces to meet program requirements, monitoring occupancy load, and all associated planning aspects including planning, and coordination of contractors, etc.
- OPL Art Program: management of OPL-owned artwork.

The Facilities Framework and the Facilities Master Plan

The Facilities Framework (“the Framework”) allows staff to undertake analyses to identify facilities-related gaps, gather information for conducting growth studies regarding future needs, and to make decisions regarding asset management and planning. The Framework’s overarching objective is to act as a mechanism that:

- Enables strategic decision-making that aligns to the Strategic Plan goals and the provision of equitable access to library service across the city; and,
- Determines priorities for investment based on established criteria and standards for consistent design, fit up, and functions.

The Framework informs one component of the overarching Facilities Master Plan (FMP) – a comprehensive document that prioritizes all investments to support the maintenance, renewal, and building of library facilities (both growth and non-growth). The FMP is a blueprint for the future expansion of the organization / service to accommodate population growth. However, future growth cannot be considered without first confirming if the existing infrastructure meets the current population and community needs. OPL’s FMP is intended to combine results and outcomes from the Facilities Framework analysis and the Asset Management analysis, as described below.

The FMP is intended to provide a long-range facility planning perspective, projecting activities in a 20 – 25-year cycle. It is an investment roadmap with approximated timeframes that identifies recommendations such as revitalizations, expansions, rationalization, or new locations. The FMP will be supported by a Strategic Facility Plan (SFP) spanning a two-to-five-year cycle (in general alignment with the term of a Board), and an Annual Facility Plan (AFP) that is used to operationalize the activities.

The Facilities Framework describes the intention of OPL facilities, the desired future state, and tools to support decision-making that will move OPL towards that future.

- **Guiding Principles** that outline the strategic intent of OPL’s long-term facility planning, stating the corporate philosophy regarding facility needs.
- **Context and Assessment** highlights both library-specific and Ottawa-specific trends and considerations that impact facility planning and development.
- **The Facility Channel** codifies OPL’s approach to facilities to support the delivery of in-person services at OPL locations.
- **Facility Classification Model** defines the facility classifications in a hierarchy aligned with the SDF.
- **Facility Decision Criteria** is to be referenced and applied during ongoing facilities planning, as well as when OPL is assessing locations for new or relocated branches. There are two typical applications:
 - **Proactive:** When OPL conducts assessments of facility needs for new locations, rationalization / moves, or to prioritize existing locations for reinvestment as part of asset management. In these instances, the framework will be used to determine facility gaps, and to review and compare options.

- **Reactive:** When OPL is offered a potential site (e.g. co-location with community centres). In these instances, the framework will be used to evaluate the proposal.

There are four (4) types of criteria that represent the end-to-end facilities planning and development cycle. Appendix B provides a tool that applies the criteria in a matrix for quick reference. It defines each criterion, and identifies the data source, weighting and scoring, giving a higher weighting to requirements and a lower weighting to preferences.

- **Long-Term Investment Plan:** This section identifies the long-term planning needs, projecting activities in a 20 – 25-year cycle. The long-term plan can be found in Appendix C. ***This section will be updated upon Board approval of the Framework.***
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** As the Framework will need to be applied consistently and reviewed with each 4-year capital planning cycle, the last section presents a process for using and evolving the Framework over time.

Supporting the Facilities Framework, are the following documents:

- **Facility Standards –** The development and implementation of corporate standards specific to two (2) main factors.
 - **Design Standards.** This standard is specific to materials, furniture, fixtures, and equipment (types of flooring, automatic faucets, etc.) and provides detailed information surrounding each item for OPL facilities, aligned with the guiding principles.
 - **Space Planning Standards.** These standards will include specifics for various spaces and services (public computers, makerspaces, programs, collections, etc.). Space Planning standards will also be identified for OPL staff space allocations by position classification. Standards will inform financial decisions and be guided by the Service Delivery Framework – specifically, the “Spaces” service channel. The standards are operationally focused and within the CEO’s authority.
- **Floor Plans –** Detailed floor plans allow for the identification of public and staff square footage allocations to undertake a comprehensive assessment of needs.

Finally, the Asset Management Plan (AMP) plays a key role in long-term facility planning. The development of a comprehensive AMP, in conjunction with the City of Ottawa’s Planning, Infrastructure, and Economic Development team, as per legislative requirement. The AMP describes the inventory of library buildings, and how these will be managed in a way that addresses service drivers and pressures and ensures long

term stability. At the time of publishing the AMP, staff will produce “branch summaries” that identify key data including usage statistics, staffing levels, hours of operation, location, brief history, and the state of the asset.

Context and Assessment

The Facilities Framework is unique and specific to OPL. It was developed within the Ottawa context with consideration of the wide geographic boundaries, the City’s New Official Plan intentions and principles, and library-specific industry trends including the role of libraries as public spaces. OPL undertook an environmental scan across North America to identify best practices and aligned these with the needs of Ottawa citizens.

Official Plan Alignment

The City of Ottawa has developed a New Official Plan (OP), a legal document that contains the City’s goals, objectives, and policies to guide growth and manage physical change through to 2046. This document has been adopted by the Ontario Planning Act. It is in this timeline that the population of Ottawa is expected to surpass 1.4 million people, a population increase of 402,000.¹ More than half of the growth projection is set to occur through regeneration in existing neighbourhoods in urban Ottawa,² and this regeneration is envisioned within the context of 15-minute neighbourhoods, where daily and weekly needs can be accessed within a 15-minute walk.

