

AGENDA

OXFORD COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, May 20, 2025, 3:00 p.m.

21 Reeve Street, Woodstock

Recording will be available at <https://www.youtube.com/@oxfordcountyonario>

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
- 3. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF**
- 4. ADOPTION OF BOARD MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**
 - 4.1 April 15, 2025
- 5. DELEGATIONS, PRESENTATIONS AND CONSIDERATION THEREOF**
- 6. CONSIDERATION OF CORRESPONDENCE**
- 7. REPORTS**
 - 7.1 2025-18 Oxford County Library Facilities Plan (Presentation by Consultant)
RECOMMENDATION
 1. That the Library Board receives Report 2025-18 Library Facilities Plan and the Library Facilities Plan document as set out in Attachment 2.
 - 7.2 2025-19 Key Agenda Items and Policy Review Update (verbal report)
RECOMMENDATION
 1. That the Library Board receives verbal Report 2025-19, Key Agenda Items and Policy Review Update for information and discussion.
 - 7.3 2025-20 Librarian Report
RECOMMENDATION
 1. That the Library Board receives Report 2025-20, Librarian Report, for information and discussion.
 - 7.4 2025-21 Q1 Library Business Plan and Budget Update

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Library Board receives Report 2025-21, 2025 Q1 Library Business Plan and Budget Update, for information.

7.5 2025-22 Peg Caffyn Bequest Expenditure Request - Children's Spaces Refresh In Rural Branches

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Board approves up to \$4,700 to be expended from the Peg Caffyn Bequest Fund to enhance children's play spaces as set out in Report 2025-22 titles "Caffyn Bequest Expenditure Request - Children's Spaces Refresh in Rural Branches".

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9. MOTIONS

10. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

11. ENQUIRIES

12. ADJOURNMENT



OXFORD COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Members Present: Deputy Warden Brian Petrie
Councillor David Mayberry
Megan Blair
Katherine Grieve
Cynthia Lacroix

Members Absent: Chair Julia Harris
Vice Chair Laura Langford

Staff Present: L.M. Williams, CEO/Chief Librarian
L. Buchner, Director of Corporate Services

1. CALL TO ORDER

Oxford County Library meets in regular session this the fifteenth day of April, 2025 in Room 411, Oxford County Administration Building, Woodstock at 3:30 p.m.

RESOLUTION 1

Moved By: David Mayberry
Seconded By: Katherine Grieve

Whereas the Terms of Reference for the County of Oxford Library requires Board meetings to be conducted in accordance with the County of Oxford Procedural By-law No. 6268-2020 as amended;

And whereas, the Library Board has convened a meeting at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 15, 2025 in the absence of a Chair or Deputy Chair.

Now therefore be it resolved, that pursuant to Section 3.9 of the County of Oxford Procedural By-law, the Oxford County Library Board, represented by a quorum of the Board, hereby appoints Board Member Deputy Warden Brian Petrie to be Chair of the meeting held on Tuesday, April 15, 2025.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

RESOLUTION 2

Moved By: Cynthia Lacroix
Seconded By: Megan Blair

Resolved that the Agenda be approved.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried



3. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

NIL

4. ADOPTION OF BOARD MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLUTION 3

Moved By: Cynthia Lacroix

Seconded By: Katherine Grieve

Resolved that the Library Board minutes of March 18, 2025 be adopted.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

5. DELEGATIONS. PRESENTATIONS AND CONSIDERATION THEREOF

NIL

6. CONSIDERATION OF CORRESPONDENCE

NIL

7. REPORTS

7.1. 2025-14 Key Agenda Items and Policy Review Update (verbal report)

RESOLUTION 4

Moved By: Katherine Grieve

Seconded By: Megan Blair

That the Library Board receives verbal Report 2025-14, Key Agenda Items and Policy Review Update for information and discussion.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

7.2. 2025-15 Librarian Report

RESOLUTION 5

Moved By: Cynthia Lacroix

Seconded By: Katherine Grieve

That the Library Board receives Report 2025-15, Librarian Report, for information and discussion.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

7.3. 2025-16 Operational Policy Review: Membership and Circulation Policy

RESOLUTION 6

Moved By: Cynthia Lacroix

Seconded By: Megan Blair

That the Library Board approves amendments to the Membership and Circulation Policy as set out in Attachment 1 to Report 2025-16.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

7.4. 2025-17 Governance Policy Review: Policy Development Policy

RESOLUTION 7

Moved By: Katherine Grieve
Seconded By: Cynthia Lacroix

That the Library Board approves amendments to the Policy Development Policy as set out in Attachment 1 to Report 2025-17.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NIL

9. MOTIONS

NIL

10. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

NIL

11. ENQUIRIES

NIL

12. CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION 8

Moved By: Cynthia Lacroix
Seconded By: David Mayberry

Resolved that the Library Board go into closed session to consider personal matters about an identifiable individual.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried at 4:00 p.m.

12.1 Correspondence (Verbal report)

RESOLUTION 9

Moved By: Cynthia Lacroix
Seconded By: Katherine Grieve

Resolved that the Library Board reconvene in Open Session.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried at 4:02 p.m.

13. CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CLOSED SESSION

13.1 Correspondence (Verbal Report)

RESOLUTION 10

Moved By: David Mayberry
Seconded By: Katherine Grieve

Resolved that the Library Board receives the Verbal Report and approves the request as presented for six months.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

14. ADJOURNMENT

RESOLUTION 11

Moved By: Cynthia Lacroix

Seconded By: Katherine Grieve

Resolved that the Board meeting of April 15, 2025 be adjourned until the next meeting scheduled for May 20, 2025 at 3:30 p.m. at the Oxford County Administrative Building.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried at 4:03 pm.

Brian Petrie, CHAIR

Lisa Marie Williams, SECRETARY

REPORT TO LIBRARY BOARD

Library Facilities Plan

To: Oxford County Library Board

From: CEO / Chief Librarian

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Library Board receives Report 2025-18 Library Facilities Plan and the Library Facilities Plan document as set out in Attachment 2.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Library staff and the consultant team from Monteith Brown and MJMA have worked to provide a Library Facilities Plan, Attachment 2, that provides 19 recommendations to meet the changing demands and create enjoyable and dynamic spaces for the communities served by Oxford County Library.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

Upon approval of the Library Facilities Plan, staff will begin working with Oxford County Facilities and Capital Finance teams to plan the short-term and long-term goals associated with the plan.

Financial Impact

The Library Facilities Plan will have no impact on the current year's budget. Future budget impacts will be presented as part of long-term capital forecasts and yearly budget planning for the Board's consideration.

Communications

Upon approval of the Library Facilities Plan, the final Library Facilities Plan document will be released. Physical copies will be produced upon request to provide to Stakeholders. The document will be posted on the "Policies" section of the website. Staff will also work with the

Strategic Communications and Engagement staff to publicly promote the plan with a media release and social media.

Library administrative staff will also provide a review of the document for all staff at the upcoming June 2 Staff Development Day.

2024-2028 LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN

Oxford County Library Board approved the **2024-2028 Library Strategic Plan** on February 20, 2024. The Plan outlines three key goals to advance the Library's vision to "Connect, discover, share, become." These goals are: (1) *Sustain service excellence*, (2) *Grow engagement and member relationships*, and (3) *Innovate access to service*.

The recommendation in this report supports the following strategic goal.

Strategic Goals and Strategies

GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3
 <p>Sustain service excellence</p>	 <p>Grow engagement and member relationships</p>	 <p>Innovate access to service</p>
<p>Strategy 1.1 – Develop and implement a long-term facilities plan to meet changing demands and create enjoyable and dynamic spaces for our communities.</p>		

See: [Oxford County Library 2024-2028 Strategic Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

The process of creating the Library Facilities Plan began in late 2024. The process included background research; consultation with Library staff and County Facilities staff; interviews with municipal staff, private lease holders, and school board partners; and scanning best practices.

Comments

The Library Facilities Plan aims to provide recommendations to improve or expand library spaces over the next ten years. With a current population of 83,140 people living in the seven

municipalities currently served by Oxford County Library, the plan bases the recommendations on the projected population growth to approximately 99,260 by the year 2034.

The main goals of the plan are:

- to create a minimum standard for the design, amenities and upkeep of all library branches;
- to ensure adequate and efficient space; and
- to revitalize the existing libraries where possible to continue to create welcoming and dynamic spaces in Oxford County communities.

To achieve those goals, the plan provides 19 recommendations along with potential capital costs for implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

The Library Facilities Plan, Attachment 2, is an ambitious 10-year plan designed to provide modern and dynamic library spaces to Oxford County communities. The plan is intended to be a living document that informs capital planning and budget processes each year.

SIGNATURES

Departmental approval:

Original signed by

Lisa Marie Williams
 CEO / Chief Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 Oxford County Library Facilities Plan Presentation, May 2025
 Attachment 2 Oxford County Library Facilities Plan, May 2025



LIBRARY FACILITIES PLAN

Presentation to Oxford County Library Board
May 20, 2025

PROJECT TIMELINE

Fall 2024

Project Initiation
Research & Trends

Winter / Spring 2025

Library Tours
Facility Partner & Staff Engagement
Needs Assessments
Final Library Facilities Plan



ABOUT OCL

- OCL delivers services through 14 branches in 7 municipalities
- There were over 20,000 active cardholders and 218,000 visits to libraries in 2024
- Currently more than 450,000 physical and non-print resources
- OCL offered more than 2,400 programs and events in 2024 that were attended by 39,000 people

45,904

square feet of library space

=

0.55

square feet per capita

Village Branches

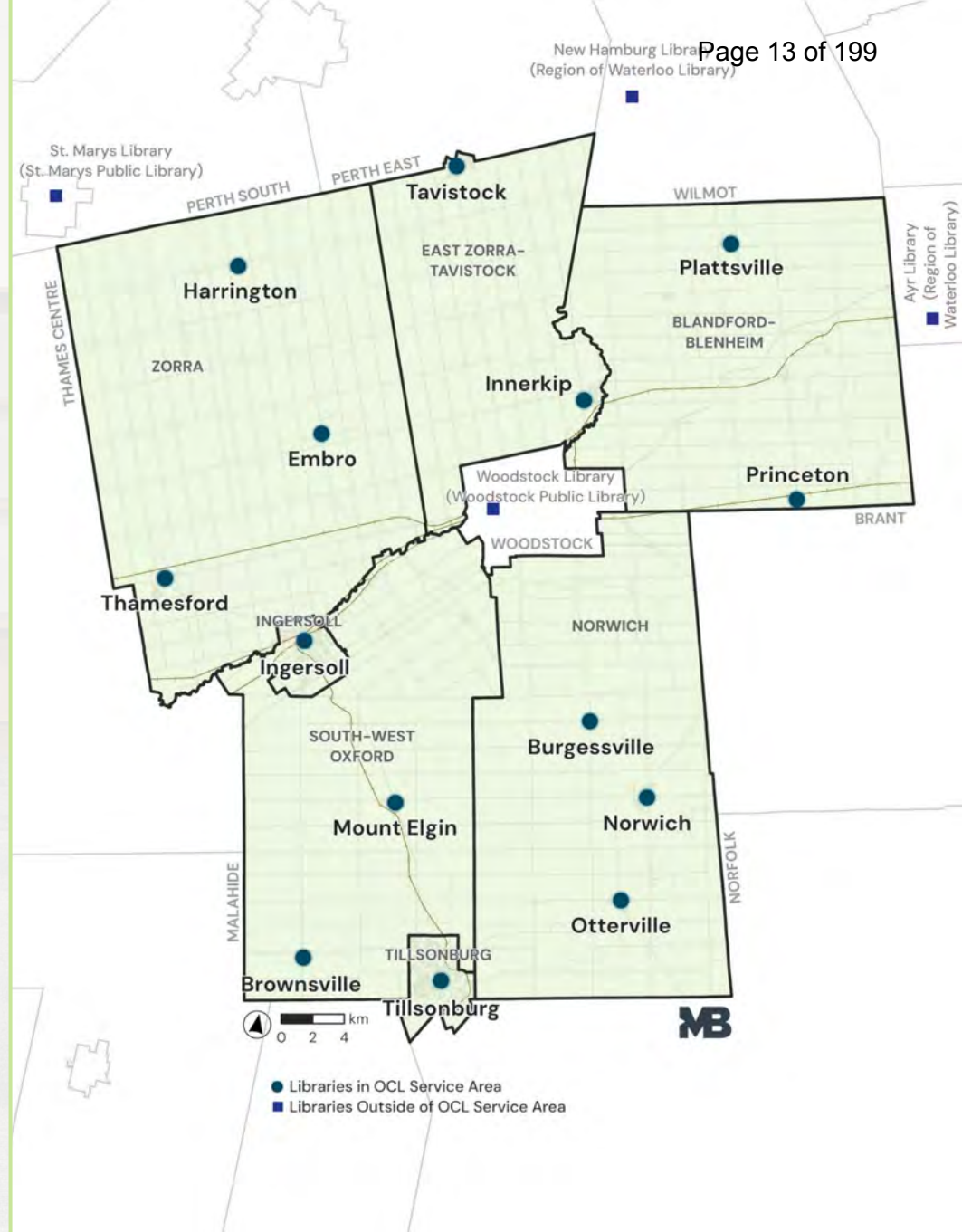
0.10 square feet per capita

Regional Branches

0.20 square feet per capita

Resource Branches

0.25 square feet per capita



CONSULTATION

Library Partner Interviews

Staff Workshops

Community Feedback from the
OCL Strategic Plan (2024)

Common Themes:

- Support for Ox on the Run
- Library offers Valuable Programming
- Accessibility & Access for All
- More Promotion to Attract Users
- Support for Partnerships



TRENDS

Libraries support education, digital literacy, people of all ages, newcomers, marginalized residents, and more.

Libraries offer more than just books

Barrier-free spaces and buildings

Co-locating libraries in community hubs

Offering alternative spaces such as makerspace, use of the outdoors, etc.



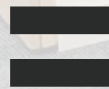
LIBRARY SPACE NEEDS

- OCL's service area population is projected to grow from 83,140 persons to 99,260 by the year 2034
- OCL should target 0.6 square feet per capita to maintain service levels at a similar rate to what is provided today
- Geographic analysis shows most settlements across OCL's service area have access to a branch, with Drumbo and Kintore considered to be gaps

Recommended Target:

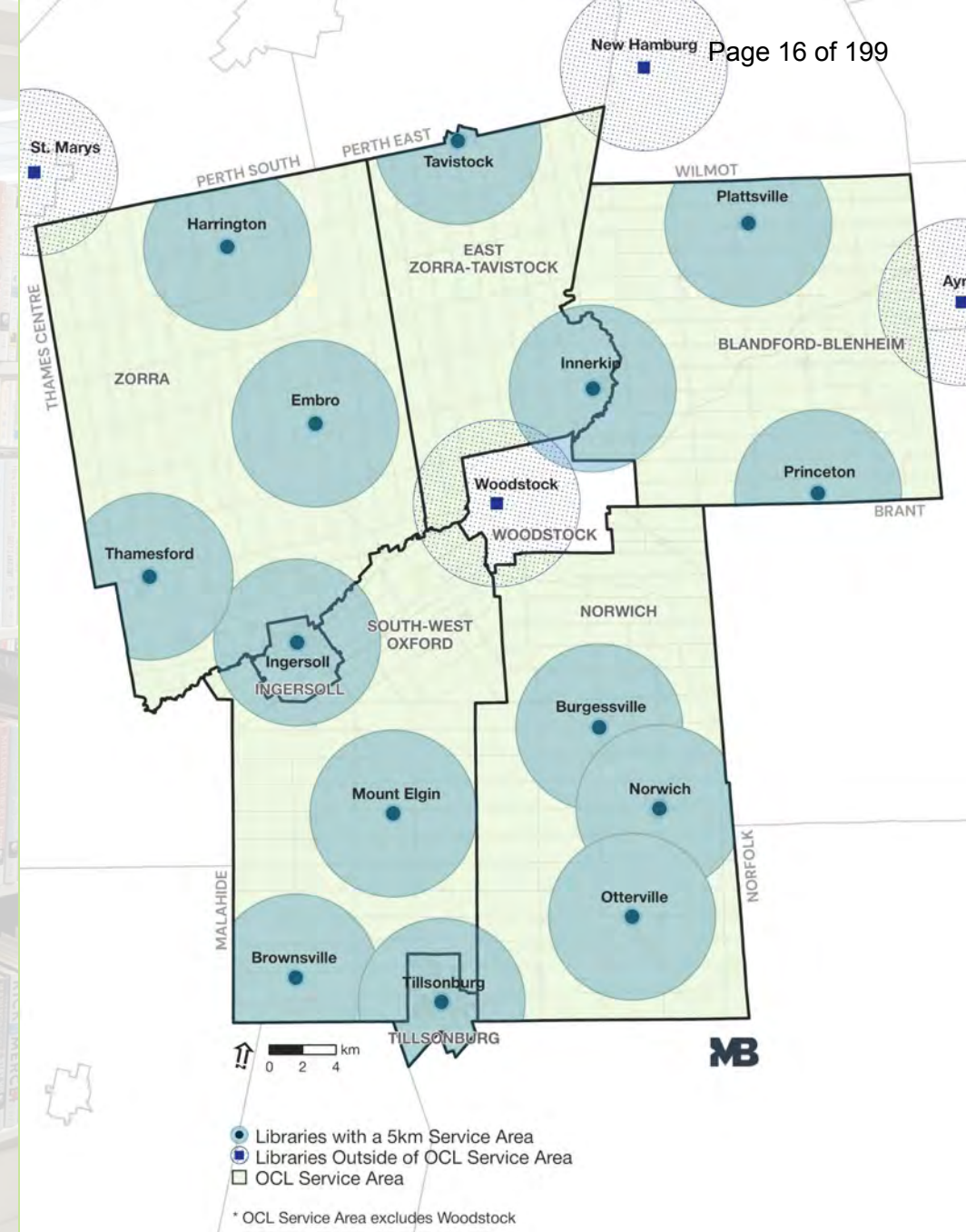
0.6

square feet
per capita



13,652

square feet of
additional library space
needed by 2034



OX ON THE RUN

8,774
visitors

376
stops

2,516
materials circulated

232
Library cards
registered



COUNTY-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

Prepare a Facility Standards Policy that defines a minimum standard for design, level of amenity and maintenance.

Strive to provide future libraries in buildings where complementary uses or programming is possible (e.g., community centres, schools, etc.).

Schedule annual walk-throughs of each branch with Library Staff and facility owners/partners.

Target a space provision at 0.6 square feet per capita, resulting in a need for 13,700 square feet of new library space by 2034.



COUNTY-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

Undertake accessibility audits for all branches that have not recently completed such an exercise.

Strive to engage equity-deserving populations in the design / redesign of libraries to improve inclusivity.

Major capital projects should consult elected officials, municipal decision makers, community partners, and the public where appropriate.



COUNTY-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

Explore opportunities to address storage needs at all OCL locations.

Where libraries are co-located with municipal halls and program rooms, engage the municipalities to discuss ways to increase time available for library programs to serve residents.

Make the Ox on the Run mobile outreach service a permanent fixture to supplement services available in physical branches.



LIBRARY-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Carry out minor updates and improvements to the **Plattsville, Princeton, Harrington and Tavistock Libraries** focused on flooring, furniture and shelving, and painting.

Plattsville Library: Discuss sharing collections and equipment with TVDSB to make more efficient use of the space in the library.

Innerkip Library: Expand the library by a minimum of 1,400 square feet.

Ingersoll Library: Explore ways to make more efficient use of the Town Hall and Library complex with a focus placed on the basement level.



LIBRARY-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Tillsonburg Library: Expand the Library by 5,000 square feet.

Mount Elgin Library: Explore co-location of a 4,000 to 5,000 square foot library as part of a new Township Office.

Burgessville Library: Replace the existing building with a 2,500 square foot library. In the event that a replacement is not supported, consider branch closure and service the settlement through mobile outreach and/or holds lockers.



LIBRARY-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Embro Library: Relocate and replace the existing branch with a 2,500 square foot library as part of a mixed-use development, affordable housing project or childcare centre.

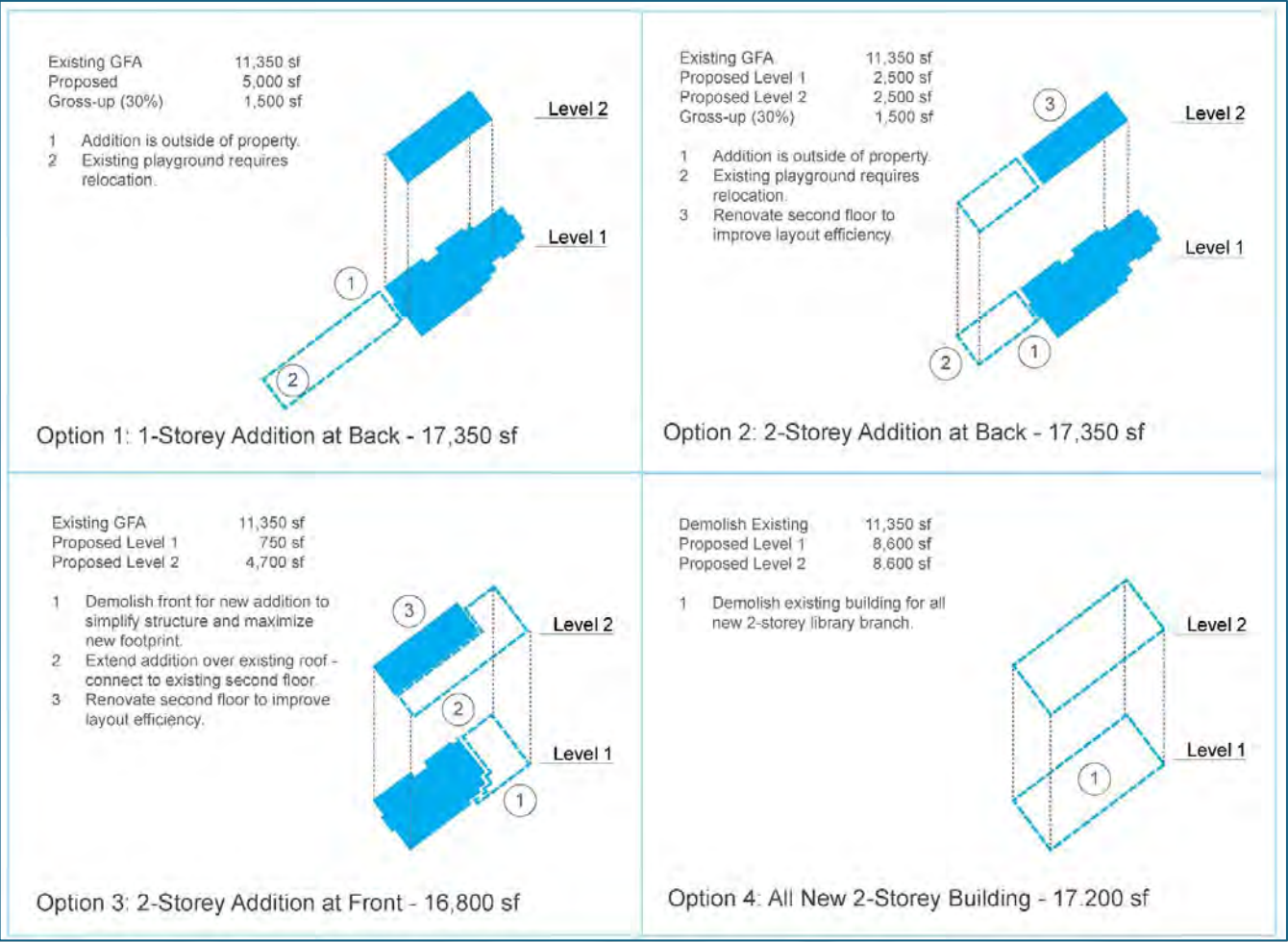
Thamesford Library: Expand the Lions Den (program room) into the lobby along with mobile shelving for the children's area.



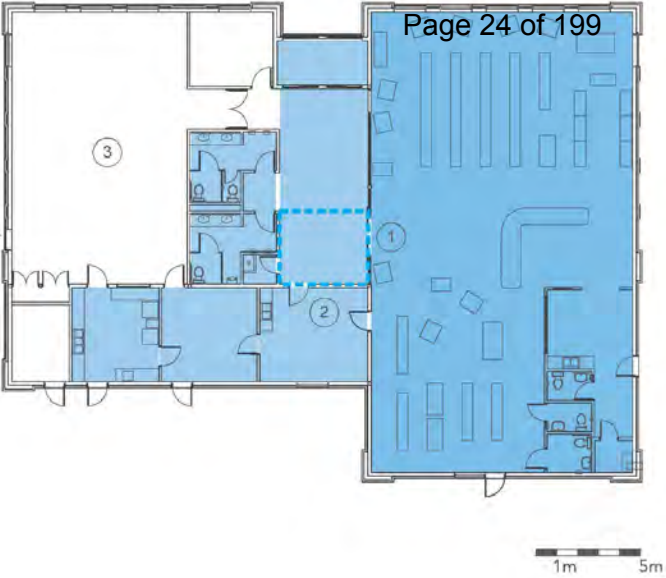
CAPITAL PROJECTS

13,485
minimum proposed
square footage
added

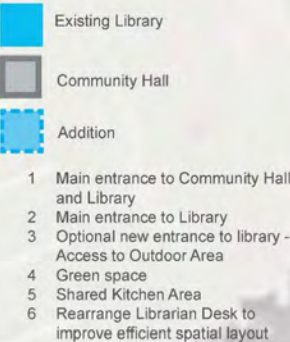
Tillsonburg Library



Thamesford Library



Innerkip Library



CAPITAL ESTIMATE & TIMELINE

\$22M to \$25M
approximate
capital cost

Recommendation	Suggested Timing	Capital Costs
Blandford-Blenheim Princeton Library Interior Updates & Improvements Plattsville Library Interior Updates & Improvements	2025-2028 2029-2031	\$50,000 \$50,000
East Zorra-Tavistock Innerkip Expansion Tavistock Library Interior Updates & Improvements	2029-2031 2031-2034	\$4,250,000 \$50,000
Ingersoll Town Hall / Library Space Audit	2025-2028	\$50,000
Norwich Burgessville Library Replacement	2025-2028	\$2,125,000
South-West Oxford Mount Elgin Library Replacement	T.B.D. with Township	\$4,250,000
Tillsonburg Tillsonburg Library Expansion	2025-2028	\$9,100,000 to \$12,350,000
Zorra Harrington Library Interior Updates & Improvements Thamesford Library Program Room Expansion Embro Library Replacement	2025-2028 2025-2028 T.B.D. with Township	\$50,000 \$72,000 \$2,125,000



THANK YOU!

Library Facilities Plan

May 2025





Oxford County Library

Library Facilities Plan

May 7, 2025

Prepared by:

**MONTEITH
BROWN** 
PLANNING CONSULTANTS

MJMA
ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather in Oxford County libraries is the ancestral lands of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee-ga (Haudenosaunee), Anishinabewak, Attiwonderonk (Neutral) and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This land is shared with us through a treaty relationship governed by the Upper Canada Treaties. As co-inhabitants of Turtle Island we are grateful for the opportunity to meet here and we thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land. May we be careful stewards of the land like those who came before us.

Executive Summary

The Library Facilities Plan (LFP) identifies how much library space is required across Oxford County to the year 2034 along with proposed improvements to existing Oxford County Library (OCL) branches. The LFP is aligned with provincial standards and complements OCL's Service Delivery Model.

OCL serves 83,140 people living in seven municipalities through its 14 libraries. OCL offers collections, programs and other library services that are tailored to the diverse resident base it serves through three tiers of library branches and a mobile service. The system-wide supply of 45,904 square feet translates into 0.55 square feet per capita.

Branch Tier	Total Floor Area (Square Feet)	Square Feet Per Capita
Village Branches	8,444	0.10
Regional Branches	16,900	0.20
Resource Branches	20,560	0.25
Mobile Outreach	--	Not Applicable

The LFP contains 19 Recommendations to meet the needs of Oxford County residents whose population is projected to grow to 99,260 by the year 2034. The LFP's recommendations span the need to:


- create a minimum standard for the design, amenities, and upkeep of OCL branches;
- ensure an adequate and efficient supply of space, amounting to a total floor area of 59,556 square feet; and
- revitalize existing libraries in recognition of their important role in serving and connecting residents living in various communities.

The LFP's Recommendations are summarized in the pages that follow.

- 1 Prepare a Facility Standards Policy that will define a minimum standard for the design, amenities, and upkeep of library branches that is consistent with the Oxford County Library Service Delivery Model. The Policy should articulate roles and responsibilities associated with the delivery of library spaces and services with flexibility to reflect specific needs at varying branches. The Policy should reflect modern principles and best practices regarding governance, communication, fiscal sustainability, capital and operating obligations, performance evaluation and other elements in order to deliver quality library services.
- 2 Strive to provide library branches in buildings where complementary use or programming is possible (e.g., community centres, schools, etc.).
- 3 Schedule annual walk-through inspections of each branch with Library staff and facility owners/partners to discuss issues, opportunities, and challenges.
- 4 Target a space provision rate of 0.6 square feet of library space per capita over the LFP planning period, thereby planning for the addition of approximately 13,700 square feet of new library space to meet a total supply of 59,500 square feet for OCL by the year 2034.

- 
- 5 In line with best practices, applicable legislation, and municipal specific objectives in Oxford County, undertake audits of barrier-free accessibility for all branches that have not completed such an exercise in the past 3 years.
- 6 Strive to engage equity-deserving populations or their representatives in the design or redevelopment of libraries to improve inclusivity of library spaces. Equity-deserving populations include, but are not limited to, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, persons experiencing low-income or homelessness, culturally diverse and racialized populations, and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
- 7 **Future Engagement:** Major capital projects undertaken by OCL – including any new builds, renovations, or adjustments to the number of libraries – should be informed by consultations with elected officials, municipal decision makers, community partners, and the public where appropriate.
- 8 **Programming:** Where libraries are co-located with municipal halls and program rooms, engage the municipalities to discuss ways to increase the amount of time available for library programs to serve local residents.
- 9 **Storage Space:** Explore opportunities to address storage needs at all OCL locations – through shelving, cabinetry, or other means – in relation to functional constraints and costs of each branch.

- 
- The background image shows a library interior. In the foreground, there is a round, light-colored wooden table with a yellow plastic chair. On the table, there is a clear plastic storage bin with colorful compartments and a small electronic device. In the background, there are bookshelves filled with books and a sign that says "These books will keep you on your toes!".
- 10 Ox on the Run:** Make the Ox on the Run mobile outreach service a permanent fixture in Oxford County Library's service delivery model to supplement services available in physical branches.
 - 11 Minor Updates & Improvements:** Carry out interior updates and improvements to the Plattsville, Princeton, Harrington and Tavistock Libraries focused on elements such as flooring, furniture and shelving, and painting as appropriate.
 - 12 Plattsville Library:** Explore the feasibility of integrating collections and physical space within the Plattsville Library in consultation with the Thames Valley District School Board with a view to maximizing the use of space for the library and the school.
 - 13 Innerkip Library:** Expand the Innerkip Library by a minimum of 1,400 square feet in order to improve barrier-free accessibility, increase programming capacity, and add areas for study, collaboration and storage.
 - 14 Ingersoll Library:** In consultation with the Town of Ingersoll, explore ways to make more efficient use of the entire Town Hall and Library complex with a particular focus placed on the basement level. A space audit could determine how to redistribute administrative activities of both parties in order to maximize and make the most efficient use of space for the purposes of both OCL and municipal services.

- 
- 15 **Burgessville Library:** Replace the existing building with a 2,500 square foot library (minimum) that meets barrier-free accessibility standards and allows for the full range of services delivered by a Village Branch. In the event that a replacement is not supported, consider the closure of the Burgessville Library and service the settlement through alternative means such as mobile outreach and/or holds lockers.
- 16 **Mount Elgin Library:** Engage the Township of South-West Oxford in their discussions for a new Municipal Office and explore the willingness to co-locate a 4,000 to 5,000 square foot Village Branch to replace the existing Mount Elgin Library.
- 17 **Tillsonburg Library:** Expand the Tillsonburg Library by a minimum of 5,000 square feet in order to alleviate the high degree of pressures being experienced as a result of population growth and socio-demographic diversification in the Town and surrounding areas.
- 18 **Embro Library:** Relocate and replace the existing branch with a 2,500 square foot library (minimum) that meets barrier-free accessibility standards and allows for the full range of services delivered by a Village Branch. If possible, integrating a new library as part of a mixed-use development, affordable housing project or community hub such as a childcare centre is preferred.
- 19 **Thamesford Library:** Explore the feasibility of expanding the Lions Den (program room) into the lobby along with purchasing mobile shelving for the children's area in order to accommodate the growing community's needs for programming.

Summary of Major LFP Capital Items

The LFP's Recommendations carry a preliminary capital estimate of \$22.1 million to \$25.4 million, (2025 dollars excluding land costs and escalations) that is primarily attributed to the improvement of existing libraries and the development of recommended libraries in Oxford County.

Suggested Timing of Major LFP Capital Items

Recommendation	Suggested Timing
Blandford-Blenheim	
Princeton Library Interior Updates & Improvements	2025-2028
Plattsville Library Interior Updates & Improvements	2029-2031
East Zorra-Tavistock	
Innerkip Expansion	2029-2031
Tavistock Library Interior Updates & Improvements	2031-2034
Ingersoll	
Town Hall / Library Space Audit	2025-2028
Norwich	
Burgessville Library Replacement	2025-2028
South-West Oxford	
Mount Elgin Library Replacement	T.B.D. with Township
Tillsonburg	
Tillsonburg Library Expansion	2025-2028
Zorra	
Harrington Library Interior Updates & Improvements	2025-2028
Thamesford Library Program Room Expansion	2025-2028
Embro Library Replacement	T.B.D. with Township

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
1.1 Public Libraries are Essential to Success	2
1.2 Purpose & Methodology of the Plan	3
About Oxford County Library	5
2.1 OCL's Organization.....	6
2.2 Oxford County Library Strategic Plan	7
2.3 OCL Branches	8
2.4 Ox on the Run	11
2.5 Library Branch Ownership & Configuration	12
2.6 Service Tiers & Branch Network	13
2.7 Library Funding	14
2.8 Library Use Indicators	15
2.9 Service Area Population.....	25
Trends.....	28
3.1 A Place for All	29
3.2 Partnerships and Community Hubs	38
3.3 Other Forms of Libraries	38
3.4 Emerging Services, Facilities and Programs.....	39
3.5 Environmentally Resilient Designs	40
3.6 The Library of Things	41
3.7 Outdoor Spaces	41
Consultations	42
4.1 Feedback from Library Partners	43
4.2 OCL Staff Workshops	44
4.3 Feedback from the Community	46
Library Organizational Model	47
5.1 Organizational Structure	48
5.2 Responsibilities of OCL & Partners	49
5.3 Approaches in Other Library Systems	51
5.4 Benefits & Challenges of the Current Approach	53
5.5 Recommendations	54

County-Wide Space Analysis..... 55

- 6.1 Per Capita Space Analysis56
- 6.2 Oxford County Space Analysis58
- 6.3 Spatial Analysis.....60
- 6.4 Recommendations – County-Wide.....62

Library Space Needs by Municipality 63

- 7.1 Blandford-Blenheim64
- 7.2 East Zorra-Tavistock70
- 7.3 Ingersoll.....78
- 7.4 Norwich.....82
- 7.5 South-West Oxford.....91
- 7.6 Tillsonburg.....97
- 7.7 Zorra.....103
- 7.8 Ox on the Run112
- 7.9 Recommendations114

Implementation Plan.....116

- 8.1 Summary of the Space Development Strategy.....117
- 8.2 Establishing Capital Budgets & Timelines.....118
- 8.3 Monitoring & Reviewing the LFP.....121

List of Figures

Figure 1: Distribution of Physical Locations and Library Space by Municipality.....	8
Figure 2: Yearly Visits by Branch, 2024	16
Figure 3: Active Cardholders by Municipality.....	17
Figure 4: Active Cardholders as a Percentage of Municipal Population, 2024	18
Figure 5: New Cardholders by Branch, 2024.....	18
Figure 6: Physical Circulation by Library, 2024.....	21
Figure 7: Hours of Operation per Branch, 2024.....	22
Figure 8: Programs / Events and Attendance (2019 – 2024).....	23
Figure 9: Number of Programs / Events by Library, 2024	24
Figure 10: Attendance of Programs / Events by Library, 2024.....	24
Figure 11: Population Age Structure in Oxford County, 2021.....	30
Figure 12: Median Age by Municipality, 2021.....	30
Figure 13: Population by Age Groups, Oxford County, 2021	31
Figure 14: Circulation by Branch (digital), 2023 & 2024	40
Figure 15: Oxford County Library Organizational Structure, 2025.....	48
Figure 16: Rate of Provision across Oxford County, 2024.....	57
Figure 17: Plattsville Library.....	67
Figure 18: Princeton Library.....	69
Figure 19: Innerkip Library.....	74
Figure 20: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Innerkip Library.....	75
Figure 21: Tavistock Library.....	77
Figure 22: Ingersoll Library.....	81
Figure 23: Burgessville Library.....	86
Figure 24: Norwich Library	88
Figure 25: Otterville Library	90
Figure 26: Brownsville Library.....	94
Figure 27: Mount Elgin Library	96
Figure 28: Tillsonburg Library.....	101
Figure 29: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Tillsonburg Library	102
Figure 30: Embro Library	106
Figure 31: Harrington Library.....	108
Figure 32: Thamesford Library.....	110
Figure 33: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Thamesford Library.....	111
Figure 34: Ox on the Run Selected Performance Indicators, 2023–2024.....	112
Figure 35: Ox on the Run – Total Visitors, Stops. Circulation & Registered Library Cards.....	113

List of Tables

Table 1: Oxford County Library Branches & Floor Area by Municipality	8
Table 2: Oxford County Branch Sizes	10
Table 3: Library Building Ownership & Lease Structure	12
Table 4: Oxford County Library Service Tiers	13
Table 5: Collection Size per Branch	19
Table 6: Hours of Operation in Relation to Service Guidelines	22
Table 7: Historical, Estimated & Forecasted Population	26
Table 8: Historical & Forecasted Population, 2016 – 2034	26
Table 9: Oxford County Age Groups, 2011, 2016 & 2021	31
Table 10: Median Household Income & LIM-AT, 2021	32
Table 11: Post Secondary Educational Attainment, 2021	33
Table 12: Immigration, 2021	35
Table 13: Per Capita Space in Comparator Library Systems, 2023	57
Table 14: System-Wide Projection of Library Space Needs, 2024 – 2034	58
Table 15: Library Space Projection by Municipality, 2034	59
Table 16: Preliminary Capital Construction Costs	118
Table 17: Summary of Major LFP Capital Items	120

List of Maps

Map 1: Oxford County Library Branch Locations	9
Map 2: Population by Census Dissemination Area, 2021	27
Map 3: Marginalization Index (Material Resources)	37
Map 4: Geographic Distribution of OCL Branches	61
Map 5: Distribution of Libraries, Blandford-Blenheim	65
Map 6: Distribution of Libraries, East Zorra-Tavistock	71
Map 7: Distribution of Libraries, Ingersoll	79
Map 8: Distribution of Libraries, Norwich	83
Map 9: Distribution of Libraries, South-West Oxford	92
Map 10: Distribution of Libraries, Tillsonburg	98
Map 11: Distribution of Libraries, Zorra	104

List of Acronyms Used

AODA	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
ARUPLO	Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario
LFP	Library Facilities Plan
OCL	Oxford County Library
OPL	Ontario Public Libraries
TVDSB	Thames Valley District School Board

Standard Limitations

This Library Facilities Plan was prepared by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. (“Monteith Brown”) and MJMA Architecture & Design (“MJMA”) for Oxford County Library. This report is based on information provided to Monteith Brown and MJMA that has not been independently verified.

The disclosure of any information contained in this report is the sole responsibility of Oxford County Library. The material in this report and all information relating to this Plan reflects Monteith Brown and MJMA’s judgement in light of the information available to us at the time of preparation. Any use which a third party makes of this Library Facilities Plan, or any reliance on or decisions to be made based on it, are the responsibility of such third parties. Monteith Brown and MJMA accept no responsibility for damages, if any, suffered by a third party as a result of decisions made or actions based on this report.

Section 1.0 Introduction



Section 1.0

Introduction

Oxford County Library (“OCL”) delivers its services through 14 locations and mobile outreach (Ox on the Run) that collectively serve more than 83,000 people spread across a vast geographic area in the following seven municipalities:

- Town of Ingersoll – 1 branch
- Town of Tillsonburg – 1 branch
- Township of Blandford-Blenheim – 2 branches
- Township of East Zorra-Tavistock – 2 branches
- Township of Norwich – 3 branches
- Township of South-West Oxford – 2 branches
- Township of Zorra – 3 branches

OCL operates as a ‘County Library system’ under the provincial *Public Libraries Act*. This section of the Library Facilities Plan (“LFP”) outlines the purpose, methodology, and planning context in which the plan was prepared.

1.1 Public Libraries are Essential to Success

Modern libraries are a place for learning, staying true to their roots while taking a much different form than in the past. Today’s public library empowers people through knowledge while remaining a hub for people to come together to exchange ideas, nurture creativity and incubate innovation. Canada’s public library systems have demonstrated remarkable resiliency over time, while constantly evolving with advances in technologies such as integration of internet based activities, development of portable technologies (Wi-Fi, eBooks, tablets, etc.) results in libraries helping people access and navigate technology in their personal lives.

Public libraries are fundamental to the success of Oxford County’s urban and rural communities.

OCL has a deep understanding of how its public libraries serve the different needs of people living across Oxford County’s urban and rural communities. OCL works with municipal, school board and private partners to deliver services in a multitude of formats ranging from stand-alone libraries, libraries with community centres / halls, and shared school libraries. This resource sharing approach allows for a well distributed and fiscally-efficient network of library services across the County’s large geographic territory and highly dispersed population.

1.2 Purpose & Methodology of the Plan

The LFP provides OCL and its municipal partners with an understanding of how much library space is required to meet the needs of the community to the year 2034. In addition to the amount of space, the LFP examines the type of space needed, a review of the organizational model that supports library facilities shared with municipalities, and provides future direction for existing libraries.

OCL initiated the LFP in Fall 2024 with the assistance of Monteith Brown Planning Consultants and MJMA Architecture & Design. The LFP is built upon background research, consultation with library staff and partners, and a scan of best practices. Space assessments are carried out in consideration of generally accepted standards and data published by provincial library bodies such as Ontario Public Libraries Monitoring & Accreditation Council and the Administrators of Rural-Urban Public Libraries of Ontario (ARUPLO) in conjunction with OCL's historic levels of service and past practices. Floor areas and building condition assessments of selected library branches were supplied by building owners and OCL which are approximate and should be confirmed through future studies. It bears noting that the size of each branch reflects Net Floor Area which means that OCL's total supply of space stated herein may be understated since certain space allocated to certain structural and mechanical components is not reflected in the supply.

The use of several inputs in the planning process allows the LFP to consider provincial and national trends and best practices for providing library space while reflecting the unique characteristics and priorities of Oxford County residents. The LFP's recommendations considered research, current and past consultations, and assessment methodologies.

County Population Forecast

The Oxford County Municipal Comprehensive Review Forecasts (2024) records the population within OCL's service area at 83,140 persons.¹ Should the County's population growth forecast be updated within the planning period of this LFP, **OCL should revisit recommendations contained herein** to ensure they remain relevant or whether adjustments are required.

¹ Email correspondence from County of Oxford dated November 27, 2024 based on County of Oxford Staff Report CP-2024-323 to County Council dated November 13, 2024. Note: excludes population of the City of Woodstock which operates its library system separately from Oxford County.

Exclusions

The LFP is focused on capital-related items pertaining to the OCL's built infrastructure. The scope of work is largely related to defining the amount and types of library space required and how to provide it. The LFP excludes organizational structure or operational assessments, staffing, organizational reviews, defining hours of operation, or preparing policies and practices to guide the delivery of library services.

The LFP did not involve public consultation or engagement given that a comprehensive outreach and engagement was undertaken in support of OCL's 2024 Strategic Plan. The LFP has considered this recent feedback and supplemented it with targeted consultations with municipal officials and feedback from OCL's facility partners. Implementation of LFP recommendations after this study's completion may re-engage the general public and community stakeholders on topic-specific matters in the future.

Section 2.0 About Oxford County Library



Section 2.0

About Oxford County Library

2.1 OCL's Organization

Public libraries in Ontario operate under the management and control of either a Public, Union, or County Library Board as outlined in the *Public Libraries Act*. OCL operates as a County Library, formed under Section 7 of the *Public Libraries Act*, stating:

“Where resolutions of the councils of at least two-thirds of the municipalities forming part of a county for municipal purposes request that the county establish a county library, the council of the county may by by-law establish a county library for those municipalities.”

~ Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.44, s. 7 (1).

OCL is governed by a library board consisting of appointed citizens and elected officials.



Innerkip Library Children's Area

2.2 Oxford County Library Strategic Plan

OCL's Strategic Plan articulates its mission, vision, values, and goals that guide decision-making of the Library Board and OCL staff between the years 2024 and 2028.



2.3 OCL Branches

OCL's 14 library branches offer 45,904 square feet of space in total that are distributed as shown in Map 1. There are also four libraries operated by adjacent public library systems that are situated within 5 kilometres of OCL's service boundary, including the City of Woodstock who operates its own public library independent of the County system.

The two urban centres of Ingersoll and Tillsonburg are served by one library each while the rural municipalities have between two and three libraries due to their larger geographic size (Table 1). Tillsonburg and Ingersoll contain 44% of library space (Figure 1) which is in line with their 42% share of the County's overall population.

14 library branches offer 45,904 square feet of space.

This translates into 0.55 square feet per capita.