The New OP includes public libraries in the context of “Community Infrastructure”

- Economic Development – policy intent: Integrate economic activity with residential and other land uses. “Commercial and community uses within Neighbourhoods are generally service oriented and are limited in size or area. These uses tend to be schools, community centres, recreational facilities, libraries, and smaller scale commercial uses including limited retail, restaurants and personal service businesses. These uses are part of achieving 15-minute neighbourhoods.”^{2F3}
- Healthy and Inclusive Communities – policy intent: Encourage development of healthy, walkable, 15-minute neighbourhoods that feature a range of housing options, supporting services and amenities. “Public service facilities such as parks and public spaces, schools, community centres, licensed childcare centres, recreational facilities and libraries. Publicly accessible places for people to connect

¹ New City of Ottawa Official Plan, [Draft OP - Post Nov 20 - SYNTAX Review \(ehq-production-canada.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com\)](https://draft.op-post-nov-20-syntax-review.ehq-production-canada.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com)

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

that contribute to quality of life and well-being are especially important as neighbourhoods continue to intensify.”^{3F4}

- Gender and Racial Equity – policy intent: Improve Access to Amenities. “15-minute neighbourhoods are neighbourhoods that support daily needs by providing a range of local amenities to advance more gender-equitable environments that are available on foot, by cycling, or using transit. These amenities include the provision of basic shopping, parks, libraries, recreation and other community infrastructure that are an essential support for those who frequently handle household and care tasks.”⁵

The City’s OP introduces a transect approach to planning that divides Ottawa into six areas, each representing different gradation in the type and evolution of built environment and planned function of the lands within it. The use of transects is intended to result in policies that are better tailored to an area’s context, age, and function in the city⁶. The transects identified are Rural, Suburban, Greenbelt, Outer Urban, Inner Urban, and Downtown. Ottawa’s suburban population is dissected by the Greenbelt – approximately 200 square kilometers (20,000 hectares) with approximately 149.5 square kilometers (14,950 hectares) owned by the National Capital Commission (NCC).

Ottawa Geography

Ottawa’s physical geography presents challenges and opportunities unlike any other city in Canada. Spanning a land area of 2,790 sq kms, the city of Ottawa stretches 87 kms east-to-west and between 68 km and 72 kms north-to-south. Ottawa has the largest rural area of any city in Canada, with 80% of Ottawa’s geography being rural. This rural context includes 26 villages. However, most of the Ottawa’s population as noted above lives in urban and suburban areas.

In addition, how residents move through the city is undergoing change. In 2019, the City opened Stage 1 of the new Light Rail Transit (LRT) system, with Stage 2 planned to open in summer 2023 for the north-south addition, and summer 2025 for the east-west portion. “Stage 2 LRT will see 44 kilometers of rail and 24 new stations added to the network. When complete, Stage 2 will bring 77% of residents within five (5) kilometers of rail.”⁷

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ New City of Ottawa Official Plan

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ [Overview | City of Ottawa](#)

Role of Public Library buildings (International Federation of Library Associations - IFLA)

“Library buildings play an important part in public library provision. According to IFLA, they should be designed to reflect the functions of the library service, be accessible to all in the community and be sufficiently flexible to accommodate new and changing services. They should be located close to other community activities, for example, shops and cultural centres. Wherever possible the library should also be available for community use, for example, for meetings and exhibitions and in larger buildings for theatrical, musical, audio-visual, and media performances. A well-used public library will make a significant contribution to the vitality of an urban area and be an important learning and social centre and meeting place, particularly in scattered rural areas. Librarians should, therefore, ensure that library buildings are used and managed effectively to make the best use of the facilities for the benefit of the whole community.”⁸

Economic Development

Public libraries have been viewed as community anchors and catalysts for economic development. In modern research, libraries have been noted to play a crucial role in the economic development and health of the city they serve.⁹ The Urban Libraries Council (ULC) identified five ways that public libraries make their communities stronger:¹⁰

- I. Linking to Local Economic Development - Local economic development practice has broadened to include strategies for building human, social, institutional, and physical resources. This change has created an opportunity for public libraries to identify when and where their assets contribute to building a stronger local economy.
- II. Improving Early Literacy and School Readiness - Early literacy in children have been shown to improve the long-term economic development of the community. Libraries are a key community resource in this arena.
- III. Strategies for Building Workforce Participation - Strategic workforce development planning and services are key components of many local economic development strategies. Libraries are uniquely positioned to support information research, and

⁸ <http://origin-www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/publications/archive/the-public-library-service/publ97.pdf>

⁹ Government of Ontario Website - <https://www.ontario.ca/document/environmental-scan-culture-sector-ontario-culture-strategy-background-document/sector-profile-public-libraries>

¹⁰ Making Cities Stronger ... [Making Cities Stronger \(urban.org\)](http://urban.org)

aid in building employment knowledge and providing technical skills to residents seeking assistance.

IV. Small Business Support Through Public Libraries - Small businesses are strong contributors to local economies. Public libraries provide support services and online resources necessary to succeed in an increasingly competitive small business sector.

V. Public Libraries and the Power of Place - Library facilities have a positive impact on downtowns, commercial areas, and neighborhoods.

Specifically in Ottawa, the 2021 Economic Benefits calculation (based on the 2016 methodology) showed that Ottawans receive \$473 in benefits for every \$1 invested in the library system. OPL generated \$110 million in total benefits in 2021, a remarkable 373% return on investment.

Library Facilities Planning Trends

There are a variety of trends that influence designs for library facilities, including:

- **Changing usage and space needs** – Libraries are now seen as community hubs and leisure centres – an extension of “home” or “work”. Similar to office and home environments, libraries should provide different zones to clients. Social zones bring people together and create environments where people can build relationships. Collaborative zones allow people to work together as a team to solve problems, build cases, etc. and can be found as informal touchdown points, bookable spaces, and meeting rooms. Learning spaces are a crucial role for libraries and can come in the form as programming spaces, tutor rooms, study rooms, etc. Finally, there are focus spaces which allow individuals to simply touch down at their leisure to study, write reports, read a book in a lounge, etc. Libraries may also be a source of health clinics and emergency response centres furthering the notion of libraries being community hubs.
- **Flexible spaces** - With increased community and leisure demands, the need for spaces to reflect customer needs requires spaces that can change and evolve with demand. Flexible spaces allow libraries to respond to changes better, and to ensure that the capital investment can be better realized over time. For example, having access to power throughout the entire branch to allow for collaboration stations or independent work in lounge chairs, moveable study carrels or shelving in order to reconfigure zones more easily, etc. Flexible design also supports the library in modifying spaces as needed for public health responses (e.g., COVID-19 mandates).