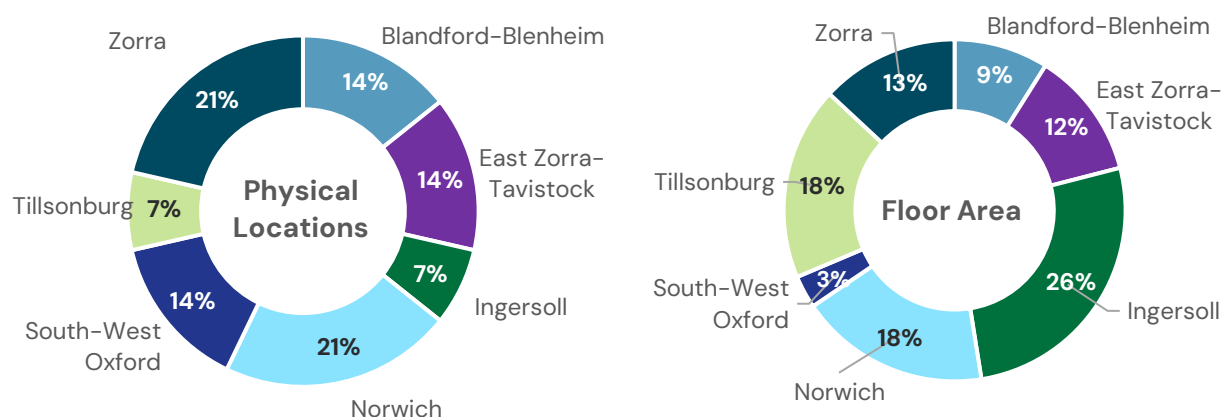
Table 1: Oxford County Library Branches & Floor Area by Municipality

Municipality	Population (2024)	Land Area	Number of Libraries	Total Floor Area
Blandford-Blenheim	8,200	382 km ²	2	4,100 ft ²
East Zorra-Tavistock	8,860	242 km ²	2	5,538 ft ²
Ingersoll	14,960	13 km ²	1	12,160 ft ²
Norwich	12,560	424 km ²	3	8,280 ft ²
South-West Oxford	8,420	370 km ²	2	1,426 ft ²
Tillsonburg	20,360	22 km ²	1	8,400 ft ²
Zorra	9,780	529 km ²	3	6,000 ft ²
	83,140	1,982 km²	14	45,904 ft²

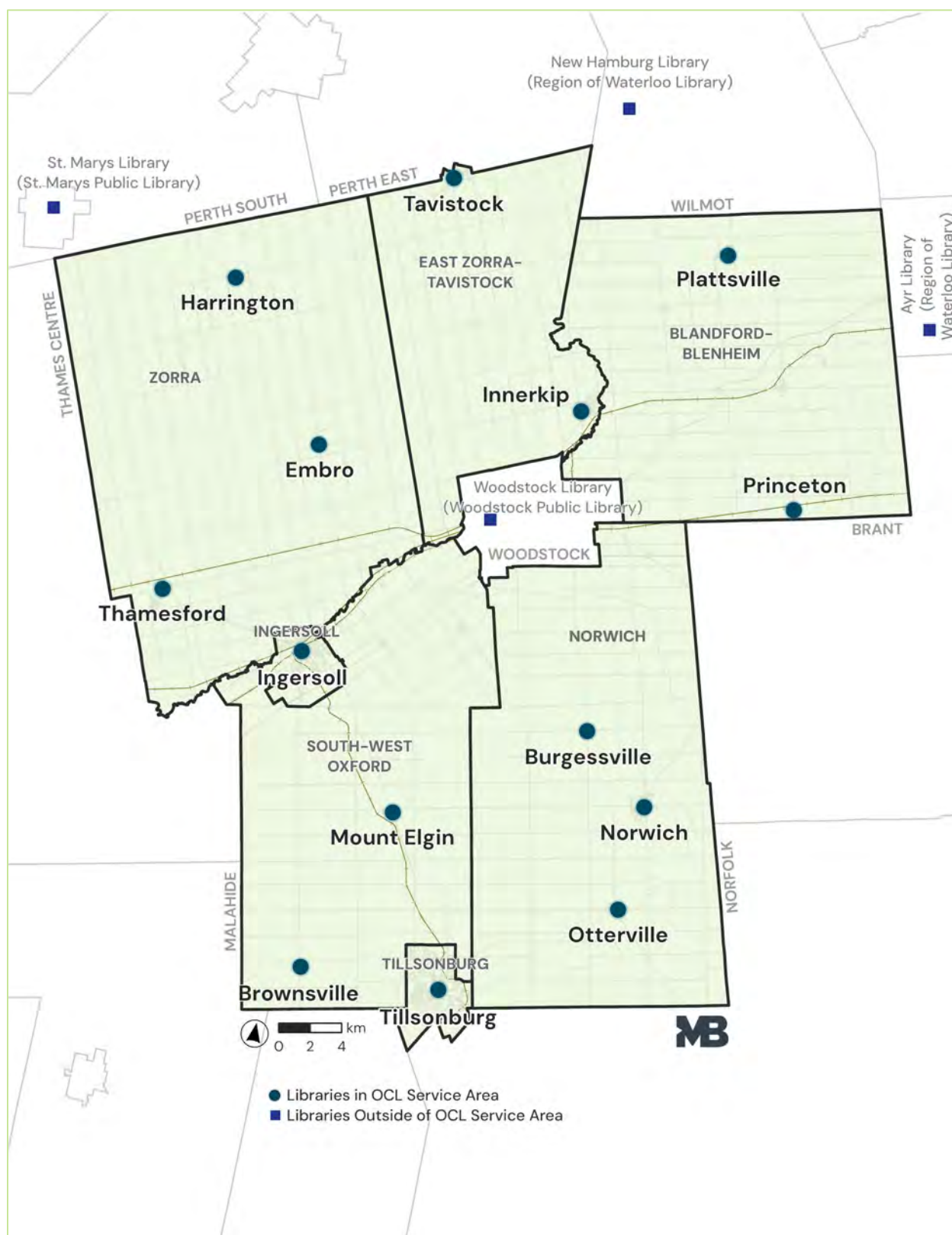
Notes: Net Floor Area is stated. Excludes City of Woodstock who operate separately from OCL.

Source: County of Oxford, 2024; Land area is rounded from Statistics Canada Census data, 2021.

Figure 1: Distribution of Physical Locations and Library Space by Municipality



Map 1: Oxford County Library Branch Locations



Note: Libraries outside of the OCL system are within 5km of OCL's service area.

Table 2: Oxford County Branch Sizes

Municipality	Branch	Address	Branch Size
Blandford-Blenheim	Plattsville Princeton	112 Mill Street East	3,000
		25 Main Street	1,100
		Sub-Total: Blandford-Blenheim	4,100 ft ²
East Zorra-Tavistock	Innerkip Tavistock	695566 17th Line	1,038
		40 Woodstock Street South	4,500
		Sub-Total: East Zorra-Tavistock	5,538 ft ²
Ingersoll	Ingersoll	130 Oxford Street	12,160 ft ²
		Sub-Total: Ingersoll	12,160 ft ²
Norwich	Burgessville Norwich Otterville	604 Main Street South	800 ft ²
		10 Tidey Street	5,400 ft ²
		207 Main Street West	2,080 ft ²
		Sub-Total: Norwich	8,280 ft ²
South-West Oxford	Brownsville Mount Elgin	292240 Culloden Road	750 ft ²
		333204 Plank Line	676 ft ²
		Sub-Total: South-West Oxford	1,426 ft ²
Tillsonburg	Tillsonburg	2 Library Lane	8,400 ft ²
		Sub-Total: Tillsonburg	8,400 ft ²
Zorra	Embro Harrington Thamesford	135 Huron Street	800 ft ²
		539 Victoria Street	1,200 ft ²
		165 Dundas Street	4,000 ft ²
		Sub-Total: Zorra	6,000 ft ²
		OCL Total	45,904 ft ²

Note: Branch sizes stated as Net Floor Area

2.4 Ox on the Run

Ox on the Run is a mobile library outreach service initiated as a two-year pilot project in 2023. Using a repurposed ambulance to deliver year-round services in public spaces, Ox on the Run makes scheduled stops in municipalities across Oxford County including settlements that do not have a physical library branch. Mobile library services are often coordinated with area municipalities to make use of community centres or halls, parks, affordable housing and retirement communities, and local businesses.

Ox on the Run is closely tied to the Future Oxford's Reducing Poverty Together Strategy 2022–2024, that aimed to provide access to services, information, education, and food by:

- Year-round access to library programs, collections, technology, and services to underserved Oxford County communities;
- Connect county residents with information on county initiatives and services;
- Increase the number of active library cardholders;
- Available resources including eBooks / Audiobooks, eLearning platforms, eTutoring, and Maker Kits;
- Access to food, such as, snacks, OCL's seed and spice library, and kitchen equipment.



Source: Oxford County, 2023

2.5 Library Branch Ownership & Configuration

Library services are delivered out of buildings that are the property of the County of Oxford, lower-tier municipalities, private property owners, and the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB). OCL operates its branches using three configurations:

- Stand-alone libraires
- Integrated libraries with community centres / halls
- Shared school libraries

Shared spaces require coordination and communication between partners to support the asset management and general maintenance of library buildings. OCL has 10 different partners it works with to deliver library services between seven lower-tier municipalities, the TVDSB, and two private property/building owners. Working with this many partners adds complexity to coordination and communication. Libraries can look very different due to the range of partners, branch sizes, branch location (urban or rural), etc., leading to differences in library services delivered to the user. Having multiple property owners results in an inconsistent library user experience across the county-wide library system. The branch locations ownerships are outlined below.

Table 3: Library Building Ownership & Lease Structure

County-Owned	Norwich Tillsonburg	
Shared Ownership Agreement with Municipality	Ingersoll Thamesford	
Shared Ownership Agreement with TVDSB	Plattsville	
Leased From Municipality	Brownsville Burgessville Embrow Harrington	Innerkip Mount Elgin Princeton
Leased From Private Owner	Otterville Tavistock	

2.6 Service Tiers & Branch Network

OCL's Service Delivery Model defines five tiers of library service with the aim of providing a consistent experience to residents living across the County. These tiers were developed in consideration of ARUPLO Guidelines to ensure alignment with provincial library sector and assure consistency with evidence-based methodologies.

Three of the tiers pertain to physical branch locations while the other two tiers include mobile outreach (Ox on the Run) and online/digital services. These tiers are summarized below.

Table 4: Oxford County Library Service Tiers

	Description	Service Catchment	Optimal Size
Mobile Outreach Tier 1 Ox on the Run	Provides collections and services to underserved and vulnerable populations throughout the County and at community events.	Entire OCL Service Area	Not applicable
Village Branches Tier 2 Brownsville Innerkip Burgessville Mount Elgin Embro Otterville Harrington Princeton	Provide collections and services which meet many of the immediate needs of the local community.	3,000 residents and those living within a 10–15 minute drive	2,500 to 5,000 square feet
Regional Branches Tier 3 Norwich Tavistock Plattsville Thamesford	Provide a wider range of collections, technology, programs and services, as well as community meeting spaces to meet the needs of the immediate community, as well as the larger region.	7,000 residents and those living within a 20–25 minute drive	5,000 to 10,000 square feet
Resource Branches Tier 4 Ingersoll Tillsonburg	Provide comprehensive and specialized collections, services and technologies for the immediate community and the entirety of Oxford County.	20,000 residents and those living within a 30–35 minute drive	10,000 to 35,000 square feet
Online & Digital Channels Tier 5	Provides a full range of informational and recreational collections and services available 24/7.	Oxford County and anywhere with internet access	Not applicable

Source: Oxford County Service Delivery Review, 2023

2.7 Library Funding

County Council approved 2025 budget for OCL is \$5.7 million, which is an increase of approximately \$520,000 (10%) over the 2024 budget.² Library system funding is set out under the authority of the *Public Libraries Act*, which indicates that there is an agreement between county and municipal governments that dictate the terms of building and operating libraries. The increase in levy since 2024 will be collected from property owners within the area municipalities that participate in the County library system (excluding Woodstock). The increase supports staff salaries and benefits, development charges exemptions, interdepartmental charges (IT and facilities), and extension of Ox on the Run.

Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.44

- 7 (4) An agreement under subsection (3) shall specify what proportion of the cost of the establishment, operation and maintenance of the county library shall be paid by the county and the single-tier municipality, respectively.
- 26 (1) The amount estimated by a county library board to meet its operating costs, as approved by the council of a county, shall be included in the amounts to be provided by the county under clause 289 (1) (d) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.
- 26 (1.1) The amount mentioned in subsection (1) shall form part of the general upper-tier levy of the county, unless not all of the municipalities forming part of the county for municipal purposes participate in the county library, in which case the amount shall form part of a special upper-tier levy of the county that shall be levied in accordance with section 311 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* on all the assessment rateable for upper-tier purposes in the municipalities forming part of the county for municipal purposes and that participate in the county library system.

² 2025 Oxford County Library Business Plan and Budget, November 13, 2024

2.8 Library Use Indicators

Visits to Oxford County Library Branches

There were 218,269 in-person visits to OCL branches in 2024, which is 7% higher than 2023 as operations and public levels of comfort continued to normalize following the COVID-19 pandemic. The five most visited branches in 2024 were:



The Tillsonburg and Ingersoll Libraries collectively generated nearly two out of every three visits to an OCL branch. The number of in-person visits (Figure 2) are typically based on three factors: the size of the catchment area population, the size of the library space, and hours open. Figure 2 also illustrates the number of visits per square foot to provide an added measure of intensity being placed on each library branch. Tillsonburg has the highest rate in OCL system with 9.9 visits per square foot. Burgessville follows at 5.8 visits per square foot, indicative of the library's small floor area at just 800 square feet.

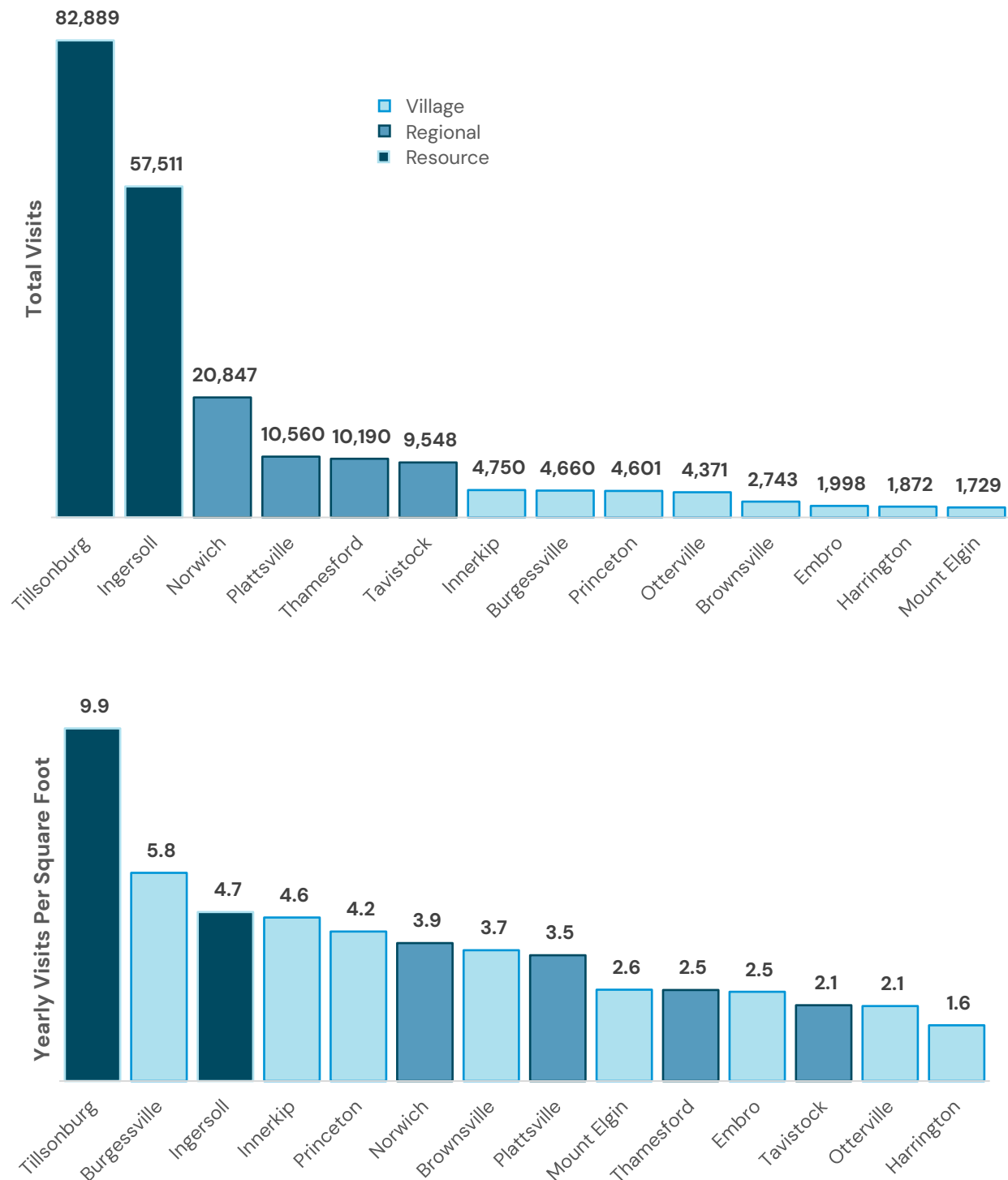


Norwich Library Children's Area



Tillsonburg Library Children's Area

Figure 2: Yearly Visits by Branch, 2024



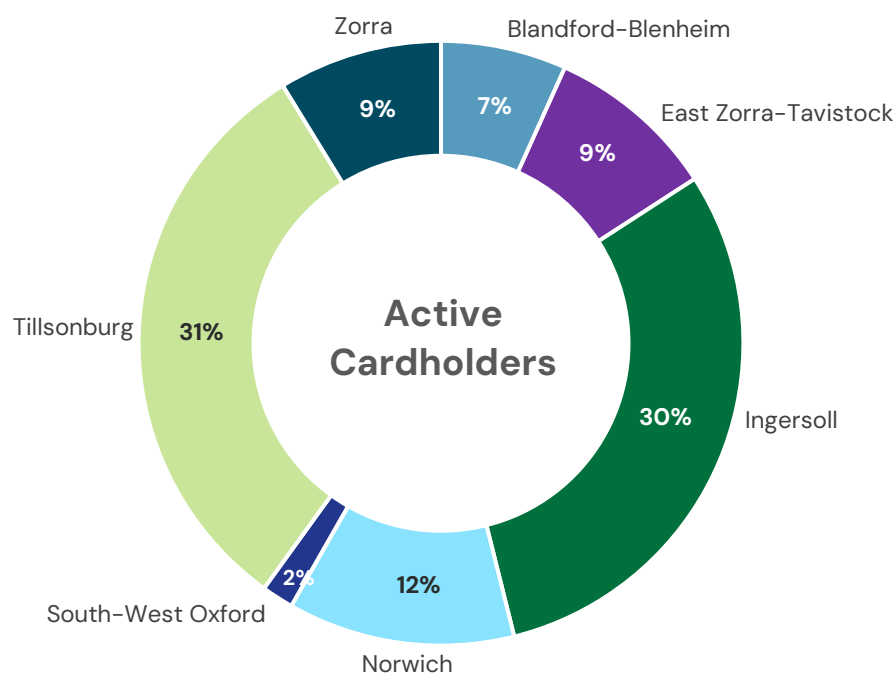
Source: Oxford County Library, 2024

Active Cardholders

OCL had 20,454 active cardholders³ in 2024, of whom 61% were residents of Ingersoll and Tillsonburg. In terms of OCL being able to reach the population it serves,⁴ Figure 3 illustrates where OCL's active cardholders live while Figure 4 shows cardholders as percentage of each municipality's total population.

25%
of people living
within the OCL
service area are
active cardholders

Figure 3: Active Cardholders by Municipality, 2024



Source: Oxford County Library, 2024

The number of active cardholders and their market penetration is a function of many factors including the number of quality library facilities in their community, type of collections available, library services offered, hours of operation, and more. In 2024, there were 3,167 new cardholders representing a 14% increase from 2022. The Ingersoll and Tillsonburg branches attracted the majority of new cardholders, corresponding with the degree of population growth being experienced by Oxford County's urban municipalities.

³ OCL defines active cardholders in accordance with Provincial terminology and is reflective of a cardholder borrowing an item over the last 12 month period.

⁴ OCL service area are residents residing in Oxford County, excluding the City of Woodstock.

Figure 4: Active Cardholders as a Percentage of Municipal Population, 2024

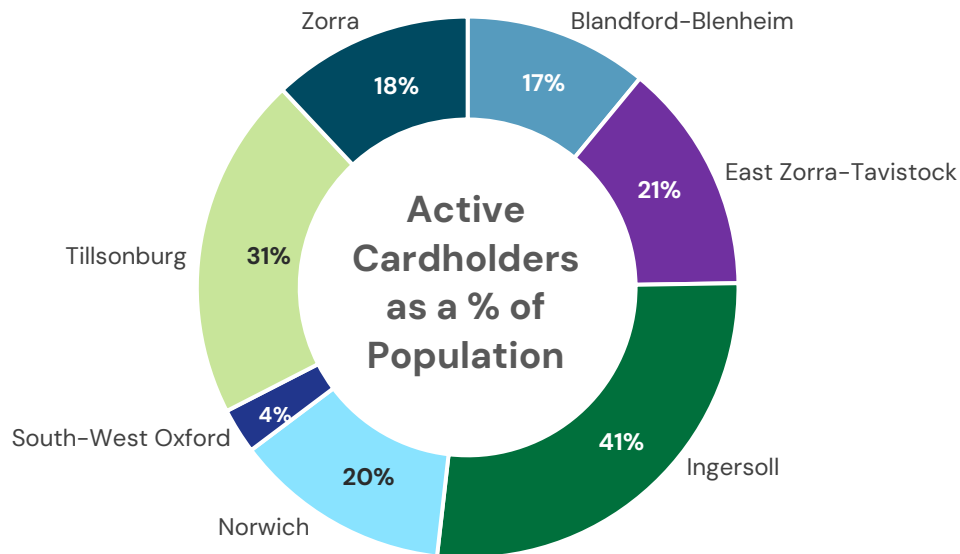
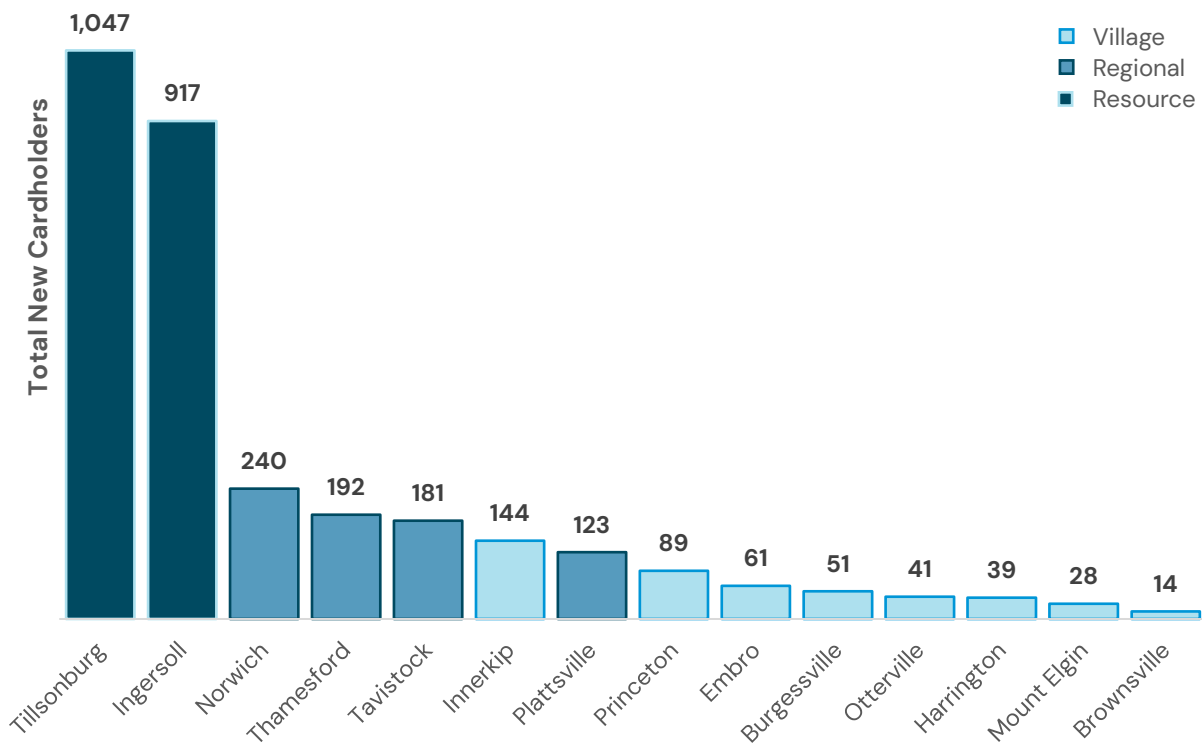