- **Design Aesthetic** – Library design reflects the priorities and interests of society at the time. In many countries, libraries have evolved from secure and private spaces to light and open, airy spaces, with plenty of flexible seating and different types of zones (e.g. individual study spaces, Teen Zones, meeting space, etc.). With modern-day research came the development of Evidence-Based Design. The research has proven that natural light and sightlines to nature within interior environments contributes to improved mental health and overall sense of well-being. This is often accomplished by incorporating larger windows, sun tunnels, nature-inspired colour palettes, etc. into the interior design of library facilities. Additionally, by applying sustainable, accessible, and interchangeable architectural concepts into the building structure, the facility will ease access constraints and assist with natural wayfinding. Lastly, branding (e.g., wayfinding, signage, colour palettes, and digital applications) has grown in importance in overall design.
- **Location** – Libraries should be in places that are visible, prominent, and connected. As part of the change to the “third space” (places where people come to congregate and linger)¹¹, libraries are now seen as part of the engine of growth and development in the community. Libraries are more prominent, not tucked away in corners, and are often connected with other community spaces to increase visibility.
- **Shift Mindset** – Libraries do not have to be “containers” of equitable distribution, that is each branch can be regarded as a unique institution with unique characteristics.¹² Though there is a degree of standardization to be achieved for library facilities, it is important to remember this concept of individualization.
- **Learning Redefined** – Learning is being redefined and spaces need to be redesigned to support the variety of learning experiences.¹³ Over the last few decades learning has evolved from being solely focused on lecture-based and reading to more experiential and hands on.
- **Square Footage per person** – Libraries traditionally use a square footage per capita measure to determine the total space needs of a library system by comparing the library’s total facility square footage to the size of the population it serves. Comparator Canadian public libraries range from 0.41 (Calgary) to 0.8

¹¹ [*Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life* by Eric Klinenberg \(Published September 2018\)](#)

¹² From MSS Public Library – Facilities of the Future (2019)
<https://www.margaretsullivanllc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/MSS-Public-Library-Facilities-for-the-Future.pdf>

¹³ Ibid.

(Vancouver). Table 1 below shows the range for large library systems throughout Canada. Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario (ARUPLO) identifies 1 square foot per capita as a baseline, and many public library systems use ratio as a goal¹⁴.

TABLE 1: COMPARATIVE CHART FOR CANADIAN LIBRARY SYSTEMS

Library System	Total Space per Capita (sq. ft.) Ratio
Vancouver	0.80
Toronto	0.67
Hamilton	0.58
Edmonton	0.54
Winnipeg	0.49
Mississauga	0.45
Ottawa	0.43
Calgary	0.41

- **Willingness to travel** – Individuals that perceive distance and travel to access public libraries as complex, are shown to be much less likely to use library

¹⁴ ARUPLO (Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario) Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems, 3rd edition, 2017
http://aruplo.weebly.com/uploads/2/8/3/7/2837807/aruplo_guidelines_3rd_edition.pdf

resources and facilities. Research has shown that most citizens in North America are willing to travel 2 miles (3.2km) to access library services.¹⁵

In recognition of Ottawa’s unique geography, there are key trends and best practices specific to libraries in rural communities:¹⁶

- Members of the public should travel no more than 30 minutes in a motorized vehicle under normal driving conditions to access basic library services offered by their municipal library system.
- Public libraries should be built in existing village and town clusters or rural service centres.

Library Facilities Guidelines

In Ontario, the public library community developed guidelines to help improve the quality of public library service across the province. The Ontario Public Library Guidelines¹⁷ have one guideline regarding access / facility location for consideration in the main portion of this Framework. Categorized under “Distance,” the guidelines use time as the measurement: Persons in the community are required to travel less than forty-five (45) minutes to the nearest stationary, mobile, or multi-branch public library service point.

Sections 27, 28, and 29 are specific to the physical facility, which are considerations for the standards to be developed for library building design.

- Building exterior – visibility of signage, posting of hours, wayfinding, parking, etc.
- Spaces within the library – areas, physical layout, interior signage, shelving types and capacity, etc.
- Access within the library – public washrooms (accessible and gender neutral), entrance, aisles, multiple floor structures, etc.

Pandemic-related Impacts

While COVID-19 was not the first outbreak to result in pause for reflection, adjusted services and mandates, or widespread panic, it did bring about the most change to

¹⁵ Elsevier, Library and Information Science Research, Mapping differences in access to public libraries by travel mode and time of day, Author Jeff Allen, February 2019

¹⁶ ARUPLO (Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario) Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems, 3rd edition, 2017

http://aruplo.weebly.com/uploads/2/8/3/7/2837807/aruplo_guidelines_3rd_edition.pdf

¹⁷ [Ontario Public Library Guidelines - Monitoring & Accreditation Council](#)

business operations and general day-to-day behaviours in decades. As such, it is prudent to acknowledge the impacts of the pandemic in terms of facilities planning and public expectation in line with public health and infection control considerations. Key factors for consideration in overall facilities design and standards development include:

- **Impacts of the requirement for physical distancing** – During the COVID-19 pandemic, health authorities both recommended and mandated a 6-foot distance between individuals in public settings. Several building modifications are required to meet this mandate during future pandemics.
- **Infection control measures** – Infection Control practice is no longer applicable to healthcare institutions alone. The main principles and guidelines can be used universally and incorporated into all corporate/commercial organizations' facilities (e.g., the use of contactless / touchless features, cleanable and durable materials and finishes.)
- **Air quality measures** – Ensuring the air flowing into and out of facilities is clean and that equipment is running at maximum efficiency is key for achieving proper air quality within a building. Since the pandemic, one measure to ensure air quality is the use of MERV-13 filters, as a minimum, on air handling units.

Fiscal environment

The sustainability of the entire library system is dependent on balancing the resources that are spent on services, staff, and facilities. The financial framework and its guiding principles regarding asset management and facilities must be consulted to ensure consistency in the treatment of facility funding options.

Although Development Charges (DCs) are the primary funding source for growth at OPL, previous studies have shown that the level of funding and the calculations used in determining funding for library facilities has fallen short of per capita requirements. Regardless, the organization is still responsible for the provision of library services and must make every effort to support physical lines of service based on the public need and a relevant delivery method for the service.

Perhaps the most influential aspects of future facility development and affordability are the rising costs and proliferation of necessary environmental technologies and construction methods. As public-facing buildings, the organization must account for some level of resiliency planning and environmental stewardship. This expectation will only result in an increase in costs over time and may require frequent evaluation of service levels and service delivery and a cautious approach to adding new facilities to ensure sustainability.

Considerations and Implications

Based on the environmental scan, some considerations and implications for OPL generally and specifically, are noted below.

- General and local research is consistent in the public library’s role in creating healthy, vibrant, and economically secure communities.
- Public library branches should reflect the uniqueness of the community it serves, and facility development needs to be tailored to ensure it is realistic and achievable.
- The notion of regeneration and intensification, and 15-minute neighbourhoods, suggests that facility spaces would be smaller and that there would be more of them. This is in contradiction with the library facilities trend to maximize financial resources and provide larger, more strategically located facilities.
- As Ottawa moves away from greenfield development to regeneration and intensification, OPL can expect to see an increased need for new facilities in existing neighbourhoods.
- LRT expansion, and the subsequent anticipated developed surrounding LRT stations, may provide opportunities for strategic branch relocations.
- While all public libraries use a distance to branch metric, there is no one standard metric. The “willingness to travel” metric is used a guide and adjusted relative to each library system’s unique needs.
- The 1 square foot per capita metric is aspirational and must be balanced against the reality of the fiscal environment.
- Ottawa’s geography and population spread create interesting divides for community types (e.g., inner urban vs. rural). Of the five applicable transects, the rural areas are considered independently of the other transects, with different thresholds for various criteria in recognition of Ottawa’s unique composition.
- As the transects provide guidance as to the general characteristics associated with urban and suburban built form, they are important considerations in designing library facilities.

Guiding Principles

These guidelines outline the strategic intent of facilities development, setting the direction for decisions and framing the goals for ongoing facility planning.

Decisions regarding the facility need are driven by OPL’s Service Delivery Framework (SDF).

The need for a facility is based on OPL’s SDF that identifies the range of services offered, and the various channels of service distribution. OPL will use a community development approach, rather than “one size fits all,” to ensure that the facility requirements meet the requirements of the population intended to be served, recognizing there are varied needs for library services and spaces.

Facility development will support the City of Ottawa’s planning goals.

OPL has a role to play in supporting the City of Ottawa’s Official Plan. Facility development will consider population size, expected population growth, equity between neighbourhoods, socioeconomic demographic considerations, and access through sustainable modes of transportation.

OPL will aim to keep pace with population growth.

OPL’s total space should increase proportionally to population growth to continually meet the needs of the growing city. OPL will continue to seek opportunities to enhance the benefits per square foot to a growing population. OPL’s new facilities will be built to house the range of library services required by current and future populations who will live, work, and use the services.

Facility design will embody architectural excellence.

Facility designs will reflect the best in contemporary library architecture while respecting the unique nature of the local community. Facilities will be attractive, welcoming, and accessible. OPL will design facilities with flexible spaces and technology to allow for easy adaptation, with consideration for future potential. Facility designs will adhere to a set of standards to ensure buildings support current and future operational requirements, safety and security, environmental sustainability, and durability.

OPL will strive for sustainability in its facility portfolio.

The facility's function must be able to support OPL's SDF considering financial and operational sustainability. This includes commitment to environmental, climate, and energy stewardship. The sustainability of OPL is dependent on balancing the resources that are spent on services, collections, staff, and infrastructure.

Facility Channel

OPL provides a network of branches throughout the city, located in prominent and convenient community gathering places. Through branches, OPL provides community groups and individuals with access to high quality, flexible, and functional public space, with branches serving as community hubs and meeting places. It is through the Facility Channel that OPL provides a variety of spaces for seating and meeting rooms for individual and group study, relaxed reading, library programs, community events, and access to technology. The types of spaces are identified in the SDF, Spaces Strategy.^{17F18}

Library branches are designed to reflect the needs and character of local neighbourhoods. Exterior space extends access to library service, enhances the library street presence in the neighbourhood, and furthers OPL's role as a community hub with services such as external seating, attractive landscaping, reading or community gardens, and wireless internet access.

Library branches contribute to the economic and social vitality of the city and its neighbourhoods. They are strong contributors to community development. Branches work in partnership with City departments, community agencies, and residents to form a network which connects people to their local neighbourhoods and the city.

A 'one-system with 33 branches' approach acknowledges a 'basic standard of service' (e.g. every branch will provide some collections, some computers, some programs, etc.) but puts less emphasis on branch hierarchy and considers branches within a geographical framework. At the same time, OPL recognizes the distinct role of the central branch as a hub for specialized services, the value in providing regionally based enhanced services, the universality of local branches as community touchpoints, and the impact rural branches can have on the close-knit rural communities.