Figure 5: New Cardholders by Branch, 2024



Source: Oxford County Library, 2024

Collections & Circulation

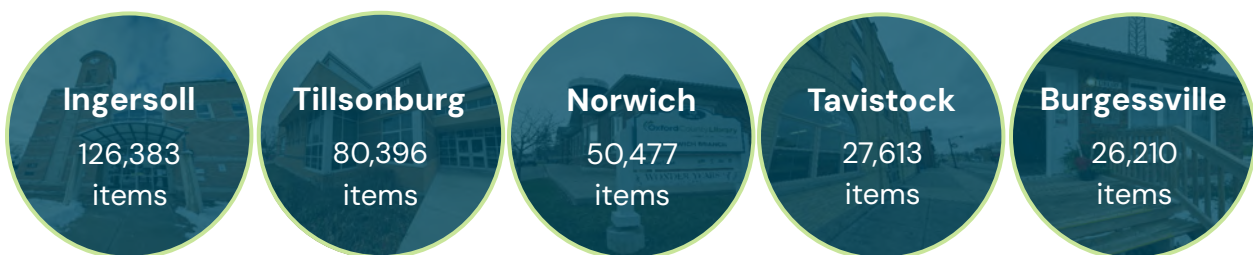
OCL has over 130,000 items in its collection and provides access to over 450,000 items when including non-print resources. Table 5 is an overview of the OCL's collection size per branch compared to its Service Guidelines that specify the number of items in each classification as follows:

- Resource Branch – 24,000 to 50,000 items
- Regional Branch – 12,000 to 24,000 items
- Village Branch – 6,000 to 12,000 items

Table 5: Collection Size per Branch

OCL Branch	Collection Size (items)	Meets Service Guidelines
Ingersoll	27,382	✓
Tillsonburg	24,477	✓
Norwich	12,385	✓
Plattsville	8,870	✗
Tavistock	10,079	✗
Thamesford	9,913	✗
Brownsville	3,270	✗
Burgessville	7,217	✓
Embro	3,615	✗
Harrington	2,384	✗
Innerkip	6,245	✓
Mount Elgin	3,838	✗
Otterville	7,262	✓
Princeton	5,879	✗

Circulation can provide indication of how much space is required to house library collections at the system-wide level and within each branch. Higher circulation rates may suggest higher levels of demand for physical items. OCL's top circulating branches in 2024 were:



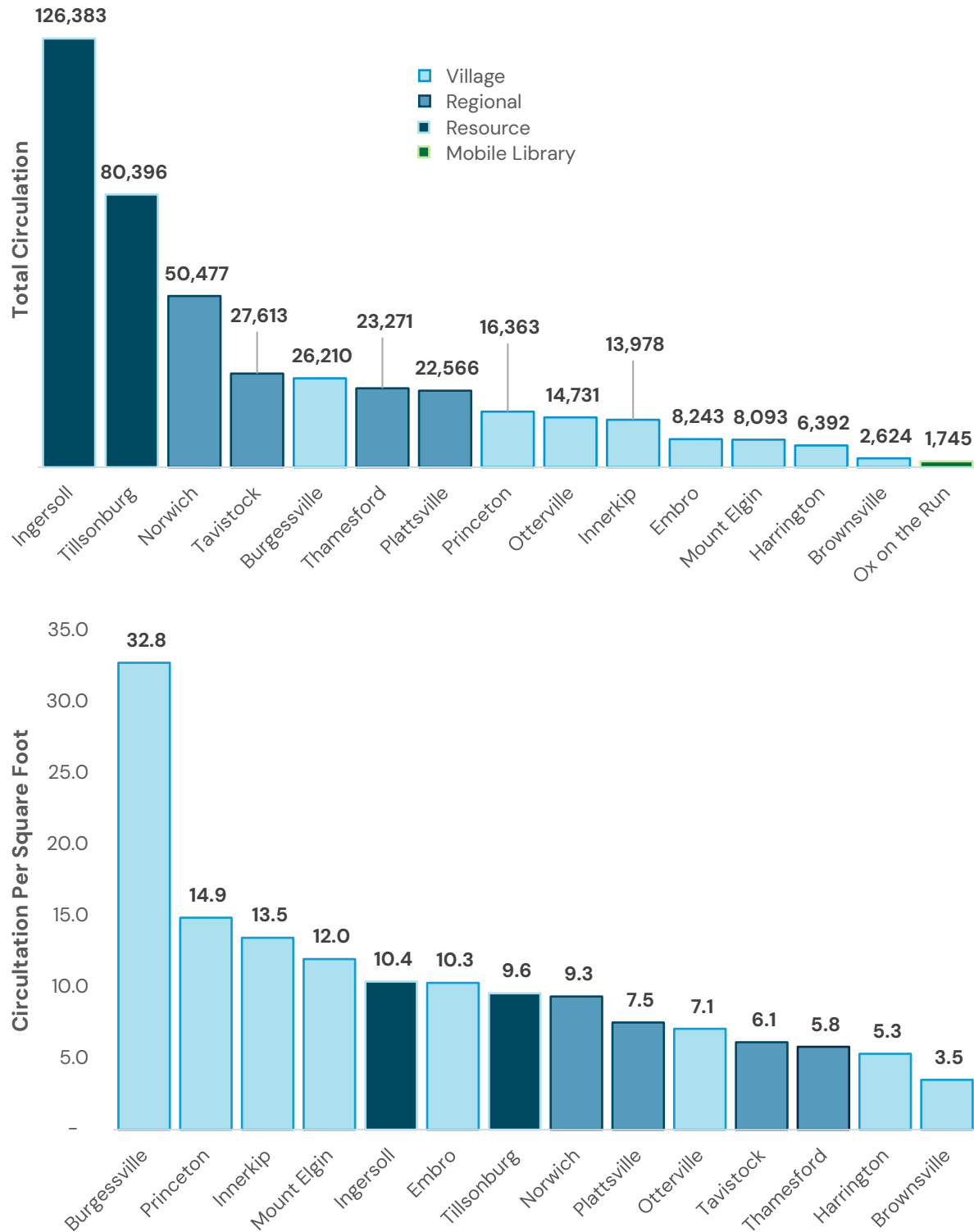
Background research completed for OCL's Strategic Plan found that 2023 circulation rates were strong compared to similar library systems⁵ with 430,829 physical items borrowed that year. Borrowing can be analyzed on a square foot basis to offer insights into the level of intensity associated with circulation but also allows comparisons between branches to be standardized. The OCL system-wide average rate in 2024 was 10.6 circulating items per square foot. Whereas the two Resource Libraries in Ingersoll and Tillsonburg had the highest circulation, interestingly it was Village Libraries that constituted four of the top five circulation rates per square foot and suggesting that their small floor area resulted in above-average pressures. Direct comparisons between libraries should be interpreted cautiously due to the very wide range of branch sizes in the OCL system.



Tavistock Library Façade

⁵ Current State Assessment & Environmental Scan, Oxford County Library – Strategic Plan, July 2023.

Figure 6: Physical Circulation by Library, 2024



Source: Oxford County Library, 2024

Hours of Operation

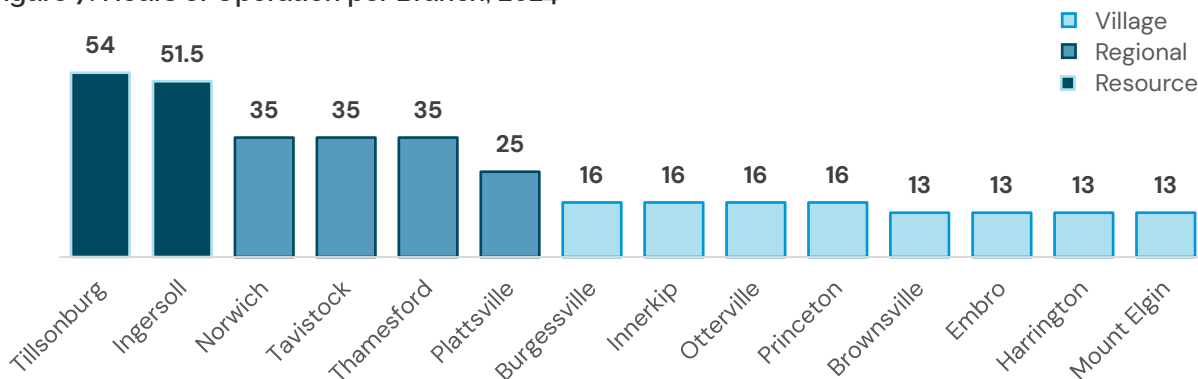
Hours of operation influences the usage of a branch in conjunction with floor space provided and catchment areas. A library with more operating hours has greater potential for higher use relative to a library with fewer operating hours. OCL's Service Guidelines contained in its Service Delivery Review establish targets for "optimum weekly hours" of operation for the branch network based on ARUPLO Guidelines. Table 6 outlines that Regional and Resource branches meet OCL's guidelines while none of the eight Village branches meet the Guideline. The branches located within rural communities are open a median of 16 hours per week.

Table 6: Hours of Operation in Relation to Service Guidelines

Branch	Branch Tier	OCL Guidelines (hours per week)	Hours Open (weekly)	Meets OCL Guidelines
Brownsville	Village	20 – 25	13	✗
Burgessville	Village	20 – 25	16	✗
Embro	Village	20 – 25	13	✗
Harrington	Village	20 – 25	13	✗
Innerkip	Village	20 – 25	16	✗
Mount Elgin	Village	20 – 25	13	✗
Otterville	Village	20 – 25	16	✗
Princeton	Village	20 – 25	16	✗
Norwich	Regional	25 – 45	35	✓
Plattsville	Regional	25 – 45	25	✓
Tavistock	Regional	25 – 45	35	✓
Thamesford	Regional	25 – 45	35	✓
Ingersoll	Resource	45 – 65	51.5	✓
Tillsonburg	Resource	45 – 65	54	✓

Source: Oxford County Library Service Delivery Model, 2023

Figure 7: Hours of Operation per Branch, 2024



Source: Oxford County Library, 2024

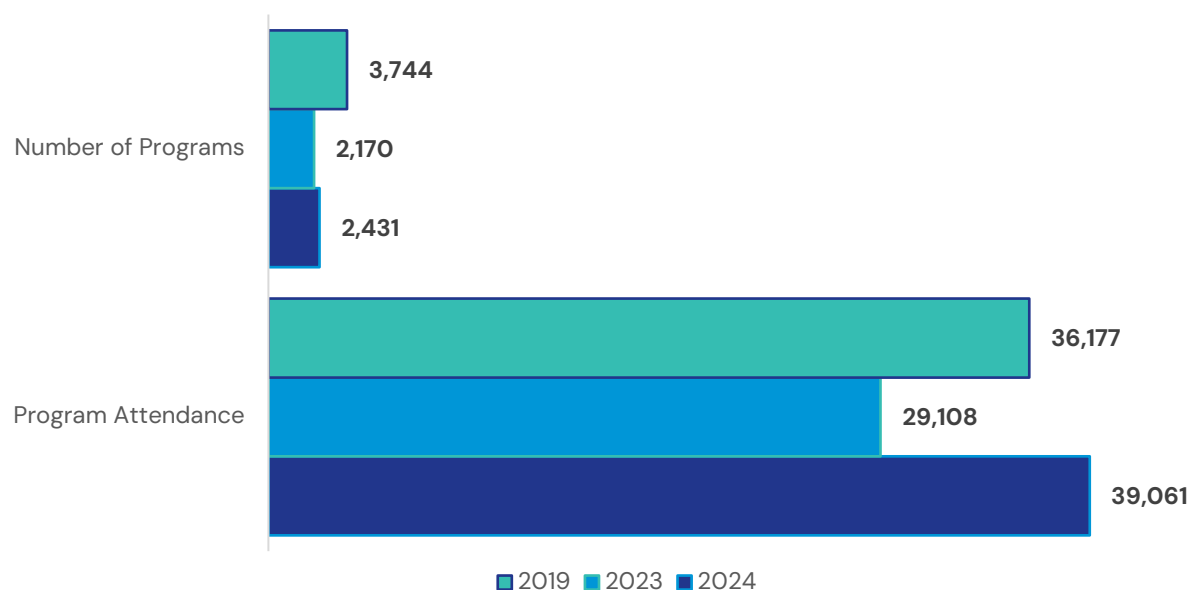
Programming

OCL offers a variety of programming and events for residents of all ages and abilities. OCL program attendance has increased by 8% since pre-Covid. OCL offered 2,431 programs and events in 2024 with Norwich hosting the highest number of events while Tillsonburg generated the greatest attendance rates.

Some of the programs offered are:

- Knits 'N' Knots
- VON Exercise Class
- Techie Tinkering Time
- EarlyON
- Tales for Tots
- Read With Me
- Coffee & Connect
- Community Employment Services
- After School (Hangout, Club, Drop-In)
- Drop-In and Draw
- Storytime
- Shake, Rattle, & Read
- Sip 'N' Stitch
- Movie Screening
- Special Guests
- Teen Drop-In
- Book Club
- Homeschool Hangout

Figure 8: Programs / Events and Attendance, 2019 - 2024



Source: Ontario Public Library Statistics, 2019; Oxford County Library, 2023 & 2024

Figure 9: Number of Programs / Events by Library, 2024

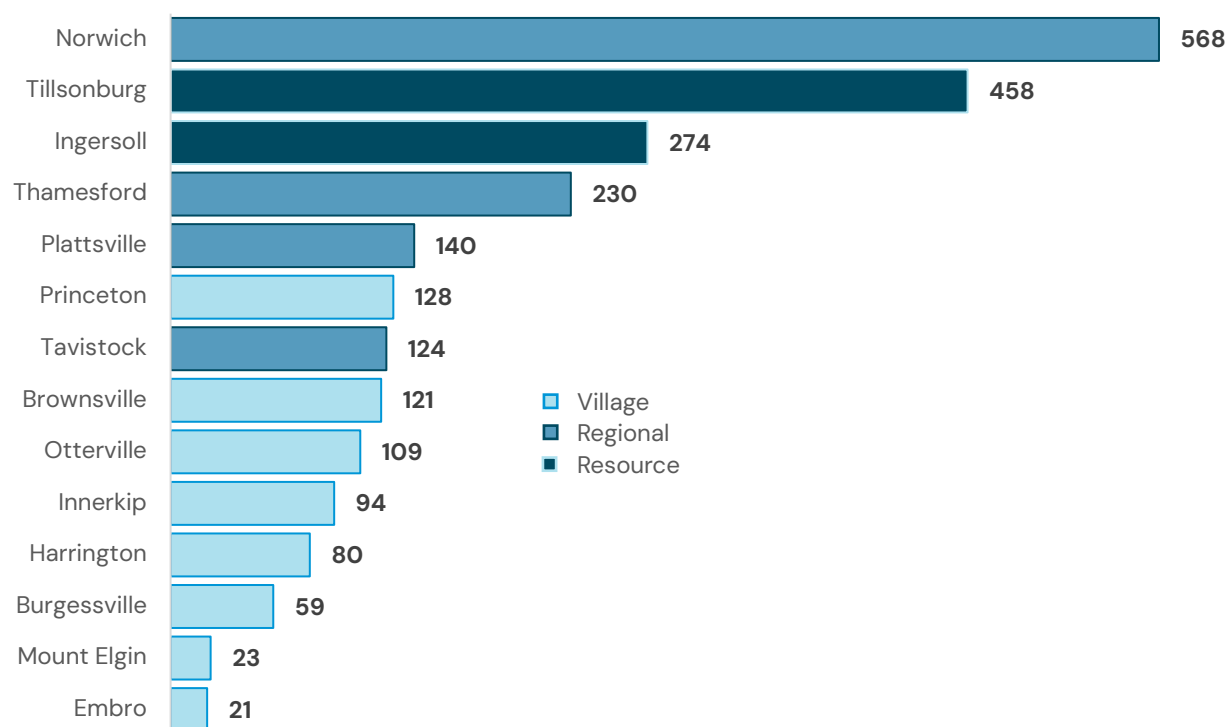
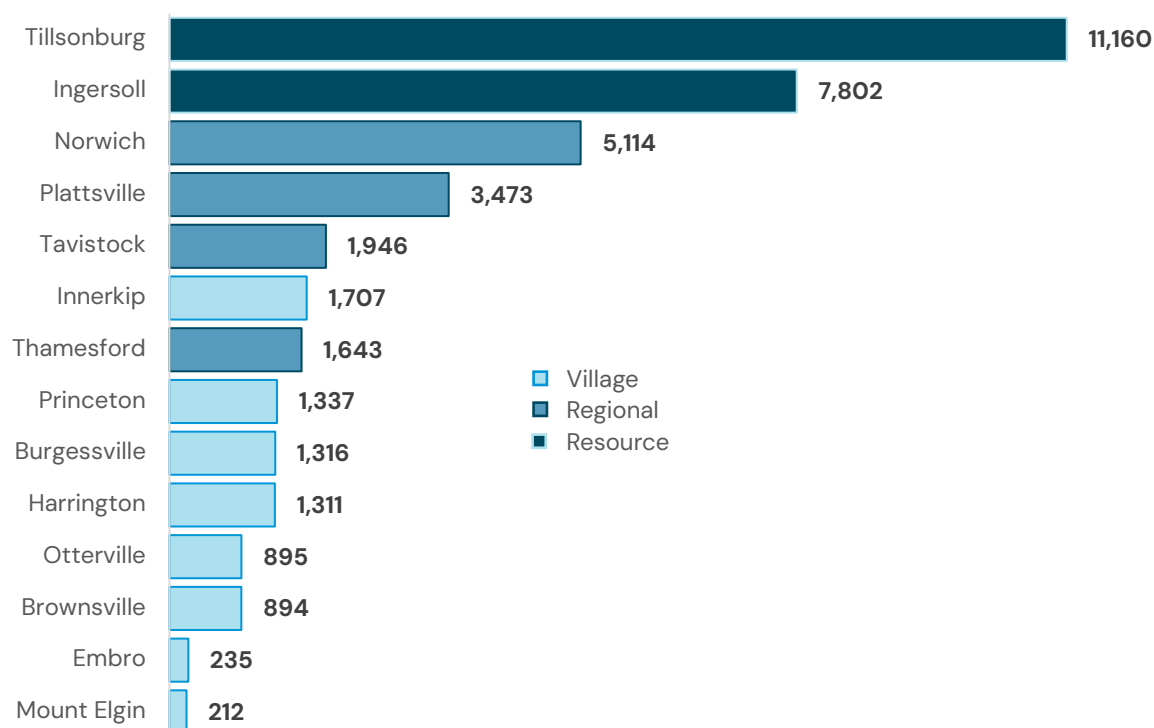


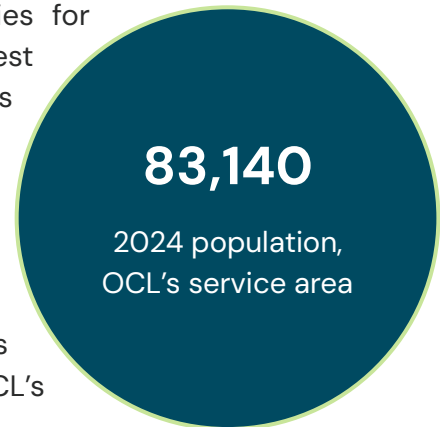
Figure 10: Attendance of Programs / Events by Library, 2024



Source: Oxford County Library, 2024

2.9 Service Area Population

OCL's service area encompasses the municipal boundaries for Ingersoll, Tillsonburg, East Zorra-Tavistock, Norwich, South-West Oxford, Thamesford, and Zorra. The service area population has grown by over 10,000 people since 2016 (14%)⁶ with the County estimating a population of 83,140 living within OCL's service area in 2024.⁷ Statistics Canada Census data forms the basis for historical information, while Oxford County Municipal Comprehensive Review Forecasts, 2024 inform the current and projected information. The following pages present information at the County-wide level as well as for OCL's service area that serves seven lower-tier municipalities.



Due largely to the immigration trends and provincial policies, population growth in Ontario has been mostly directed to urban centres. Many rural settlements have experienced a decline of population due to factors such as aging trends, migration of younger people, to urban settings employment prospects and less availability for new housing due to provincial planning policies. OCL's lower-tier municipalities have not mirrored these rural trends in Ontario as the population has increased in each municipality between 2011 and 2021 Census periods.

Tillsonburg is projected to experience the greatest share of growth in OCL's service area over the next 10 years, followed by Ingersoll. The rural municipalities are experiencing slight growth over the next 10 years, but the majority of growth is happening in the urban areas. The municipality receiving the least amount of growth within the next 10 years is expected to be South-West Oxford and Blandford-Blenheim.

OCL branches are distributed throughout Oxford County to provide library access to communities and higher density areas. As shown in Map 2, existing libraries serving areas projected to experience the strongest rates of population growth include OCL's branches in Thamesford, Tillsonburg, Norwich, Tavistock and Plattsville.

⁶ Email correspondence from County of Oxford dated November 27, 2024 based on County of Oxford Staff Report CP-2024-323 to County Council dated November 13, 2024.

⁷ Oxford County Municipal Comprehensive Review Forecasts, 2024

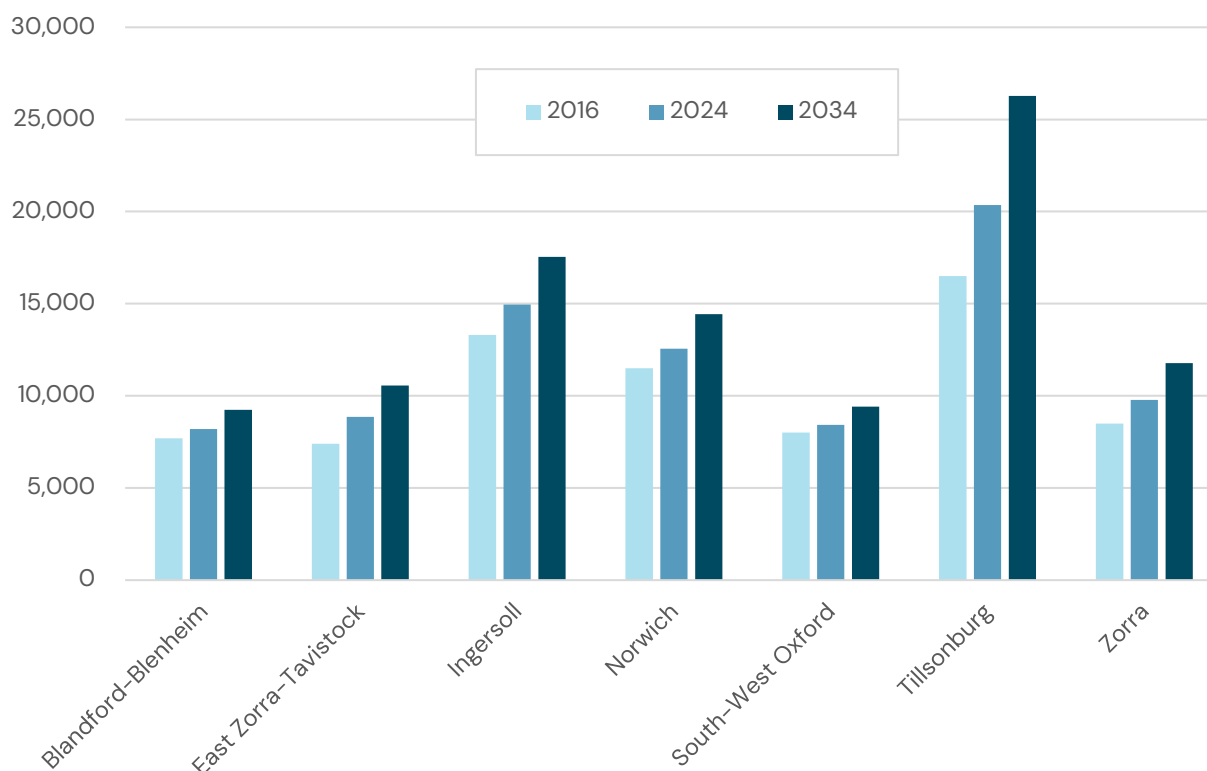
Table 7: Historical, Estimated & Forecasted Population

	2024 Estimated Population	2034 Forecasted Population	Net Δ 2024 – 2034	10 Year Δ 2024 – 2034	Share of County Growth 2024 – 2034
Blandford–Blenheim	8,200	9,240	1,040	13%	6%
East Zorra–Tavistock	8,860	10,560	1,700	19%	11%
Ingersoll	14,960	17,540	2,580	17%	16%
Norwich	12,560	14,440	1,880	15%	12%
South–West Oxford	8,420	9,420	1,000	12%	6%
Tillsonburg	20,360	26,280	5,920	29%	37%
Zorra	9,780	11,780	2,000	20%	12%
OCL Service Area	83,140	99,260	16,120	19%	100%

Note: Population figures include Census undercount.