¹⁸ Note: The Spaces Strategy is currently under development as part of the new Service Delivery Framework implementation.

Given Ottawa’s unique urban-rural composition, OPL recognizes the role of rural branches as:

- demand increases for local services as the cost of fuel rises;
- services provided locally support the concept of a “walkable community”; and,
- to support environmental sustainability by providing access to services locally.

Facility Classification Model

The classification of branches for service delivery requirements provides guidelines to address public facility-related needs. OPL has identified four (4) types of branches where services can be delivered: Central branch, District branches, Local branches, Rural branches. The four types will be further refined based on the service strategies and identified in the SDF, including branch reclassification from one type to another.

Central branch – designed to serve a local, regional, and city-wide function

- The Central branch is in the downtown transect.

District branch - designed to serve a local and regional function

- District branches are located in Outer Urban or Suburban transects and serve as regional hubs for both local and rural branches in the region.

Local branch - designed to serve neighbourhoods

- Local branches are located in Downtown, Inner Urban, Outer Urban, and Suburban transects.

Rural branch - designed to serve a specified village and surrounding rural community

- Rural branches are in the Rural transect.

A visual depicting the branch classifications along with the current list of branches is available in Appendix A: Facility Classification Model - Application (2022).

Facility Decision Criteria

The decision criteria provide parameters to inform final decisions surrounding branch retrofits, new builds, and decommissioning or relocating existing facilities. Since there are several factors that contribute to the success of a facility, the following criteria have been identified.

Gateway Criterion

The decision criteria begin with an initial gateway criterion, which is based on ensuring an appropriate level of service. For in-person services and facilities, service levels are commonly identified in terms of access, that is coverage across the city and convenience. OPL’s Facility Channel service level is to ensure facilities are of sufficient size and are convenient and accessible to the entire community.

The Gateway Criterion identifies neighbourhoods with a facilities gap based on a neighbourhoods’ proximity to an existing public library branch. Library organizations overall seemed to reach consensus that a distance metric for service access was the best way to identify under-served and over-served communities in conjunction with square footage available per capita, with most using a “radius” from the branch location.

Using the North American “willingness to travel” metric as a guide, two (2) miles is considered an acceptable distance to travel to access public library services. Converting to the metric system, this represents 3.2 kilometers.

To find the appropriate distance to nearest branch metric for Ottawa specifically, OPL took into consideration the city’s general landscape and culture. Geographically, Ottawa has much more landmass than other large cities such as Toronto, and the communities are rich with their own identities. In Ottawa, the average distance to a library branch is 2.9 kilometers, based on neighbourhoods, according to the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (ONS) data¹⁹. A review of other large urban public libraries across Ontario and Canada shows the following distances to library facilities, along with relevant data for context such as land size, population, population density, and the number of library branches (for the population and geography data, the figure in parenthesis denotes Ottawa’s ranking relative to the other cities identified).

TABLE 2: CANADIAN LIBRARY SYSTEMS DISTANCE TO BRANCHES AND POPULATION SERVED

City	Distance to closest branch (kms)	Land size (km²)	Number of branches	Population (2021)	Population Density (2021)

¹⁹ Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (ONS) - [Neighbourhood Maps | Ottawa Neighbourhood Study](#)

TABLE 2: CANADIAN LIBRARY SYSTEMS DISTANCE TO BRANCHES AND POPULATION SERVED

Ottawa	2.9	2788 (1)	33 (3)	1,017,449 (5)	364 (7)
Vancouver	2	115	22	662,248	5,749
Montreal	1.5	364	45	1,762,949	4,833
Hamilton	N/A	1373	22	785,000	571
Calgary	N/A	820	21	1,306,784	1,592
Edmonton	5	765	21	1,010,899	1,320
Toronto	1.6 / 2.5*	630.2	100	6,255,000	9,925

*Local branch is 1.6kms; regional branch is 2.5kms.

Many library systems use a “branch radius” metric, that is, the distance to the closest branch is calculated using the branch as the focal point, drawing a kilometer-based circle around the branch to define the intended service area. ONS considers a population-weighted calculation that uses pedestrian distance measures to confirm the distance that the majority of the population in a neighbourhood travels to reach the destination, in this case, the public library.²⁰ Using a population-weighted calculation, in lieu of a branch radius, places the focus on customer. OPL will use the population-weighted calculation. **For OPL, the target gateway criteria threshold is an average**

²⁰ Details on the ONS methodology can be found here:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OWoccPXWTNxFCOQ1ByAmzo2YSpWloQg/view>

neighbourhood access to a library branch of three (3) kilometers or less. For neighbourhoods in the Rural transect the threshold is 15 kilometers.

Gateway criteria calculations will be based on information available from the ONS database. For example: if the average distance in a neighbourhood in the Outer Urban transect is equal to or less than three (3) kilometers to the closest library branch, no facility gap exists. In this instance, because no gap has been identified, no further criteria would be evaluated. However, if the average distance from a neighbourhood to the closest branch is more than three (3) kilometers, a facility gap exists. In this instance, as a gap has been identified, the next set of criteria would be evaluated, beginning with the Prioritization Criteria.

Prioritization Criteria

The Prioritization Criteria identifies which neighbourhoods, of those with facilities gaps as identified using the Gateway Criteria, are in more critical need of library services. Prioritization criteria are used to develop a ranked list of facilities needs throughout Ottawa. Based on this list of needs, opportunities for development will be explored as available – both proactively and reactively, subject to funding. OPL will use three lenses to determine the priorities: equity, distance, and growth. These three lenses will be weighted, and the combined score will be used to set priorities.