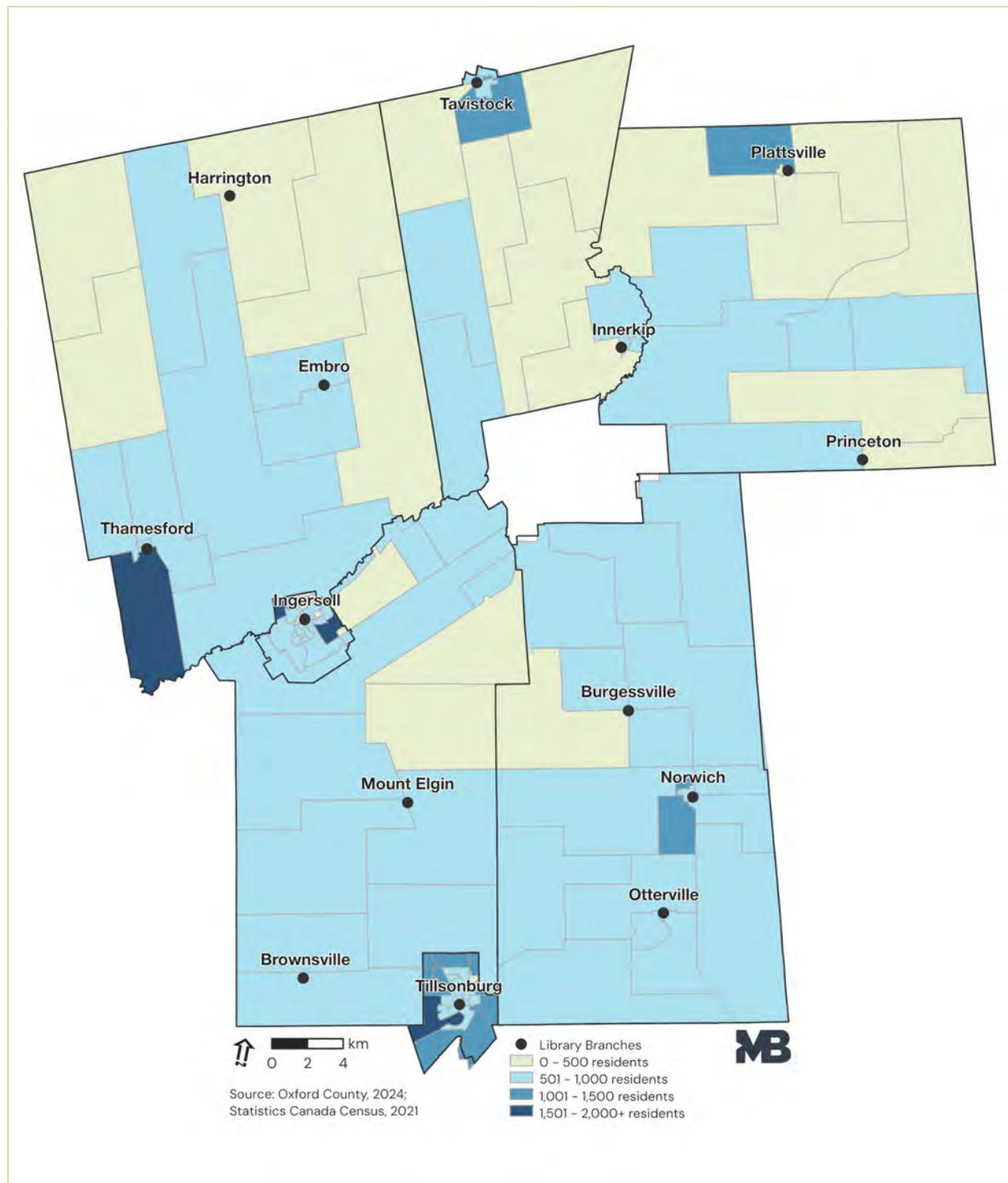
Source: Oxford County Municipal Comprehensive Review Forecasts, 2024

Table 8: Historical & Forecasted Population, 2016 – 2034



Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2016; Oxford County Municipal Comprehensive Review Forecasts, 2024

Map 2: Population by Census Dissemination Area, 2021



Section 3.0 Trends



Section 3.0

Trends

This Section provides an overview of how the function and form of a library translates into a welcoming, inclusive, and functional space where the community can come together and can engage in programs and services which allow individuals to thrive. Consideration of spaces is a key factor to consider when attracting greater usage and enabling a range of programs and services sought by the community.

3.1 A Place for All

“Libraries are essential to Canada’s value proposition of an inclusive and prosperous country. They are the heart of every community, open to everyone, providing connections and experiences essential to our economic opportunities, equity, and democracy. They are essential to social cohesion and the healthy functioning of modern life.”

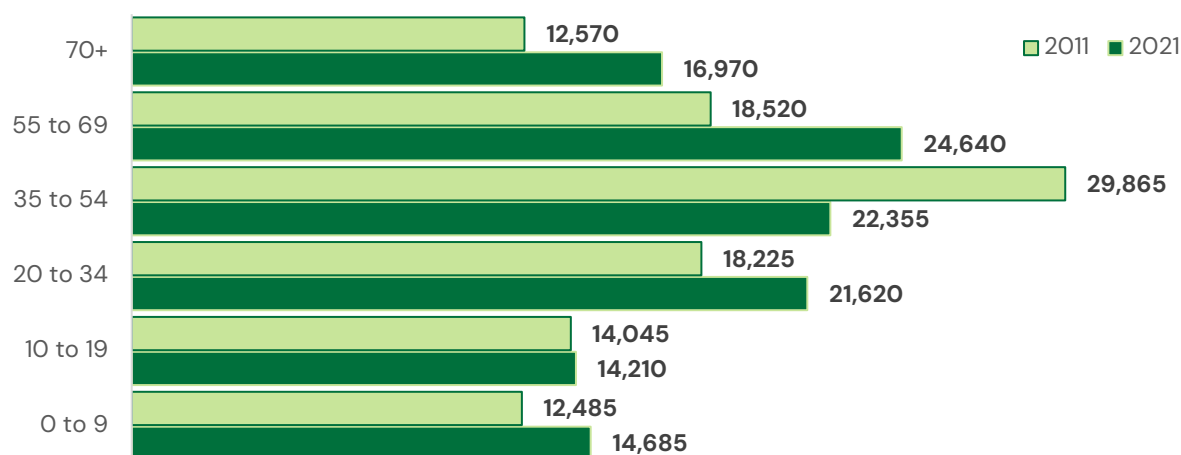
~ Canadian Urban Institute. The Case for Canada’s Public Libraries, 2023.

To attract a diverse range of users, modern libraries are offering engaging and innovative spaces and technologies. Libraries must accommodate diversity to evolve with the changing demographics. Libraries should consider a range of physical, mental and developmental disabilities, different age ranges, and a diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds through their collections, service points, and common spaces.

Libraries Serve a Range of Ages & Generations

Libraries are multi-generational spaces that attract new parents and toddlers, school-age and post-secondary students, young professionals, and seniors. Libraries have adapted their programming and collections to the needs of the age groups that attend the library. The age structure information can inform space and service delivery that OCL provides, ensuring that there is multi-generational usage that takes place in all branches. A primary focus of this LFP is to meet the needs of all ages in the community, while ensuring that age appropriate activities are available where necessary.

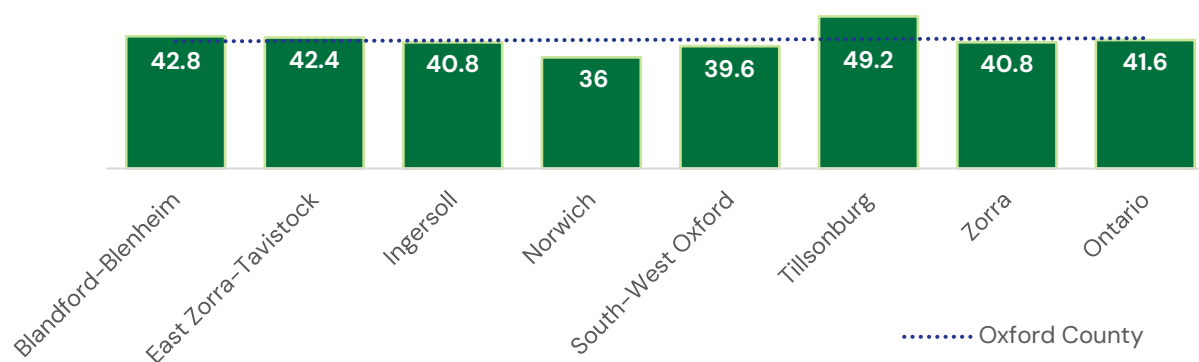
Figure 11: Population Age Structure in Oxford County, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2021

All libraries should include a number of age-specific spaces such as children's and teen areas along with spaces and services for other demographics, such as study spaces or older adult spaces and common areas. The physical size of a library determines the suitability of spaces for library users in different age groups. In Oxford County, the median age is 41.6, which is in-line with Ontario. Oxford County's median age has increased from 41.2 years in 2011. The provincial trend is that urban areas tend to have a lower median age than rural areas, Ingersoll tends to follow this trend while Tillsonburg has a higher median age than the province and all other municipalities in Oxford County.

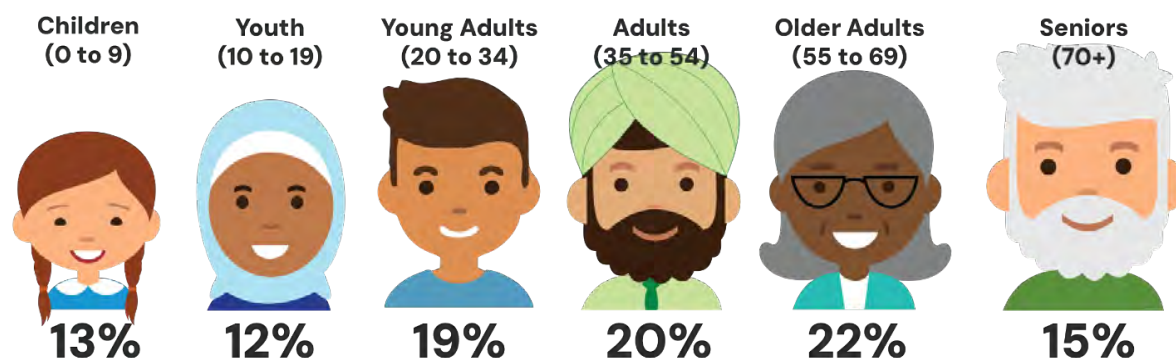
Figure 12: Median Age by Municipality, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2021

A review of Oxford County's population composition from 2011 to 2021 reveals that the County's adult population has been decreasing since 2011 while the older adults and senior age groups have been increasing. With an increase in children and young adult population as well, this suggests that the population-driven demand for libraries should consider the needs for all age groups when thinking about library services, location, and programming.

Figure 13: Population by Age Groups, Oxford County, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2021

Table 9 illustrates how the number of people in different age groups have changed since 2011. The increasing median age is largely driven by a 33% increase in older adults (+6,120 persons), and 35% increase in seniors (+4,400 persons), while adults have decreased by 25% (-7,510 persons).

Table 9: Oxford County Age Groups, 2011, 2016 & 2021

	2011	2016	2021	5 Year Δ 2011 – 2016	5 Year Δ 2016 – 2021	10 Year Δ 2011 – 2021
Children (0 to 9)	12,485	13,085	14,685	5%	12%	18%
Youth (10 to 19)	14,045	13,345	14,210	- 5%	6%	1%
Young Adults (20 to 34)	18,225	19,430	21,620	7%	11%	19%
Adults (35 to 54)	29,865	28,760	22,355	- 4%	- 22%	- 25%
Older Adults (55 to 69)	18,520	22,045	24,640	19%	12%	33%
Seniors (70+)	12,570	14,190	16,970	13%	20%	35%

Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2011 – 2021

Libraries Deliver Affordable Services

The 2021 Census records that Oxford County's median household income (after-tax) is \$76,500, which is slightly lower than Ontario (\$79,500).⁸ In Oxford County, the municipality with the highest median household income (after-tax) is Blandford-Blenheim, and the lowest is Tillsonburg.

Populations experiencing low income are a priority for this LFP, as such persons may not have the same access to information and technology as people with greater financial means. In this light, it is important to note that there were 9,930 people living below Statistics Canada's low income measure after-tax (LIM-AT) in 2021, equating to 8% of Oxford County's population. Prevalence of persons experiencing low income as defined by LIM-AT across Oxford County are highlighted below:

- **5%** of Blandford-Blenheim residents (375 persons)
- **7%** of East Zorra-Tavistock residents (510 persons)
- **8%** of Ingersoll residents (1085 persons)
- **10%** of Norwich residents (1075 persons)
- **8%** of South-West Oxford residents (625 persons)
- **9%** of Tillsonburg residents (1725 persons)
- **6%** of Zorra residents (525 persons)

Table 10: Median Household Income & LIM-AT, 2021

Municipality	Median Household Income (after-tax)	Pop. Living Below Low Income Measure After-Tax
Blandford-Blenheim	\$93,000	5.0%
East Zorra-Tavistock	\$86,000	6.5%
Ingersoll	\$77,000	7.9%
Norwich	\$84,000	9.6%
South-West Oxford	\$86,000	8.2%
Tillsonburg	\$66,000	9.3%
Zorra	\$91,000	6.1%
Oxford County	\$76,500	8.2%
Ontario	\$79,500	10.1%

Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2021

⁸ Statistics Canada Census, 2021

Libraries Support Education

The level of education attainment can also influence the use of libraries within a community. The 2021 Census reported that 46,285 of Oxford County residents (38%) have a post secondary education, which is approximately 41% lower than Ontario.⁹ Public libraries have a significant positive impact in people's social values, addressing:

- literacy;
- educational outcomes;
- workforce development;
- culture;
- mental and physical health;
- reconciliation; and
- belonging.¹⁰

Table 11: Post Secondary Educational Attainment, 2021

Municipality	Post Secondary Educational Attainment
Blandford-Blenheim	42%
East Zorra-Tavistock	42%
Ingersoll	38%
Norwich	34%
South-West Oxford	35%
Tillsonburg	24%
Zorra	44%
Oxford County	38%
Ontario	58%

Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2021

Barrier-Free Accessibility in Libraries

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) intends to make public spaces in Ontario accessible for persons with disabilities by the year 2025. Standards have been created based on accessibility as part of the AODA for organizations to follow, identify, remove and prevent barriers. By implementing AODA standards, the aging population will also benefit from the improved accessibility in spaces.

Under the AODA, the Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11) requires public libraries to provide access to or arrange for the provision of access to accessible materials, where they exist. When procuring new library materials, libraries are required to

⁹ Statistics Canada Census, 2021

¹⁰ The Case for Canada's Public Libraries, Canadian Urban Institute, 2023

consider the accessibility needs of their users to allow for accessibility to the widest range of people. Part 4.1 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards outlines specific guidelines to the design of public spaces and the built environment. Certain OCL branches do not fully reflect the barrier free standards; for example, the Burgessville branch requires users to climb a set of stairs to enter the building and while Embro branch has an exterior lift, it requires an OCL staff to operate it. Creating barrier-free buildings and spaces is a priority for OCL.

Resources that OCL provides for barrier-free accessibility includes but is not limited to:

- Book magnifiers;
- Large print books;
- Books on CD;
- Daisy audiobooks;
- Daisy reader; and
- CCTV (allows for low vision reading and the user can view pictures or see what they are writing).



Inaccessible steps at library entrances in Burgessville and Embro

Tall shelving in Ingersoll

Libraries as Destinations for Newcomers and Diverse Cultures

Libraries are community destinations, especially for newcomers to Canada. Immigrants can hone their literacy and language skills at a library as they have free access to collections and programming. Libraries also allow newcomers to meet other people in their community in a safe space. OCL provides resources for newcomers such as multi-lingual collections, an Arabic keyboard, and referral services to local settlement providers.

Understanding the ethno-cultural composition of Oxford County will allow OCL to reflect changes in its resident base through library services. OCL is focused on inclusion and acceptance through its spaces, collections, services and staffing to meet the needs of the

community. In 2021, there were approximately 13,600 foreign-born Canadians living within the County, equating to 11% of the population. The top three places of birth for the Oxford County's immigrant population are:

- Netherlands (2,065 residents)
- United Kingdom (2,010 residents)
- India (1,840 residents)

Based on Table 12, the need for multi-lingual and multi-cultural collections and services are more likely to be in demand within Tillsonburg, Norwich and Ingersoll branches. However, immigration trends are such that greater cultural diversity can be expected in more rural settings although to a slower pace relative to urban areas. English is the first language for 88% of Oxford County residents while French is the first language of 1% of the population. Among non-official languages, Dutch (1.8%), Punjabi (1.6%), and German (1.2%) were the most spoken.

Table 12: Immigration, 2021

Municipality	Number of Immigrants	Percentage of Immigrants
Blandford-Blenheim	530	7.0%
East Zorra-Tavistock	585	7.6%
Ingersoll	1,035	7.6%
Norwich	1,185	10.7%
South-West Oxford	710	9.4%
Tillsonburg	2,295	12.5%
Zorra	515	6.0%
Oxford County	13,600	11.2%
Ontario	4,206,585	30%

Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2021

The Library as an Advocate for Social Justice

Within the last few years, attention has been placed on social justice issues. Prominent areas of focus have been on 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous and racialized communities. OCL provides resources to these communities, supplements collections with authors representing marginalized backgrounds and topics (e.g., Black History Month), and delivers intentional programming (e.g., Drag Queen Storytime). Other considerations include shortened bookshelves, widening circulation paths, gender-neutral washrooms, lowered service counters, etc. OCL supports all community members by creating inclusive, diverse and safe spaces.

Libraries are an Access Point for Marginalized Populations

Public libraries are one of the few free spaces that are available to marginalized populations. The *Public Libraries Act* supports the provision of universal and equal access to information for all members of the community. There are a number of low income households within Oxford County that benefit from access to accessible and affordable public library services, including the 9,930 residents living below Statistics Canada's Low Income Measure After-Tax (8% of Oxford's total population). OCL is committed to eliminating as many barriers as possible and have eliminated overdue fines on all materials for users.

Equity-deserving groups face disproportionate barriers to accessing library services and often rely on libraries for supports related to learning, access to technology, language and newcomer supports, career and employment resources, and forming social connections. Increasingly, libraries are experiencing greater use by unsheltered populations seeking respite from extreme weather including heatwaves and cold snaps. Convenient access to quality and affordable services such as those found in library facilities and services can help to reduce these barriers.

Recognizing the intersectionality of various factors influencing marginalization, an index measure is preferred as there are many variables that may be considered as part of where library services may be delivered. The Ontario Marginalization Index is used for the purposes of the LFP. This index is updated every five years by researchers at MAP Centre for Urban Solutions at St. Michael's Hospital (Unity Health Toronto) and Public Health Ontario¹¹. This geo-spatial tool can assist in planning, needs assessments, gap identification, resource allocation, monitoring of inequities, and other forms of research across many sectors. Last updated in 2023, the index accounts for 18 Census (2021) indicators grouped across four dimensions of marginalization.

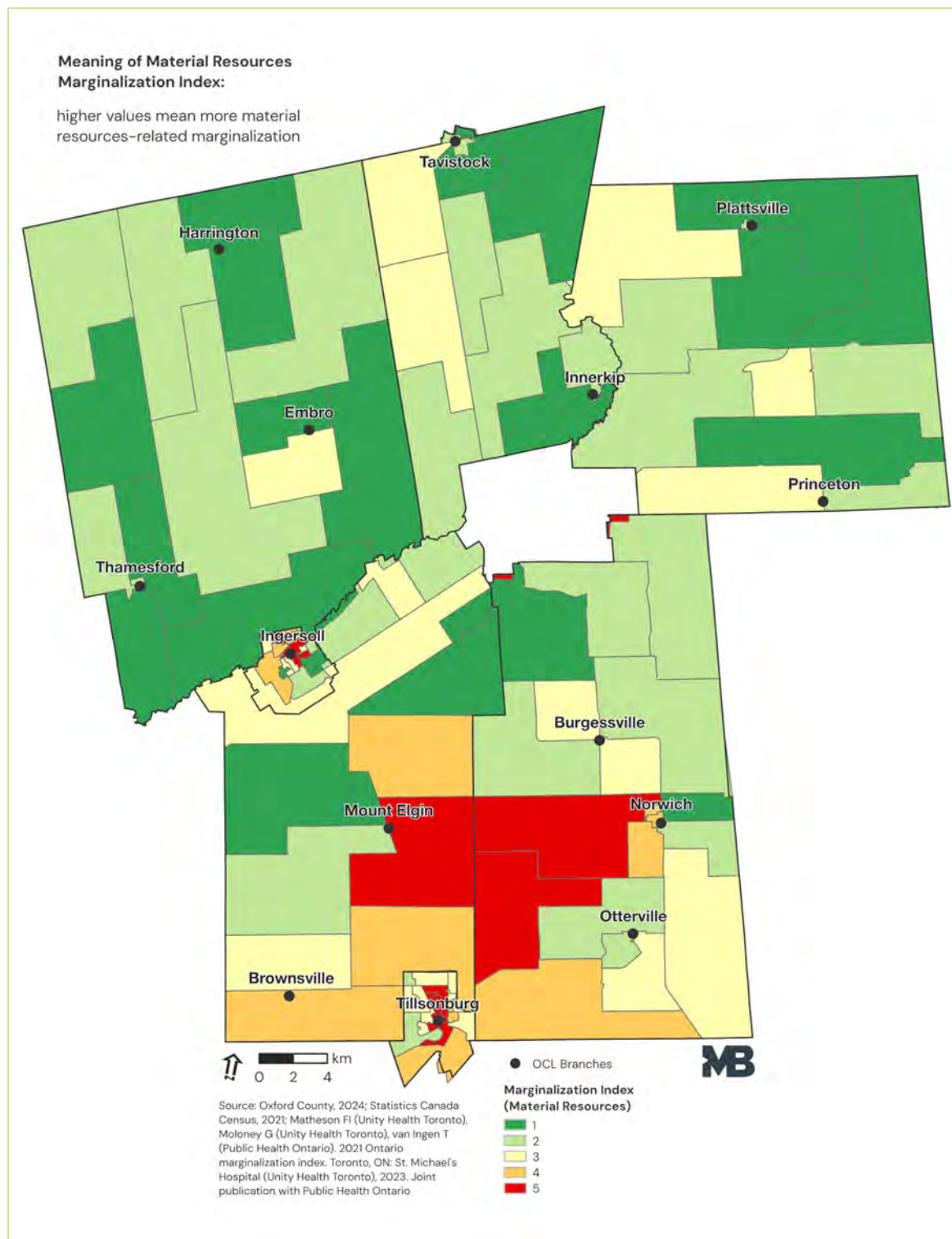
The dimension with the greatest relevance to library provision is Material Resources which is "closely connected to poverty and refers to the inability for individuals and communities to access and attain basic material needs relating to housing, food, clothing, and education." This dimension is composed of six census variables, including the proportion of:

- the population aged 25 to 64 without a high-school diploma
- families who are lone parent families
- total income from government transfer payments for population aged 15+
- the population aged 15+ who are unemployed
- the population considered low-income (defined as income less than the LIM-AT)
- households living in dwellings that are in need of major repair.