- The equity lens looks at neighbourhoods that are considered to have lower equity than others, as identified on the Neighbourhood Equity Index²¹ coordinated by the Social Planning Council of Ottawa. The equity index tool assesses and compares neighbourhood differences that impact wellbeing. There are 28 indicators categorized into five domains (economic, health, social and human development, physical environment, and community and belonging). Using this data, an overall Index Score is provided. It is the overall score that will be used to prioritize neighbourhoods for facility needs, with primary weighting.
- The distance lens is based on the proximity to the nearest library branch. Neighbourhoods that are closer to a branch will receive lower scores, with those furthest away receiving higher scores. Distance calculations will use the average distance from a neighbourhood threshold, as identified in the gateway criteria. For example, a neighbourhood that is 3.5kms to the nearest branch would receive lower scores than a neighbourhood that is 5kms to the nearest branch. Data from the ONS will be used.

²¹ <https://neighbourhoodequity.ca/>

- The growth lens recognizes that facilities are intended to serve both existing and future populations, it is important to assess whether a neighbourhood is expected to grow rapidly or maintain its population in the long-term, and for those population figures to be considered in facility development. Neighbourhoods with faster-than-average growth rates are prioritized. In addition, population growth rate will be included in determining facility size and will be factored into site-related criteria (land size) to ensure that the site is able to accommodate expansion opportunities as may be required. In both instances, the square foot per capita ratio will be used.

Once the list of priorities is established using the Prioritization Criteria, staff will use a variety of criteria to inform decisions regarding the physical facility/building.

Building Criteria

The Building Criteria further develops the overall facility components including design. This will ensure that OPL meets the service requirements outlined in the SDF and that branches meet modern-day designs, are flexible, and include sustainable practices. The types of criteria that fall within the overarching Building Criteria are:

- Service Needs** – The SDF identifies five (5) service categories: Collections, Expertise, Programs, Spaces, and Tools. Each of these is guided by a strategy document that details specific commitments such as size of collection, types of spaces, etc. Using the data in the strategy documents, calculations are made to determine the facility size based on service needs.
- Population Size** – Based on anticipated clients considering those who live in the specified area. In 2022, OPL completed a study to develop floor plans for all facilities, providing a baseline for strategic planning by providing factual square footage counts for both public and staff spaces. OPL’s total facility square footage is 452,520. Of this, the branch square footage is 424,746. Public space represents approximately 75% of the total OPL facility space. As a result, OPL’s current total square foot per capita ratio is 0.43. **OPL will use a per capita ratio of 0.5** to assess and validate facility size for both new branches and branch expansions (subject to physical space).
- Functionality** – The functionality of a building is reliant on numerous aspects. A building must be structurally sound, have a layout that supports operational requirements and that can be easily transformed to meet new service and accessibility needs as they evolve. Specific to OPL library operations is having a single-story building rather than a multi-level. Ensuring the functional requirements

are met allows the organization to plan for future growth and ensures that the building will remain modern.

- **Sustainability** – The sustainability factor focuses on ways to deliver a facility that combats climate change and delivers a facility that promotes environmental sustainability. Elements such as energy saving initiatives (e.g., Energy Star equipment, LED lighting, etc.), climate resiliency (e.g., stronger structures and insulation), and the use of alternative building materials (e.g., renewable sources such as wood, recycled plastic, locally sourced, etc.) are planned. Furthermore, this factor considers the ability to achieve certifications such as LEED, Green Star Certification, Green Globes, etc.
- **Aesthetics** – This factor assesses whether or not a facility is appropriate for the expectations of the community it serves from a visual perspective. The facility is evaluated based on its attractiveness and ensuring it contains community-relevant design for a modern, innovative public space (for example, that the facility design evokes feelings of being invited in).
- **Wellbeing** – Evidence-based design has shown that the design of a building can contribute to one's overall wellbeing. For instance, providing natural light and views to the exterior surroundings helps with overall mental health and feeling more relaxed. Incorporating sustainable measures to enhance indoor air quality and implementing infection control measures to aid the spread of viruses (e.g., copper elevator touch points) also contribute to overall wellbeing by ensuring the health of the building occupants is addressed.

Site Criteria

The Site Criteria is used to identify appropriate location for the facility. Site criteria was developed using best practices, technical expertise, and guided by past public input.

The types of factors that fall within the Site Criteria are:

- **Access** – These factors considers the ease of site access via multi-modes as well as public transit and personal vehicles. Sites with access via a common collector road will be given higher weighting, as will those sites that ensure that the branch is easily identifiable and visible to the community. Depending on the transect, the availability of parking capacity in relation to population served is considered. For rural communities and villages, access recognizes the importance of main streets to the vitality of rural areas as hubs for essential services and a central component to identity, culture, and heritage.

- **Shared Spaces** – Preference is given to sites that allow for co-location opportunities with another City service such as a recreational/community center or community housing. Consideration is also given to locations that are near a park and/or green space, in support of outdoor programming functions.
- **Physical Boundaries** – This factor allows OPL to evaluate the site on legislative and mandatory criteria such as accessibility needs, ensuring that the Ontario Building Code (OBC), and the building criteria (outlined below), can be met. In addition, criteria to assess physical barriers are included (e.g. does a stream, culvert, highway, etc. run through the community).
- **Site Readiness** – Properties being considered for OPL facilities will be evaluated on the level of infrastructure services and usable land they have. The infrastructure criteria will be determined based on City services already in place on the property or the ease of adding them on to the site (e.g., hydro, gas and water). In terms of usable land, it is important to evaluate the number of trees and other plant life that are currently on the property that would need to be removed for a facility to reside on it. In addition, land moisture is another item that would be taken into consideration (e.g., swamp land vs. rock).
- **The 15-minute neighbourhood** is designed to align with the City’s 15-minute neighbourhood goal to have complete communities across the City. A complete community refers to a person not having to leave their immediate neighbourhood (e.g. Hintonburg) to acquire day-to-day services and needs. Service examples include, but are not limited to grocery stores, pharmacy, libraries, etc. Communities that are emerging 15-minute neighbourhoods would receive higher priority than those that are existing or not identified.
- **The isolated community** looks at those communities which are further from the inner-city limits (e.g. rural locations), or those which are separated from other neighbourhoods by human-made or natural barriers (e.g. the Rideau Canal). An isolated community is described as one that is not complete, and requires travel outside of one’s neighbourhood to acquire day-to-day services and needs. Isolated communities receive higher scores.

The complete list of criteria (in chart format) along with definitions, weighting, and scoring mechanism, is available in Appendix B – Decision Matrix.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Facilities Framework is intended to guide strategic decisions regarding the Facility Channel, and is intended to inform short- and long-term decisions. It will be reviewed

once per term of the Board. In addition, there are several factors that could drive additional reviews, such as:

- Changes to other corporate planning documents (such as the SDF)
- Changes in municipal direction and subsequent plans
- Changes to the legislative environment, including governance changes
- Change to OPL strategic directions and priorities
- New trends in library facilities planning as well as changes to space use

It is the responsibility of the Manager, Facilities Planning and Development to lead reviews, ensuring that Management, the Board, and the Public are consulted.

The OPL Board has authority to approve the Framework, in keeping with Board Policy #002 – Delegation of Authority. In addition, Board approval of the criteria is as follows:

- Gateway Criteria** - Board approval of criteria at time of establishment
- Prioritization Criteria** - Board approval of criteria at time of establishment, as well as approval of prioritization list of gaps every five years.
- Site Criteria** - Board approval criteria at time of establishment, as well as approval of project specific site (e.g. site selection). In instances where OPL is co-located with a City facility, it is the City that determines the location.
- Building Criteria** - Board approval at the time of establishment, as well as approval of project specific building elements (e.g. size).

Ottawa residents and library customers are engaged on the Facilities Framework at the time of development and with each overall review. In addition, project-specific public engagement occurs on the **Building Criteria**, in particular the Service Needs, and excludes population size and operational requirements.

Public engagement may be stand-alone, combined with other OPL consultations, or may occur in partnership with the City of Ottawa.

Appendix A: Facility Classification Model – Application (2022)

OPL’s facilities are classified as follows:

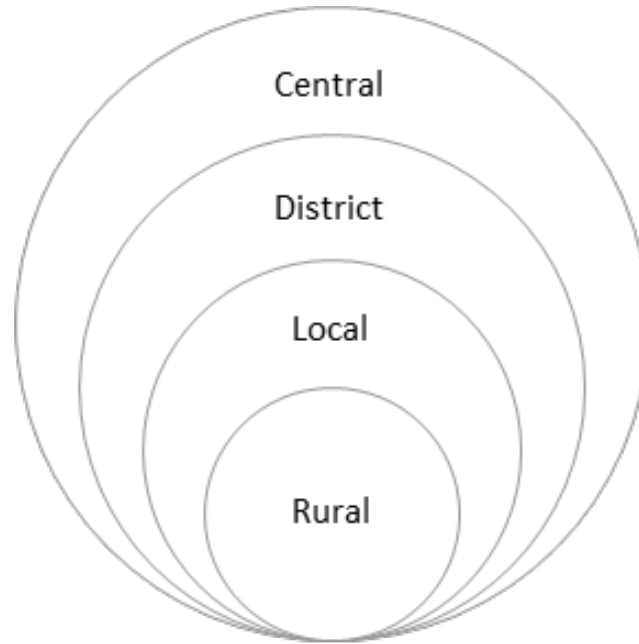


TABLE 3: OPL'S BRANCHES BY CLASSIFICATION

Central	District (6)	Local (16)	Rural (10)
Central branch at Ādisōke	Beaverbrook	Alta Vista	Carp
	Cumberland	Blackburn Hamlet	Constance Bay
	Greenboro	Carlingwood	Fitzroy Harbour
	Main*	Centennial	Greely
	Nepean Centrepointe	Emerald Plaza	Metcalfe Village

TABLE 3: OPL'S BRANCHES BY CLASSIFICATION

	Ruth E. Dickinson**	Elmvale Acres	Munster
		Hazeldean	North Gower
		Manotick	Osgoode
		North Gloucester	Richmond
		Orléans	Vernon
		Rideau	
		Rockcliffe Park	
		Rosemount	
		Stittsville	
		St.Laurent	
		Sunnyside	
		Vanier	

*The Main branch will be replaced by the Central branch at Ādisōke upon opening in 2026.

**The Ruth E. Dickinson branch will be replaced with the Barrhaven branch.

Based on the classificational model, the regional alignment for each District branch with the local and rural branches is as follows:

TABLE 4: ALIGNMENT FOR OPL DISTRICT BRANCHES WITH LOCAL AND RURAL

Beaverbrook	Cumberland	Greenboro	Main	Nepean Centrepointe	Ruth E. Dickinson
Carp	Blackburn Hamlet	Alta Vista	Rideau	Carlingwood	Manotick
Constance Bay	North Gloucester	Elmvale Acres	Rockcliffe Park	Centennial	Munster
Fitzroy Harbour	Orléans	Greely	Rosemount	Emerald Plaza	North Gower
Hazeldean		Metcalfe Village	St.Laurent		Richmond
Stittsville		Osgoode	Sunnyside		
		Vernon	Vanier		

Appendix B: Decision Matrix

Gateway Criteria	Description	Weight	Scoring Criteria
Coverage (access)	Neighbourhood proximity to an OPL branch Data source: Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (ONS)	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3kms for neighbourhoods within the City's Downtown, Inner Urban, Outer Urban, and Suburban transects • 15kms for neighbourhoods within the City's Rural transect.