¹¹ Matheson FI (Unity Health Toronto), Moloney G (Unity Health Toronto), van Ingen T (Public Health Ontario). 2021 Ontario marginalization index: user guide. Toronto, ON: St. Michael's Hospital (Unity Health Toronto); 2023. Joint publication with Public Health Ontario.

Based on Map 3, areas in the OCL service territory experiencing the greatest degree of material resource marginalization include the Tillsonburg and Ingersoll downtowns/core areas, the east portion of South-West Oxford, and the west portion of Norwich.

Map 3: Marginalization Index (Material Resources)



3.2 Partnerships and Community Hubs

Libraries strive to reflect a model of centralizing community services in multi-use centres. This is driven by planning principles where municipalities will develop libraries within community centres, administrative buildings, etc. As such, focus is reverting back to neighbourhood placemaking with library services offered in walking distance or located along a transit route. Co-locating libraries within a community hub offers many benefits including, community cohesion, fosters enhanced quality of life, etc. Library systems are also looking to co-locate with institutional partners (e.g., schools, hospitals, colleges, social services, etc.) as part of a public-private partnership.

OCL has co-located some branches with other municipal or county services as well as an elementary school which has created conveniences for the library user and generated benefits through fiscal economies.

3.3 Other Forms of Libraries

The most popular reason for visiting libraries is borrowing physical materials (books, DVDs, etc.). However, lending services are evolving and being supplemented by an increasing focus on creation and collaboration in library spaces. Due to this, some branches are reducing the footprint of collections to allow more room for seating, meeting, and studying. OCL users rely on libraries for studying, technology use, access to programming, and social connections. Libraries are evolving to meet the changing needs of the community. OCL balances the communities' priorities for access to programming, digital content and technology, alongside traditional library services including collections and physical space.

Modular Libraries

To meet the needs of a growing community, some libraries develop modular libraries if they are limited by space, time and money. Large capital investments into branches that deliver enough space to respond to growth and adequately address the community needs are major challenges. Some library systems look into prefabricated buildings in response, offering a movable building that can host flexible education space for workshops, training, and community activities. Construction costs may not be less, but modular libraries do provide an option for expanding library services to areas that need it most. While this form of library space has not been recommended for OCL, depending on the future of library space in the County, consideration for a modular library may be required.

Bookless Libraries

Bookless libraries focus on programming and community social spaces in place of book collections. The first bookless library in Canada is located in Cambridge and is a partnership between the City and its Idea Exchange Division (Cambridge Public Library). This space focuses on delivering programs, supporting learning and creativity.

OCL does not operate any bookless libraries, some of its rural branches have limited collections. This is in response to the size of the branch but also in recognition of the rural branches serving as a social function where the community can gather. These rural branches are key for holds pick-ups, access to the internet or technology, and the ability to participate in library programs.

‘Express’ Libraries

A new approach to increasing service points is an express library which allows for pick-ups and drop-offs through hold lockers, as well as browse and borrow through self-serve kiosks/book vending machines. Express libraries are a cost effective way to provide limited physical collections that are conveniently located in high-traffic or underserved areas. OCL does not currently have any express library locations but with the County being spread out, these libraries can offer support for rural or high-traffic areas.

3.4 Emerging Services, Facilities and Programs

The population in Oxford County is and has been growing over the last 10 years with changing demographics. The change in population and demographics is creating an increasing demand for libraries and the services they deliver. This may include, but not be limited to, makerspaces, technology, common spaces, multi-media production spaces, and performance spaces. Many libraries across Ontario are merging libraries with arts and cultural spaces to fill the need for low-cost and accessible spaces for community and cultural events.

Makerspaces

A makerspace is a collaborative workspace within the library where users can learn, make, and explore in. Makerspace contains equipment such as 3D printers, laser cutters, button makers, VHS to DVD tools, sewing machines, and more. OCL recently integrated a makerspace at the Ingersoll branch and is monitoring its use.

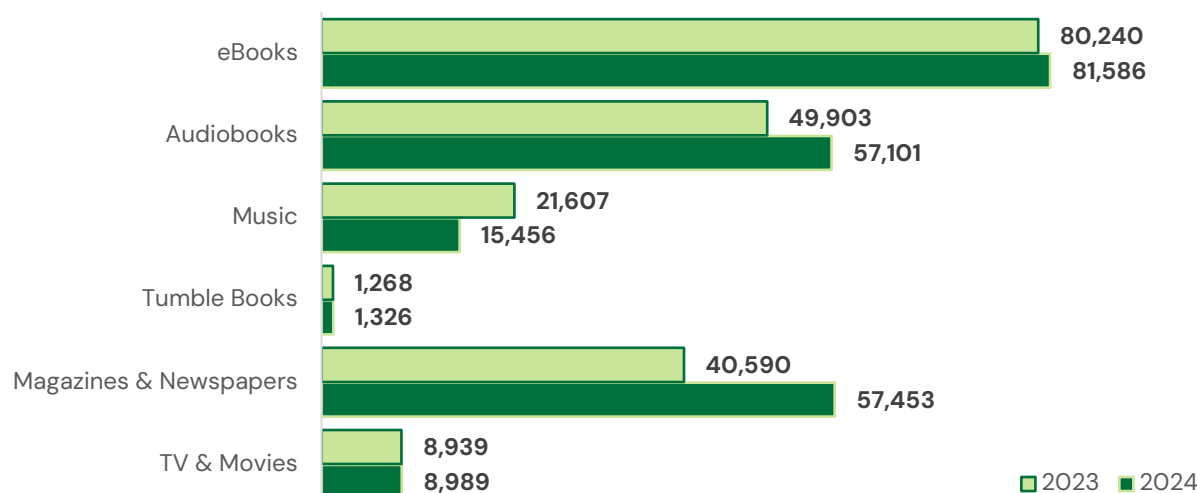
Digital Technology

Digital technology has become more popular due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Borrowing printed books is the most popular activity at libraries, however, some desire an electronic collection. Within the 2024 Oxford County Strategic Plan, a goal of OCL is to “Expand the availability of self-service options and introduce more technology to increase access.”

With a growing trend of digital access, Oxford County is embracing larger electronic collection and electrical infrastructure (e.g., self-service checkouts, charging stations within furniture, etc.) within the coming years. Although digital services are becoming more popular, physical collections will continue to co-exist as trends suggest that certain people (including children and seniors) prefer books and other physical items.

In the OCL system, physical circulation has had a 1% decrease since 2023 with digital circulation having an increase of 10%. This change can be attributed to the convenience and accessibility of digital materials.

Figure 14: Circulation by Branch (digital), 2023 & 2024



Source: Oxford County Library, 2024

3.5 Environmentally Resilient Designs

Oxford County puts priority to adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts. Oxford County's 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan highlights that "Oxford County was the first municipality in Ontario to commit to 100% renewable energy and the second in Canada". OCL's branches are in various stages of life with specific branches in need of upgrades to help minimize energy consumption.

When developing new buildings, design and materials must be taken into account based on industry standards outlined by the Green Building Standard for New Construction and Canada Green Building Council Zero Carbon Design guide. These standards ensure that the building's carbon footprint is considered at every stage of its life, from design to construction, operation and end of use.

OCL can strive to make upgrades to their owned buildings while cooperation with municipal partners and TVDSB will be required as the building owners are primarily responsible for the buildings and mechanical system upgrades.

3.6 The Library of Things

OCL has expanded its collection of things beyond books and reference materials to include non-traditional items such as hiking kits, kitchen items, maker kits, etc. The “Library of Things” is a term used to describe initiatives of public library systems but can also refer to municipal or community-based lending. A Library of Things typically pertains to a collection of objects, equipment, or items that are loaned to others. For OCL to be able to provide a Library of Things, appropriate physical infrastructure (storage space) and organization support is required.

Some of the things that can be borrowed from OCL include:

- Binge Boxes (set of DVDs)
- Carbon Dioxide Monitor
- Chromebooks
- Electricity meters
- Hiking kits
- Kitchen equipment
- Kobos
- Launchpads
- Maker Kit
- Ontario Provincial Park Passes
- Playaway views
- Snowshoes
- Toys
- Ukuleles
- Vox Books

As an example of the above, OCL offers kitchen equipment to be borrowed to help residents enjoy fresh, seasonal food, and to help families to provide healthy, affordable meals. Some of the kitchen gadgets available for use are a slow cooker, dehydrator, pans, canning set, mixing bowls, mixer, juicer, and more. Further contributing to OCL’s food literacy and food security initiatives is a Spice Library where residents can exchange different dried spices and seasonings, something that also facilitates greater ethnocultural understanding.

3.7 Outdoor Spaces

Outdoor spaces offer users an alternative area to read, attend workshops and classes, and expanded common areas. Outdoor spaces are typically equipped with seating, shading, wireless internet access, and gardens. Requests for outdoor reading areas are becoming more frequent. OCL has an opportunity to expand their outdoor public library space at specific branches. OCL enables outdoor connections through Ox on the Run stops, rentable snowshoes, Ontario Provincial Parks passes, hiking kits, and more.

Section 4.0 Consultations



Section 4.0

Consultations

Consultations for the LFP have been focused on engaging library partners, local school boards and staff of Oxford County Library. Community engagement for this LFP was not undertaken due to OCL's in-depth consultation for their 2024 Strategic Plan.

4.1 Feedback from Library Partners

Interviews were carried out with six lower-tier municipalities, Oxford County staff, along with representatives from the private property owners. Municipal staff that were engaged consisted of CAO, Mayor, Director of Community Services/Recreation, Clerk

Feedback from these interviews have been summarized into common and key points below (listed in no particular order). Specific comments provided by these individuals have not been reproduced to respect their confidentiality but were considered during the assessments as part of this LFP.

- **Valued.** Staff and elected officials mentioned that libraries in Oxford County are of high value to the community as they provide a place for people to gather while offering more than just books.
- **Ox on the Run.** The Ox on the Run pilot has received positive responses from municipal staff due to its flexibility, service delivery model, and cost perspective compared to brick and mortar. Municipal staff have indicated they have heard an agreeing response from the Oxford County community.
- **Programming.** OCL has received positive feedback from the library partners on programs offered through the library. It was mentioned for OCL to look into uses its space more effectively when branches are closed by partnering with municipal programs to be used out of the library spaces.
- **Accessibility.** Staff have mentioned accessibility of the library branches and how accessibility should be a priority when improving or thinking about library spaces.
- **Promotion.** A suggestion was for OCL to promote library services and programs more through social media and other means. It was mentioned that some residents would like more promotion for things that are happening at OCL branches.
- **Partnership.** Staff have mentioned that there is a great working relationship between Oxford County Library and lower-tier municipalities in Oxford County. It was suggested that OCL and lower-tier municipalities meet more frequently to strengthen their long-standing working relationship.

4.2 OCL Staff Workshops

OCL staff were engaged in a workshop to obtain their insights on the amount, type and distribution of library spaces, as well as their vision for the future of Oxford County libraries. To obtain a range of perspectives from library staff, front-line and supervisory staff were engaged from each library branch in Oxford County. The workshop was held in December 2024.

In order to allow staff to speak freely, input has been consolidated into general themes to protect confidentiality and ensure comments cannot be attributed to a single individual. The themes are summarized below.

- Community Values.** Libraries are valued for fostering welcoming spaces for socializing and personal use, such as reading newspapers or utilizing multi-use areas. They are cherished for providing play and enjoyment for young families, offering unique free services unavailable elsewhere, and serving as a pressure-free environment without the need to make purchases. Additionally, libraries excel in catering to all ages through multi-generational spaces and extending their reach into the community with effective Book Mobiles.
- Attracting Users.** Oxford County's growing communities highlight the need for expanded and flexible library spaces to accommodate increasing demand for programs and services. Well-attended adult programming has spurred interest in year-round offerings, but capacity limitations, particularly in branches like Tillsonburg, often result in turning people away. Repurposing library spaces with movable shelving, such as "Tombstone shelving" in Brownsville, could enhance flexibility. Collaboration with community organizations and the integration of libraries into upcoming community centre renovations over the next decade present opportunities for new branches and services, such as makerspaces and childcare centres. Libraries serve as vital accessible and safe spaces, particularly in communities with vulnerable populations, like Tillsonburg, where multi-generational use is prevalent, with grandparents frequently bringing grandchildren to enjoy the facilities.
- Geographical Areas.** The Ingersoll Branch is seen as the most geographically central library in Oxford County. East Oxford Centre is thought of as an ideal location for a new branch or services like a drop-off box, as residents in this area often travel to Woodstock. Additionally, hold lockers or bookmobiles could effectively serve communities like Woodstock, Drumbo, Beachville, Hickson, and Folden, with Folden being notably underserved.

- **Challenges and Opportunities.** Oxford County Library is faced with a variety of challenges and opportunities as it strives to meet community expectations. Limited spaces in shared facilities, such as branches paired with community centres or daycares, restrict gathering areas and programming capacity, as seen in the Ingersoll Branch, which often relies on the town for additional space. While shared spaces with schools and other facilities offer benefits, they also present challenges, such as limited walkable access or structural constraints like low ceilings. Teen engagement remains a challenge post-pandemic, although libraries have designated spaces for them. Accessibility enhancements are necessary for features such as the Princeton book drop, and locating the Bookmobile at the Central Library Branch could enhance efficiency. Many branches have limited staff spaces, affecting visibility and security, with Tillsonburg particularly in need of improved storage and a reconfigured supervisor office. In order to address these issues, it would require thoughtful planning and increased resources to meet the growing community demands.
- **Alternative Approaches.** Staff recommended alternative approaches to library service delivery including multi-height counters, charging stations (e.g., phone, tablet charging), stationary computers, adjustable study room spaces.
- **Ox on the Run and Programming.** Outreach is an essential library service with the vast size of Oxford County. It was suggested that the Ox on the Run makes regular stops at special events (e.g., splash pads during the summer, indoor locations in the winter, schools) to maintain community engagement. Initiatives like Ox on the Run further promote library programming and services beyond traditional collections, reinforcing the vital role of the library within the community. Programs that are popular, for example, craft nights, are often waitlisted which highlights the need for expanded capacity.

Staff were asked what key things they would like to see expressed through OCL spaces:

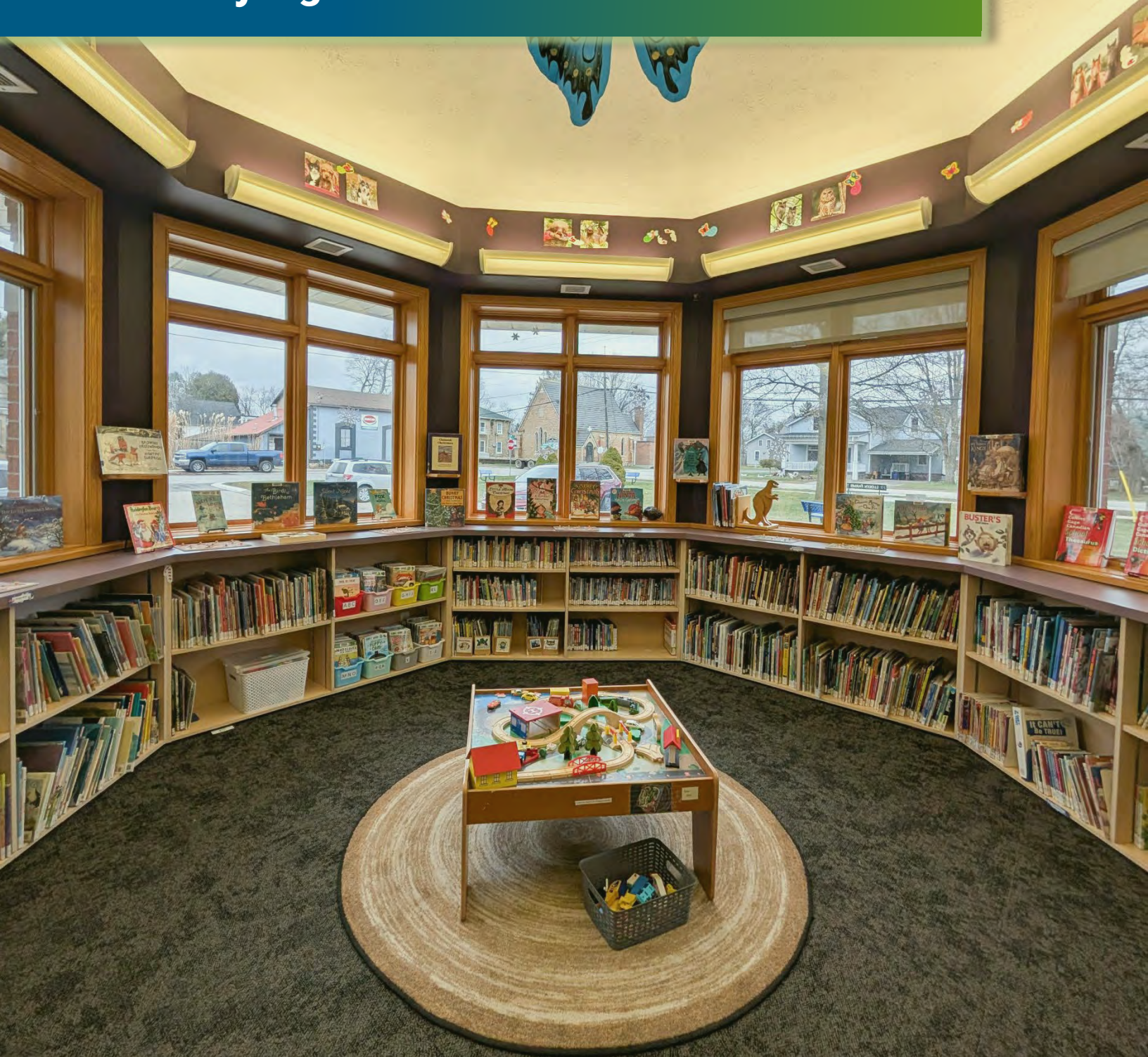
- Accessible
- Welcoming & Safe Space
- Reliable Services
- New Bookmobile
- Innovative
- Inclusive & Multi-cultural

4.3 Feedback from the Community

Feedback from the Strategic Plan consultations have been summarized into key themes (listed in no particular order).

- Respondents consider library hours and facilities as key priorities when considering access.
- In-person visits are the primary way respondents access library services in Oxford County.
- Respondents are highly satisfied with the level of service provided by OCL.
- Suggestions were made to enhance promotion of OCL's services.
- Respondents consider the libraries as safe spaces.
- The top three responses for improvement of the library user experience included programming, collections, and access (focusing on village branches).

Section 5.0 Library Organizational Model



Section 5.0

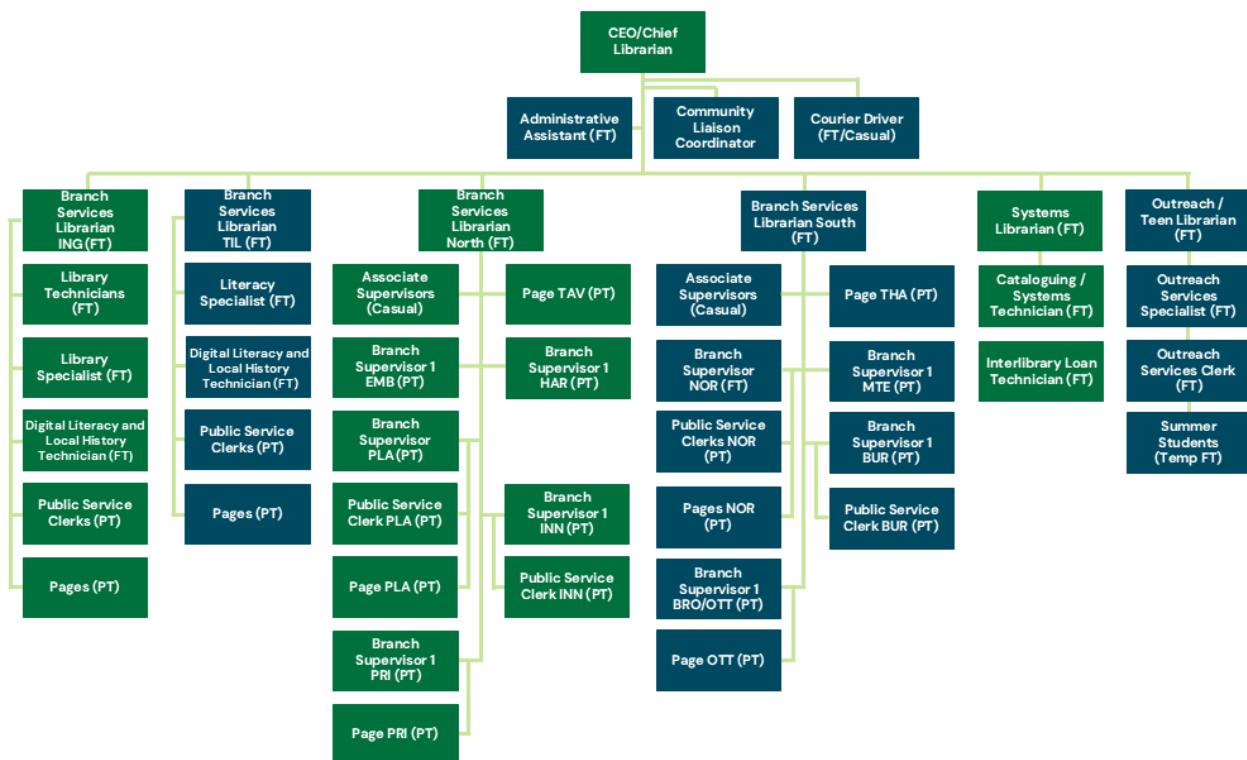
Library Organizational Model

This section highlights OCL's organizational structure, responsibilities of OCL and Partners, other library system approaches, benefits and challenges of OCL's current approach, and opportunities to explore.

5.1 Organizational Structure

OCL operates under a centralized organizational structure whereby the CEO/Chief Librarian oversees a team of Branch Services, Systems and Outreach/Teen Librarians. The CEO/Chief Librarian reports to the Oxford County Library Board and the County of Oxford's Director of Corporate Services. In 2024, OCL employed approximately 20 full time staff members, 40 part time staff members, and was assisted by 15 volunteers.

Figure 15: Oxford County Library Organizational Structure, 2025



While the LFP does not include staffing or organizational reviews, OCL's organizational structure is generally consistent with other library systems and is capable of operating the number of locations across the County's urban and rural areas. OCL staff effectively deliver services while leveraging staff resources in other departments of the County along with lower-tier municipalities, albeit incurring an expense in some instances for leases and maintenance contracts.

5.2 Responsibilities of OCL & Partners

Agreement with Municipalities

OCL and the lower-tier municipalities in Oxford County are guided by lease agreements. These agreements are policies that assign responsibilities to the County and municipalities as follows.

Municipal Responsibilities

- Provision of building for facility for the branch
- Capital improvements to the building
- Insurance for the building
- Repair and maintain structure of building, exterior, walls, roof, pipes, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and other installations of a structural nature
- Utilities such as electricity, heat and water
- Maintenance of grounds (e.g., snow removal, grass cutting, landscaping, etc.) at selected locations
- Provide free hall rentals to OCL (South-West Oxford)

OCL Responsibilities

- Annual lease payments in certain (but not all) municipalities
- Staff wages, benefits, travel expenses, and training
- Library materials such as books, materials, and organizing materials so that they are accessible and rotated between branches
- Library furniture and equipment and their associated maintenance
- Telephones, office supplies, postage, fire extinguishers, signage
- Minor repairs to interior of the premises (e.g., changing light bulbs, fixing door locks, etc.)
- Cleaning and upkeep of premises
- Library programs
- Van delivery service to and from branches
- Janitorial work and maintenance of grounds (e.g., snow removal, grass cutting, landscaping, etc.) at selected locations where a municipality does not carry out these works, in which case the County of Oxford Public Works Department charges back OCL for these services
- Insurance of all contents and exhibits in the library

Agreement with Thames Valley District School Board

A joint use agreement exists between the Library and Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) for the provision of a library located at Plattsville & District Public School. The agreement states that the term shall remain in effect for 99 years or until otherwise terminated. The agreement outlines the County pays the School Board an operating cost that is proportionate to the share of operating costs.

Notable elements include (but are not limited to):

- School Board to provide electricity, water, natural gas, and other public utilities consumed by the Library, as well as property insurance
- OCL to provide telephone services, network and computer services in the branch
- OCL to be responsible for materials, liability and content insurance, staffing and supervision, and all costs associated with Library programs
- Improvements to Plattsville Library will be jointly designed and constructed with the costs dedicated to the Library
- All repairs will be maintained by the School Board with the costs built into the Library's operating costs
- Library to have the right to choose public operating hours when the School is not open (with written approval from the Management Committee)

Agreement with Private Property Owners

Lease agreements between a private property owner and the OCL are in place for the Otterville and Tavistock branches. Notable elements include (but are not limited to):

- OCL is responsible for electricity, water, and natural gas
- OCL to provide telephone and internet services for the branch
- Private property owners are responsible for ground maintenance
- Private property owners are responsible for major building maintenance while OCL is responsible for interior building maintenance
- Private property owners to provide janitorial services for the branch

5.3 Approaches in Other Library Systems

Oxford County Library employs many of the various facility provision models used by other Ontario library systems. For public libraries, common approaches are to provide branches that are:

- stand-alone libraries as is the case in Tillsonburg and Burgessville;
- integrated with community halls or community centres such as in Mount Elgin, Princeton and Innerkip; or
- combined with other civic infrastructure such as administration buildings / town halls or with emergency services as is the case in Ingersoll and Brownsville;
- provided in partnership with other institutions such as schools as is the practice in Plattsville; and/or
- leased from a private property owner such as in retail or storefront settings as is the case in Otterville and Tavistock.

For this LFP, other County library systems will be looked at to provide a basis of comparison to the approach presently in Oxford County through its current agreements with the municipalities, TVDSB, and private property owners. Case studies presented are Huron County Library, Lambton County Library, and Middlesex County Library as they are County library systems operating with similar characteristics to OCL.

Huron County Library - A Collaborative Approach

Huron County consists of nine lower-tier municipalities and operates 12 branches throughout the County. All County libraries are operated out of buildings owned or leased by the lower-tier municipalities, which are made available to Huron County Library (HCL) under a formal rental agreement and Service Delivery Model Policy. All but one municipality has a County-operated library branch.

This agreement guides the provision of library services and facilities between Huron County and each lower-tier municipality. The agreement has been governing roles and responsibilities since 1998 through which:

- Municipalities are responsible for maintaining the facility interior and exterior including garbage, snow removal, heating, building insurance, repairs, renovations and improvements; and
- HCL is responsible for staffing, operating and furnishing, equipment and materials, and periodic inspections.

This agreement specifies that HCL will establish an annual grant to be paid to each municipality and this grant will be reviewed each year. It further outlines that any new facilities or major renovations / improvements to existing buildings shall be jointly planned between the municipality and Library. Either party is able to terminate the agreement upon 90 days written notice.

Lambton County Library

Lambton County Library (LCL) and its lower-tier municipalities have an agreement that dates back to 1989 known as the Division of Responsibilities. This agreement assigns responsibilities to the municipalities and County, and was refined in 2024 through the creation of a new Facility Standards Policy that was approved by County Council. LCL also has a letter of understanding with the Lambton Kent District School Board.

LCL's Facility Standards Policy that defines minimum standards for design, amenities, and upkeep of buildings occupied by LCL. The Policy also provides provisions to allow for regular reviews and inspections of these buildings along with timely responses to maintenance and repair concerns. The Policy reflects modern principles and best practices regarding capital and operating obligations, performance evaluation, communication, governance, fiscal sustainability, and other elements required to deliver quality library services to Lambton County residents.

Middlesex County Library - Tiered Lease Rates

Middlesex County Library operates 15 libraries and one library vending machine that serves residents living in its lower-tier municipalities by leasing space in municipal buildings. This leased approach is different than Lambton County's agreement as it specifies that municipalities are to provide the physical space with no reference to a rental payment or physical space standards.

With changing user expectations and needs, Middlesex County encourages comprehensive services in certain locations. With the County delivering different types of spaces and services, it is recognized that library buildings fell into three broad categories providing Basic, Enhanced, and Comprehensive service levels.

In 2012, County Council and the Library Board approved a Three-Tier Lease Rate for County Library Facilities Policy. This is a variable lease structure for library facilities accounting in that there is a higher capital and maintenance cost associated with larger full-service branches. Lease rates for Enhanced library buildings are higher than Basic libraries. This provides the municipalities with revenue certainty through an assurance that each given branch will be repaid to reduce their capital payback. This allows municipalities to determine whether their

investments in a building will generate a positive return on investments in terms of fiscal performance but also take into account the value to their users.¹²

5.4 Benefits & Challenges of the Current Approach

For the branches that are co-located with municipal services (multi-use community centres and halls), the intent is to provide residents with convenience while municipalities and OCL benefit from the foot traffic that each other generates from the multi-use facility.

Feedback received from Library and municipal staff through LFP consultants reinforces the current approach of working collaboratively to provide library services. The County of Oxford provides strong value by generating economies of scale through its organizational infrastructure that ensures qualified staffing is in place, provision of information technology and communication, alignment with County services and outreach initiatives, and more. The current approach is an efficient way to deliver library services to a dispersed population across Oxford County.

The main challenge is working with many different partners while managing the expectations of the partner and library user. OCL strives to maintain positive relationships with each lower-tier municipality and TVDSB. Communication and building relationships can be challenging as municipal and school board staff come and go, but there is an opportunity to create a policy basis and operating practice for continued dialogue.

From a policy development perspective, communications can be engrained in principles as well as implementation of formal and informal methods. OCL could implement periodic reviews of policies (e.g., lease agreements) between the parties to discuss successes, challenges, and lessons learned to apply to future policy updates. Another implementation method that is effective and easy to do regular walk-throughs of each library branch with Library and municipal staff (or shared library owners; TVDSB). Library walk-throughs at least once a year can allow staff to review asset management needs at each branch and allows for a collective discussion about budget priorities between the OCL and its partners.

Facility Standards Policy

As described earlier in this Section with respect to Lambton County Library, a Facility Standards Policy can help to ensure that library buildings are designed and maintained in a manner agreed upon by Oxford County Library, lower-tier municipalities, TVDSB, and private property owners. It is recommended that OCL prepare a Facility Standards Policy to define a minimum standard that reflects best practices in order to deliver quality library services and spaces to library customers across the county.

¹² County of Middlesex. Staff Reports entitled Library Facility Study (January 24, 2012) and Three-Tier Lease Rate for County Library Facilities (November 27, 2012).

5.5 Recommendations

- Rec 1.** Prepare a Facility Standards Policy that will define a minimum standard for the design, amenities, and upkeep of library branches that is consistent with the Oxford County Library Service Delivery Model. The Policy should articulate roles and responsibilities associated with the delivery of library spaces and services with flexibility to reflect specific needs at varying branches. The Policy should reflect modern principles and best practices regarding governance, communication, fiscal sustainability, capital and operating obligations, performance evaluation and other elements in order to deliver quality library services.
- Rec 2.** Strive to provide library branches in buildings where complementary use or programming is possible (e.g., community centres, schools, etc.).
- Rec 3.** Schedule annual walk-through inspections of each branch with Library staff and facility owners/partners to discuss issues, opportunities, and challenges.



Norwich Library Collections

Section 6.0

County-Wide Space Analysis



Section 6.0

County-Wide Space Analysis

This section assesses the need for library space across Oxford County. The analysis establishes a planning framework through branch typologies, use of per capita standards, and geospatial analysis. Analysis that are specific to each branch are contained in Section 8.0 and build on the county-wide assessments.

6.1 Per Capita Space Analysis

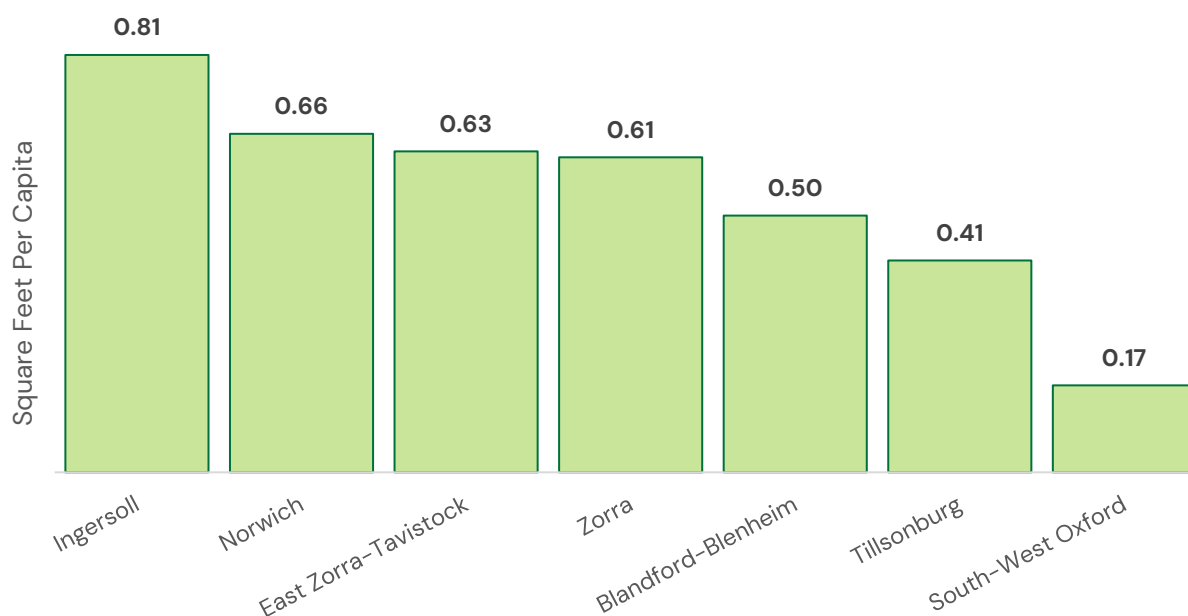
To understand high-level needs, the use of per capita standards is a reasonable measure for most urban and rural library systems. With the evolution of library holdings and roles, public library usage levels remain strong, and a standards-based approach endures. The unique needs of individual communities can determine the amount of library space required.

OCL's system-wide supply of 45,904 square feet translates into **0.55 square feet of library space per capita**. Provision rates by OCL's Branch Tiers are:

- **Village Branches – 0.10 square feet per capita** based on a collective floor area of 8,444 square feet.
- **Regional Branches – 0.20 square feet per capita** based on a collective floor area of 16,900 square feet.
- **Resource Branches – 0.25 square feet per capita** based on a collective floor area of 20,560 square feet.

Space provision rates vary across the County from just 0.17 square feet per capita in South-West Oxford to 0.81 square feet per capita in Ingersoll (Figure 16). Ingersoll and Tillsonburg are home to 42% of the OCL service area and account for 45% of OCL's total library space while the rural municipalities (Blandford-Blenheim, East Zorra-Tavistock, Norwich, South-West Oxford, and Zorra) contain 58% of the OCL service area population and 55% of the total library space.

Figure 16: Rate of Provision across Oxford County, 2024



Per Capita Space in Comparator Library Systems

A benchmarking exercise undertaken among comparator county library systems in Ontario found that the average per capita library space provision was 0.67 square feet per capita, which is 20% higher than provided in Oxford County. Middlesex County offers the highest rate per capita at 0.96 while the Region of Waterloo (adjacent to Oxford County) provides the least amount of square feet per capita.

Table 13: Per Capita Space in Comparator Library Systems, 2023

Comparator Libraries	Total Floor Area (sq. ft.)	Population	Sq. Ft. Per Capita
Bruce County	52,919	68,761	0.77
Elgin County	31,448	51,912	0.61
Huron County	46,613	59,411	0.78
Lambton County	102,456	125,807	0.81
Middlesex County	71,102	73,754	0.96
Region of Waterloo	26,037	70,632	0.37
SDG Counties	25,143	63,922	0.39
Total	355,718 ft²	514,199	0.67
Oxford County	45,904 ft²	83,140	0.55

Source: Ontario Public Library Statistics, 2023

6.2 Oxford County Space Analysis

OCL's provision level of 0.55 square feet per capita is slightly below the ARUPLO Guidelines. It is recommended that OCL target a provision rate of 0.6 square feet per capita in line with progressive library systems across Ontario and to maintain its service level at a similar rate to what is currently being achieved. Population projections presented in Section 3.1 of this LFP suggest that the number of people living within the OCL service area catchment could reach 99,260 by 2034 (excluding Woodstock). If growth rates continue as projected, a total library supply of 59,556 square feet would be needed by 2034 (Table 14). **This amounts to 13,652 square feet of additional library space needed within the County within the next 10 years.**

Table 14: System-Wide Projection of Library Space Needs, 2024 - 2034

Year	OCL Service Area Population	Library Space Provided	Library Space Needs at 0.6 ft ² per capita	Deviation from Existing Supply
2024	83,140	45,904 ft ²	49,884	- 3,980
2034	99,260	45,904 ft ²	59,556	- 13,652

Population Source: County of Oxford Community Planning Office email correspondence, November 2024

Note: Population excludes the City of Woodstock whose library services are delivered separate from the County.

Per capita rates of provision are greatest in Ingersoll and Norwich, while South-West Oxford and Tillsonburg deliver the least amount of space in proportion to their respective populations. Table 15 illustrates that the amount of library space available in Ingersoll and Norwich is sufficient to achieve the recommended provision rate. Tillsonburg has the greatest shortfall of space that will be compounded due to the amount of population growth projected by 2034 when the Town would require nearly 7,400 square feet of additional library space.

South-West Oxford offers the lowest rate of space per capita and despite limited population growth, that municipality's 10-year shortfall is projected at 4,225 square feet based on the system-wide 0.6 square feet per capita target. The remaining municipalities of Blanford-Blenheim, East Zorra-Tavistock, and Zorra are projected to have modest shortfalls of less than 1,500 square feet.

Table 15: Library Space Projection by Municipality, 2034

Year	2024	2034
Blandford-Blenheim	8,200 persons	9,240 persons
Existing Supply	4,100 ft ²	4,100 ft ²
Service Level (ft ² per capita)	0.5	0.4
Library Space Needs at 0.6 ft ² per capita	4,920	5,544
Deviation from Existing Supply (ft²)	- 820	- 1,444
East Zorra-Tavistock	8,860 persons	10,560 persons
Existing Supply	5,538 ft ²	5,538 ft ²
Service Level (ft ² per capita)	0.63	0.52
Library Space Needs at 0.6 ft ² per capita	5,316	6,336
Deviation from Existing Supply (ft²)	+ 222	- 798
Ingersoll	14,960 persons	17,540 persons
Existing Supply	12,160 ft ²	12,160 ft ²
Service Level (ft ² per capita)	0.81	0.69
Library Space Needs at 0.6 ft ² per capita	8,976	10,524
Deviation from Existing Supply (ft²)	+ 3,184	+ 1,636
Norwich	12,560 persons	14,440 persons
Existing Supply	8,280 ft ²	8,280 ft ²
Service Level (ft ² per capita)	0.66	0.57
Library Space Needs at 0.6 ft ² per capita	7,536	8,664
Deviation from Existing Supply (ft²)	+ 744	- 384
South-West Oxford	8,420 persons	9,420 persons
Existing Supply	1,426 ft ²	1,426 ft ²
Service Level (ft ² per capita)	0.17	0.15
Library Space Needs at 0.6ft ² per capita	5,052	5,652
Deviation from Existing Supply (ft²)	- 3,626	- 4,226
Tillsonburg	20,360 persons	26,280 persons
Existing Supply	8,400 ft ²	8,400 ft ²
Service Level (ft ² per capita)	0.41	0.32
Library Space Needs at 0.6 ft ² per capita	12,216	5,652
Deviation from Existing Supply (ft²)	- 3,816	- 7,368
Zorra	9,780 persons	11,780 persons
Existing Supply	6,000 ft ²	6,000 ft ²
Service Level (ft ² per capita)	0.61	0.51
Library Space Needs at 0.6 ft ² per capita	5,868	7,068
Deviation from Existing Supply (ft²)	+ 132	-1,068
OCL's Total Space Needs (at 0.6 ft² per capita)	49,884	59,556
Deviation from OCL's Supply of 45,904 ft²	- 3,980	- 13,652

Population Source: Oxford County Municipal Comprehensive Review Forecasts, 2024

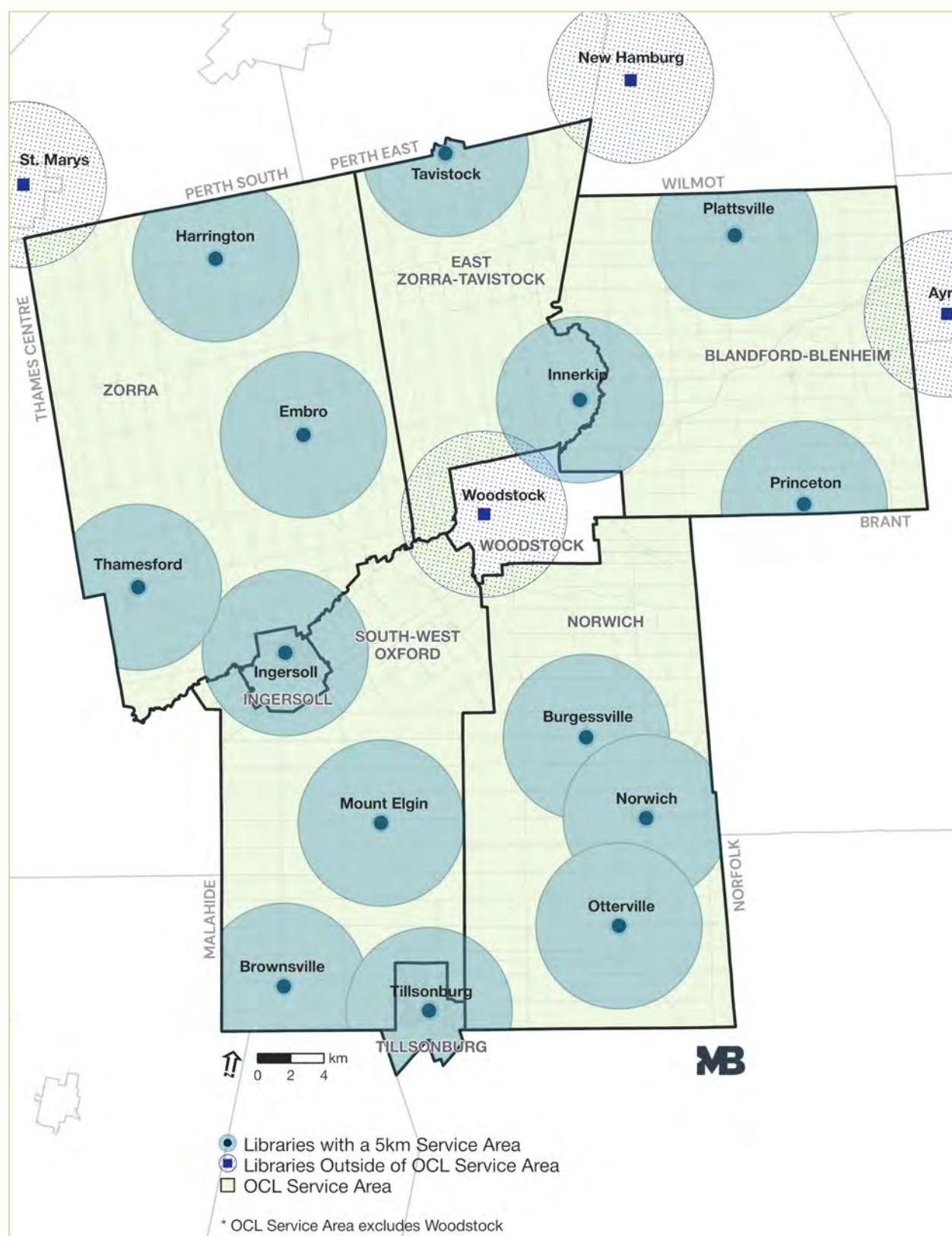
6.3 Spatial Analysis

OCL's branches service localized catchment areas but depending on the services offered at a given branch, its reach may extend further where users are willing or able to travel to reach it. The size of a library's geographic catchment is also dictated by whether it is located within a rural or urban setting. Rural branches have a larger catchment size due to the dispersed nature of their populations and shorter drive times by car due to less traffic.

OCL's Service Delivery Model specifies that libraries should be located within a 10 to 35 minute drive depending on whether it is a Village, Regional or Resource Branch. For the purpose of the LFP, Map 4 applies a 5 kilometre radius to all libraries which would represent a 10 to 15 minute drive depending on whether travel is occurring within an urban or rural road network (note: most pedestrians are unlikely to walk between settlements). The distributional analysis in illustrates the following within each municipality:

- **Blandford-Blenheim** – satisfactory coverage, with the Bright and Drumbo settlements serviced by branches in Plattsville, Princeton or Innerkip. It bears noting that the Innerkip branch is likely attracts use by City of Woodstock residents, particularly with new residential developments in that municipality's northeast.
- **East Zorra-Tavistock** – a gap between the municipality's western border and Highway 59 but recognizing that these areas are largely rural and not densely populated.
- **Ingersoll & Tillsonburg** – strong coverage within their respective urban boundaries, with both branches located in the core/downtown areas.
- **Norwich** – generally strong coverage resulting from having three libraries though there is a geographic gap in the municipality's predominantly rural north
- **South-West Oxford** – a geographic gap within the north of the municipality in the areas around Beachville, Sweaburg, and Salford settlements, noting these settlements are within a 10 to 15 minute drive of the Ingersoll branch (and Woodstock Public Library).
- **Zorra** – coverage is generally satisfactory with a geographic gap observed northwest of County Road 16 and Highway 119, however, the Kintore settlement (where much of the population in the northwest is situated) is less than a 10 minute drive from the Thamesford Branch.