Prioritization Criteria	Description	Weight	Scoring Criteria
Equity	The area is identified as a priority in the Neighbourhood Equity Index (NEI). Total equity score based on 5 domains combined: Economic, health, social and human development, physical environment, and community and belonging Data Source: NEI	3	10 points – Red 8 points – Yellow 4 points – Green 2 points – Dark Green
Distance	Compare and prioritize neighbourhoods based on the proximity to the nearest library branch. A neighbourhood average is used to calculate the gap. Data Source: ONS	2	Distance in excess of the respective gateway criteria will be used.

Growth Rate	Forecast for the neighbourhood to experience an above average growth rate (>25%) within the next 25 years. Data Source: City of Ottawa	1	10 points – within 5 years 8 points – within 10 years 6 points – within 15 years 4 points – within 20 years 2 points – within 25 years
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Branch Criteria	Description	Weight	Scoring Criteria
Service Needs	Identification of type and size of facility required based on the service needs.	N/A	Refer to Service Delivery Framework and related strategies.
Population Size	Considering those who live in the area Data Source: City of Ottawa	N/A	0.5 square foot per capita
Structural Integrity	Can withstand heavy floor loads for multi-purpose use.	3	10 points – Yes, no additional cost 5 points – Yes, but requires minimal costs 0 points - No and cost prohibitive

Sustainability	Building has energy saving initiatives, climate resiliency practices, and has reached green certifications such as LEED	3	<p>10 points – Has achieved certification (e.g., LEED)</p> <p>5 points – Has some sustainable practices in place</p> <p>0 points – Has no sustainable practices</p>
Aesthetics	Modern design with innovative features throughout.	2	<p>10 points – Iconic building</p> <p>7 points – Above average</p> <p>5 points – Neighbourhood Standard</p>
Well-Being	Built with indoor air quality and infection control measures in place. Views to the exterior and natural light throughout.	2	<p>10 points – Yes, fully achieved</p> <p>5 points – Some aspects achieved</p> <p>0 points - No</p>
Technology	Building design supports modern technology	2	<p>10 points – Yes, fully supports</p> <p>5 points – Some support</p> <p>0 points - No</p>

<p>Layout for Operational Requirements</p>	<p>Layout supports operational requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single, dedicated, accessible entrance • Potential for flexible spaces (open floorplate) • Single storey • Square footage meets current and future needs • Delivery access • Dedicated access to accessible washroom facilities 	<p>3</p>	<p>2 points for each supported requirement – evaluated against Facility Planning Standards up to a maximum of 10 points</p>
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Site Criteria	Description	Weight	Scoring Criteria
Easy Access	Located on a collector road, centrally located within a community, street visibility Data Source: geoOttawa	3	Refer to Transects matrix for evaluation criteria
Accessible by Public Transit	Proximity to OC Transpo bus or LRT stations and/or stops. Data Source: geoOttawa	3	10 points – within 400 metres walking distance to LRT & OC Transpo hub/terminal 6 points – within 400 metres walking distance to OC Transpo main route 4 points - more than 400 metres from public transit up to 1km walking distance 2 points – located on infrequent neighbourhood OC Transpo bus route 0 points – no public transit access
Accessible by walking and cycling	Proximity to direct pathways/trails to the location, and safe sidewalk availability from surrounding neighbourhoods. Data Source: geoOttawa	3	10 points – Direct adjacency to sidewalks, pedestrian, and bicycle paths 5 points – direct adjacency to sidewalks only 0 points – no direct adjacency to sidewalks, pedestrian, or bicycle paths

Parking Availability	Proximity to free or paid parking. Ability to accommodate parking on the site. Data Source: geoOttawa	1	Refer to Transects matrix for evaluation criteria
Co-located with partner facilities	Shared site with facilities such as recreational centers, community centres, community housing, etc.	3	10 points – 2 partners 5 points – 1 partner 0 points – no partner
Near park and/or green space	Proximity to a City-developed park near the site, maintained trail or forest, or body of water or beach. Data Source: geoOttawa	2	10 points – direct adjacency 7 points - within block 5 points – 15-minute walk
Land Size and Shape	Ensuring land size is appropriate for current needs, future growth opportunities and is relatively simple to build on (e.g., does not have large, rock hills). Facility standards by population served and growth projections of population.	3	5 points – meeting current requirements 0.5 points for each projected year met to a maximum of 10

Site Readiness	<p>Land Plot Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility readiness or access (hydro, gas, water) • Requirement to excavate ground • Clear-cutting required 	2	<p>10 Points – has utilities built on site, no clear cutting & excavation required</p> <p>5 points – requires utility connection, but in proximity. Minor excavation required</p> <p>0 points – requires significant utility connections and clear-cutting</p>
15-minute neighbourhood	<p>Identification if the community is an emerging or existing 15-minute neighbourhood (“complete community”)</p> <p>Data Source: City of Ottawa</p>	1	<p>10 points – undeveloped services</p> <p>5 points – semi-established services</p> <p>0 points – complete community</p>
Isolated community	<p>Identification if the community is isolated from other neighbourhoods (due to a variety of reasons – for example: natural or human-made barriers)</p> <p>Data Source: geoOttawa</p>	1	<p>10 points – no barriers</p> <p>5 points – natural barrier (e.g., rivers)</p> <p>0 points – human-made barriers (e.g., highway)</p>

Transect Matrix Overlays					
Criteria	Downtown	Inner Urban	Outer Urban	Suburban	Rural
Site location and access	Local	Collector	Collector	Collector	Village Main Street

Site parking capacity	0	0	Zoning minimum	Zoning minimum	Zoning minimum
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Appendix C: Long Term Investment Priorities

This section will be completed upon Board approval of the Framework.