Map 4: Geographic Distribution of OCL Branches



6.4 Recommendations - County-Wide

- Rec 4.** Target a space provision rate of 0.6 square feet of library space per capita over the LFP planning period, thereby planning for the addition of approximately 13,700 square feet of new library space to meet a total supply of 59,500 square feet for OCL by the year 2034.
- Rec 5.** In line with best practices, applicable legislation, and municipal specific objectives in Oxford County, undertake audits of barrier-free accessibility for all branches that have not completed such an exercise in the past 3 years.
- Rec 6.** Strive to engage equity-deserving populations or their representatives in the design or redevelopment of libraries to improve inclusivity of library spaces. Equity-deserving populations include, but are not limited to, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, persons experiencing low-income or homelessness, culturally diverse and racialized populations, and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.



Tillsonburg Library Customer Service Desk

Section 7.0

Library Space Needs by Municipality



Section 7.0

Library Space Needs by Municipality

This Section builds on the county-wide assessments in Section 7.0 to evaluate needs for library space within each of the lower-tier municipalities in the OCL service area.

7.1 Blandford-Blenheim

2024 Population: 8,200

2034 Population Forecast: 9,240

Existing Library Space: 4,100 ft² (0.50 square feet per capita)

Number of Branches: 2

2034 Supply Required at 0.6 square feet per capita: 5,544 ft²

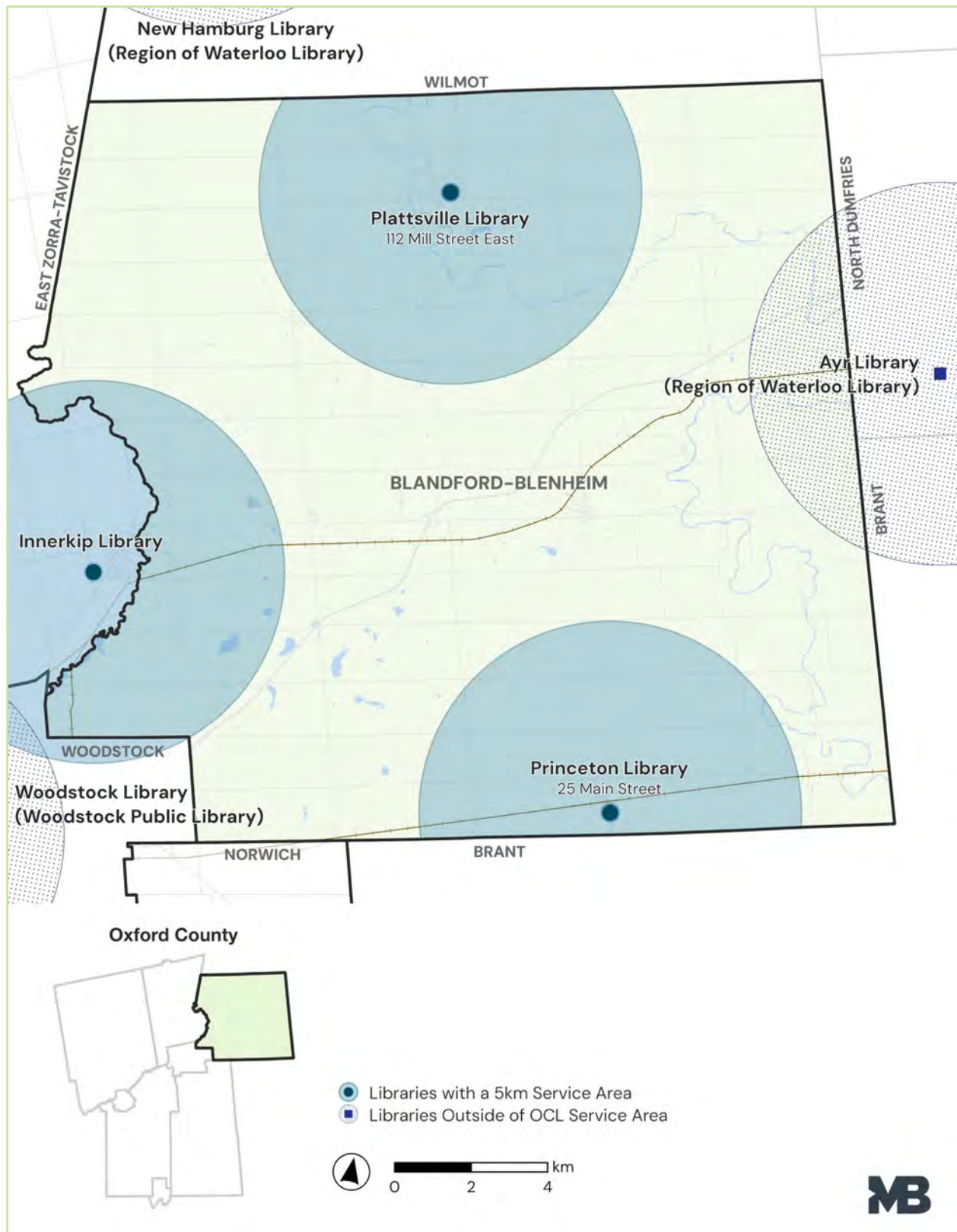
Blandford-Blenheim is a primarily rural municipality located in the northeastern part of Oxford County and whose primary settlements consist of Bright, Drumbo, Plattsville, Princeton, and Wolverson. The Plattsville and Princeton branches serve the Township and there are just over 1,000 residents that identify these two libraries as their home branch, while Blandford-Blenheim residents account for 7% of OCL's active cardholders.

Over 90% of Blandford-Blenheim's residential growth over the next 10 years is directed to Plattsville and Drumbo whose populations are expected to increase by 500 and 600 persons, respectively.¹³ The floor area contained in the Plattsville and Princeton libraries results in a provision rate of 0.5 square feet per capita that is below the recommended rate. By the year 2034, an additional 1,444 square feet of library space would be required in the Township in order to achieve a provision rate of 0.6 square feet per capita.

The two branches service areas on either side of Highway 401, while areas to the west fall within a portion of the Innerkip branch catchment and certain areas east of Blenheim Road are in proximity to Waterloo Public Library's branch in Ayr. The Drumbo settlement falls within a geographic gap just beyond the Plattsville and Princeton catchments. Drumbo has approximately 1,000 residents and additional residential growth is projected in the medium-term. With strong access to the Highway 401, County Road 29 and County Road 3 corridors, has satisfactory vehicular access to other library branches including Plattsville and Princeton which are both within a 10 minute drive. Further, OCL has made it a priority to direct Ox on the Run services to Drumbo during the pilot period which has reintroduced library services to the settlement following closure of the Drumbo Library in 2005.

¹³ Township of Blandford-Blenheim Development Charges Background Study, 2024

Map 5: Distribution of Libraries, Blandford-Blenheim



Plattsville Library

Address:	112 Mill Street East
OCL Classification:	Regional Branch
Library Type:	Integrated with Public School
Ownership:	Co-owned between County and TVDSB
Net Floor Area:	3,000 ft ²
Avg. Weekly Visits:	203
Hours Open:	25 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	22,566 items / 7.5 items per ft ²

The Plattsville Library was built in 2003 through a partnership with TVDSB that integrated a shared library into the Plattsville & District Public School. The lease agreement specifies that 60% of the space is to be used as a public library and the remaining 40% as a school library. While there is no physical separation between the public and school portions of the space, OCL and TVDSB staff work collaboratively and have delineated areas for collections, seating, and programming on different sides of the space.

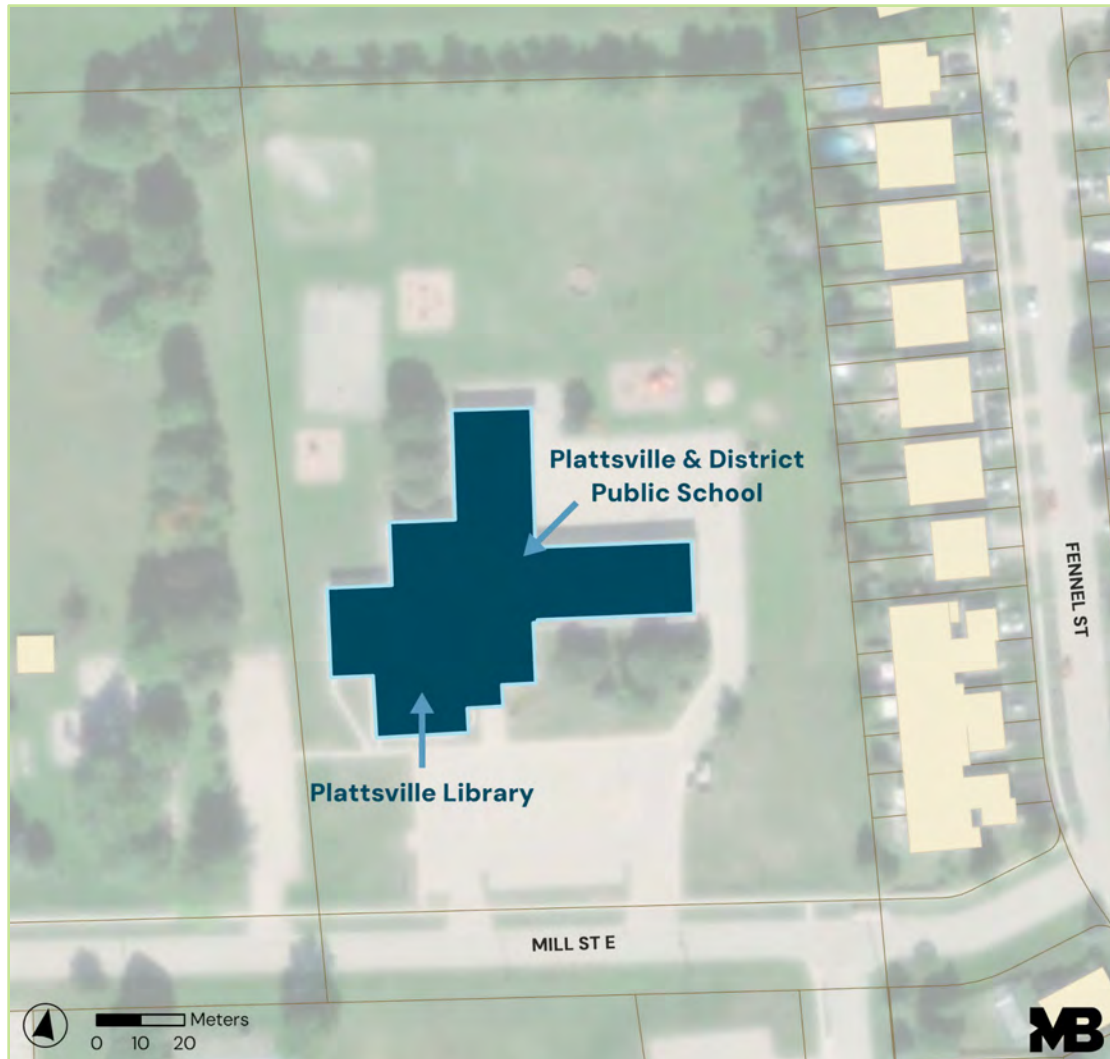
Plattsville Library generated the fourth-highest number of visits and program attendance rates of any OCL branch in 2024, though physical circulation ranked seventh. This may suggest that library customers value the branch's amenities such as seating and program areas, though circulation rates may be impacted by the fact that there is limited space available to house collections which are 25% below ARUPLO Guidelines for Medium Branches. That being said, branch has experienced a 45% increase in its physical circulation from 2019 to 2024 that may suggest people are seeking more access to materials and is something to be mindful of moving forward.

By virtue of being physically attached to the elementary school, the Plattsville Library attracts use among many young children and families. A seniors' residential development is directly across the street which contributes usage among that demographic while the branch is situated close to new housing developments on the settlement's east side. The library was designed in consideration of relatively modern barrier-free accessibility standards and appears to be in generally good condition having been in service for 22 years.

With a modest space deficit projected in Blanford-Blenheim not deemed to warrant construction of new library space, making efficient use of existing space through optimization is a way to cost-effectively respond to population growth and evolving service needs. With OCL and TVDSB maintaining separate collections and equipment on each other's "side" of the Plattsville branch, there is merit in exploring whether the library could be configured more efficiently by sharing certain collections and equipment. There are many examples across the province where schools and municipalities have integrated their collections, computer workstations, program rooms and other areas. In the case of Plattsville, "co-mingling" certain spaces and services could reduce duplication of space and free it up for other uses such as

study, enhanced collections, etc. In addition, this LFP recommends undertaking minor aesthetic upgrades to the Plattsville Library such as new paint, mobile shelving in the childrens area to provide flexibility for programs, and lowered shelving for accessibility.

Figure 17: Plattsville Library Site Plan



Service Desk



Computers



Collections

Princeton Library

Address:	25 Main Street
OCL Classification:	Village Branch
Library Type:	Integrated with Museum
Ownership:	Municipal
Net Floor Area:	1,100 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	88
Hours Open:	16 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	16,363 items / 14.9 items per ft ²

Princeton Library is integrated with the Princeton & District Museum and shares a large site that is also home to the Princeton Community Hall and a park containing a playground, ball diamonds and outdoor rink. As such, the Library is part of the settlement's primary community gathering place and also draws from nearby rural areas. Its service area covers the south portion of Blandford–Blenheim and extends into Brant County. Originally opened in 1997, a minor renovation was carried out in 2018 that refreshed paint while adding seating and new lowered shelving units.

Over 370 library users identify Princeton Library as their home branch. The 4,600 visits in 2024 was 30% below OCL's rural library average while circulation rate was 10% below the rural library average. These could be affected by the library's small floor area, limited collection size, and the fact that it is open 16 hours across four days per week. It is worth noting, however, that This library has experienced a 99% increase in physical circulation since pre-pandemic circulation rates (2019). OCL has access to the Museum's Theatre Room to deliver library programs and events that allow Princeton Library to offer more programs than any other Village Branch in the library system. Princeton Library could benefit from minor upgrades to the interior, such as, new paint and furniture upgrades.



Princeton Library Exterior



Lobby (shared with Museum)

Figure 18: Princeton Library Site Plan



Library Entrance



Children's Area & Collections



Workstations & Collections Area

7.2 East Zorra-Tavistock

2024 Population: 8,860

2034 Population Forecast: 10,560

Existing Library Space: 5,538 ft² (0.63 square feet per capita)

Number of Branches: 2

2034 Supply Required at 0.6 square feet per capita: 6,336 ft²

The Township of East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) is an urban-rural municipality with three primary settlement areas consisting of Hickson, Innerkip and Tavistock. EZT's population has grown by 20% since 2016, adding over 1,400 persons, and is projected to grow by a further 1,700 persons by the year 2034. Nearly one out of every five EZT residents (18%) are active library cardholders which is the third highest rate in Oxford County outside of Ingersoll and Tillsonburg, and EZT residents constitute 10% of OCL's active cardholder base.

The floor area provided by the two branches in Innerkip and Tavistock service EZT residents at a healthy per capita rate which is the third highest among the municipalities serviced by OCL. The amount of library space is largely sufficient to meet growth-related needs to the year 2034 with a small deficit in the range of 800 square feet projected.

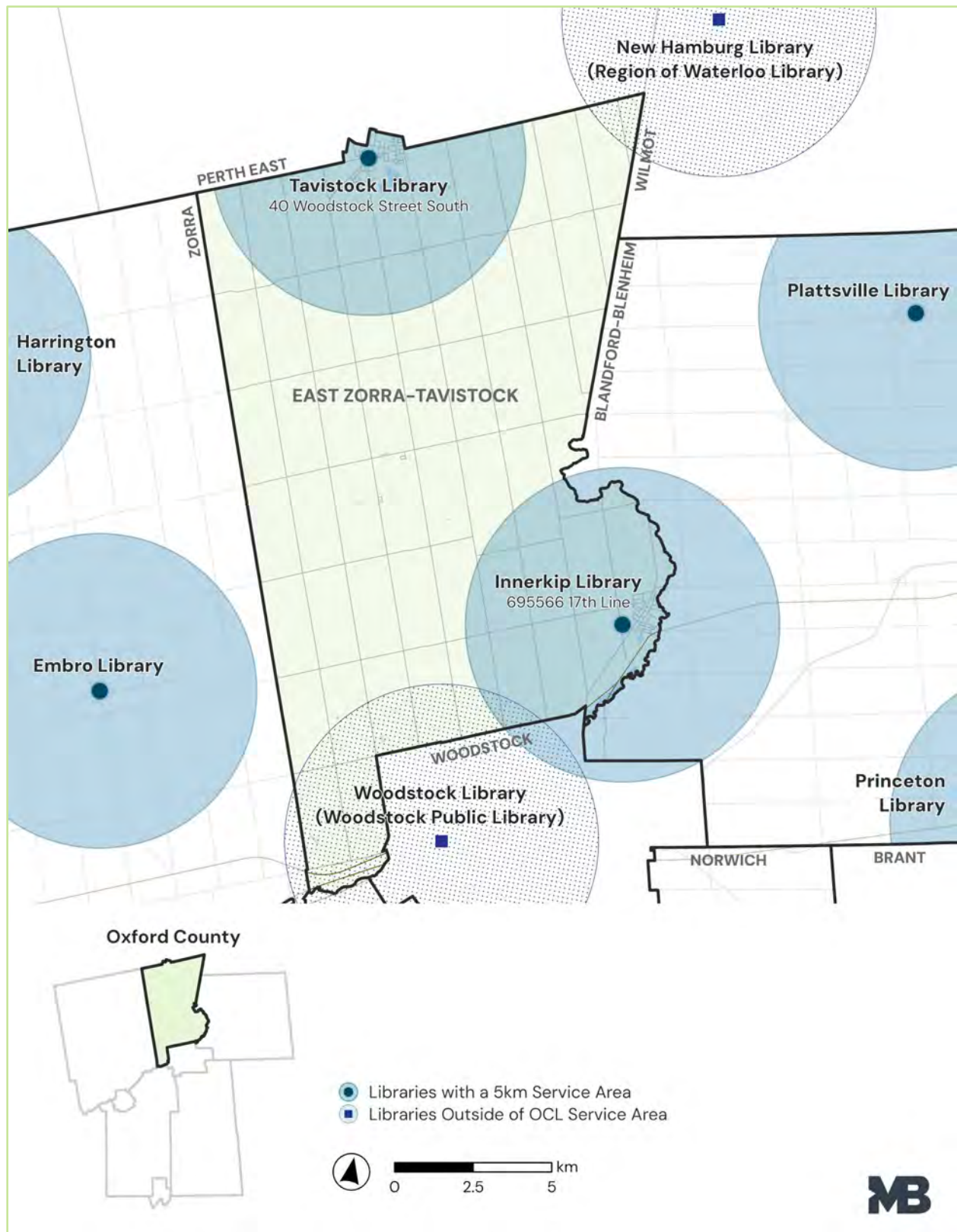


Innerkip Community Centre & Library



Tavistock Library

Map 6: Distribution of Libraries, East Zorra-Tavistock



Innerkip Library

Address:	695566 17 th Line
OCL Classification:	Village Branch
Library Type:	Integrated with Community Centre
Ownership:	Municipal
Net Floor Area:	1,038 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	91
Hours Open:	16 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	13,978 items / 13.5 items per ft ²

Innerkip Library was constructed in the 1980s as part of the broader community centre development, and the branch was renovated in 2012. There are nearly 600 library users that use the Innerkip Library as their home branch and it receives the greatest number of in-person visits among OCL's Village Branches. The collection size meets minimum ARUPLO Guidelines, however, circulation is slightly below the average for OCL's rural libraries and does not appear to have recovered from the pandemic with circulation down 19% compared to 2019.

At slightly more than 1,000 square feet, the floor area is tight which challenges the ability for OCL to effectively program the space or accommodate presentations, with branch staff sometimes having to resort to holding programs outside of the library in the community centre's hallway. Like a number of libraries, a lack of adequate storage is also a concern. Accessibility within the branch meets standards but narrow aisles can make it difficult for persons with mobility-related restrictions to maneuver. There are limited opportunities for study, collaboration and workspace.

Over the LFP's planning horizon, the Innerkip settlement is projected to grow by 330 persons,¹⁴ and thus could approach 2,000 residents in total. That population alone would warrant a library branch in the range of 1,200 square feet not to mention the fact that the Innerkip Library also draws from rural areas in other parts of EZT as well as Blanford-Blenheim; as the City of Woodstock develops new residential areas in its northeast, it is likely that some of those residents may find it more convenient to travel to Innerkip rather than into the City's downtown thereby generating further pressures on the Innerkip Library.

¹⁴ Township of East Zorra-Tavistock 2024 Development Charge Background Study

With EZT facing a modest 10-year space deficit, expansion of the Innerkip Library may be a lower priority from a service level perspective; however, the limited functionality of the library in relation to its level of use increases its priority. OCL and the Township should consider expanding the Innerkip Library to 2,500 square feet in order to meet minimum OCL Service Guidelines and ARUPLO standards (i.e. adding at least 1,400 square feet of new space to the current branch) by extending the building to the east;

Economies of scale in construction could be attained if the community centre portion of the building were also to be expanded (the community centre is being renovated at time of writing). Added floor area would allow OCL to rethink the interior configuration of the Innerkip Library and the expansion would optimally result in a dedicated program room for the library, additional seating areas and a new, accessible and more prominent entranceway into the library (the picture below illustrates snow-clearing challenges at the secondary entrance, not to mention that the door is somewhat hidden being at the side of the building).



Children's Program



Presentation Setup



Library Entrance Challenges

Figure 19: Innerkip Library Site Plan



Library Entrance



Book Return Box



Children's Area & Collections

Figure 20: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Innerkip Library

INNERKIP

Existing	1,040 sf
Addition	1,460 sf
Total Net Floor Area	2,500 sf



MJMA
ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

Tavistock Library

Address:	40 Woodstock Street South
OCL Classification:	Regional Branch
Library Type:	Stand-alone
Ownership:	Private Property Owner
Net Floor Area:	4,500 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	184
Hours Open:	35 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	27,613 items / 6.1 items per ft ²

Tavistock Library services residential communities in the north part of East Zorra-Tavistock (part of its service area also extends into the Township of Wilmot). OCL and the County of Oxford negotiated a creative partnership with a private property owner that replaced a former library branch in Tavistock with a new and larger branch as part of an adaptive re-use and redevelopment project in 2010. Now housed in a building that dates back to the 1880s, the branch has ground floor access while there are two upper floors that contain affordable housing units.

There were over 9,500 visits to the Tavistock Library in 2024 which was the sixth-highest in the OCL system while circulation ranked fourth and has nearly tripled since 2019. There are over 960 active cardholders that use the Tavistock Library as their home branch, accounting for 6% of OCL's active users. The branch is well-lit, aesthetically pleasing and accessible for persons with disabilities while providing ample areas for seating and to browse collections. At 4,500 square feet, it is the second largest of OCL's rural libraries. As one of the newer libraries in the County and provision rates largely sufficient for EZT over the next 10 years, the Tavistock Library can largely focus on minor aesthetic upgrades and potential to reconfigure space in a manner that adds more seating. Exterior branding or design amenities may be considered to make the library more visually prominent and increase its street presence along Highway 59.

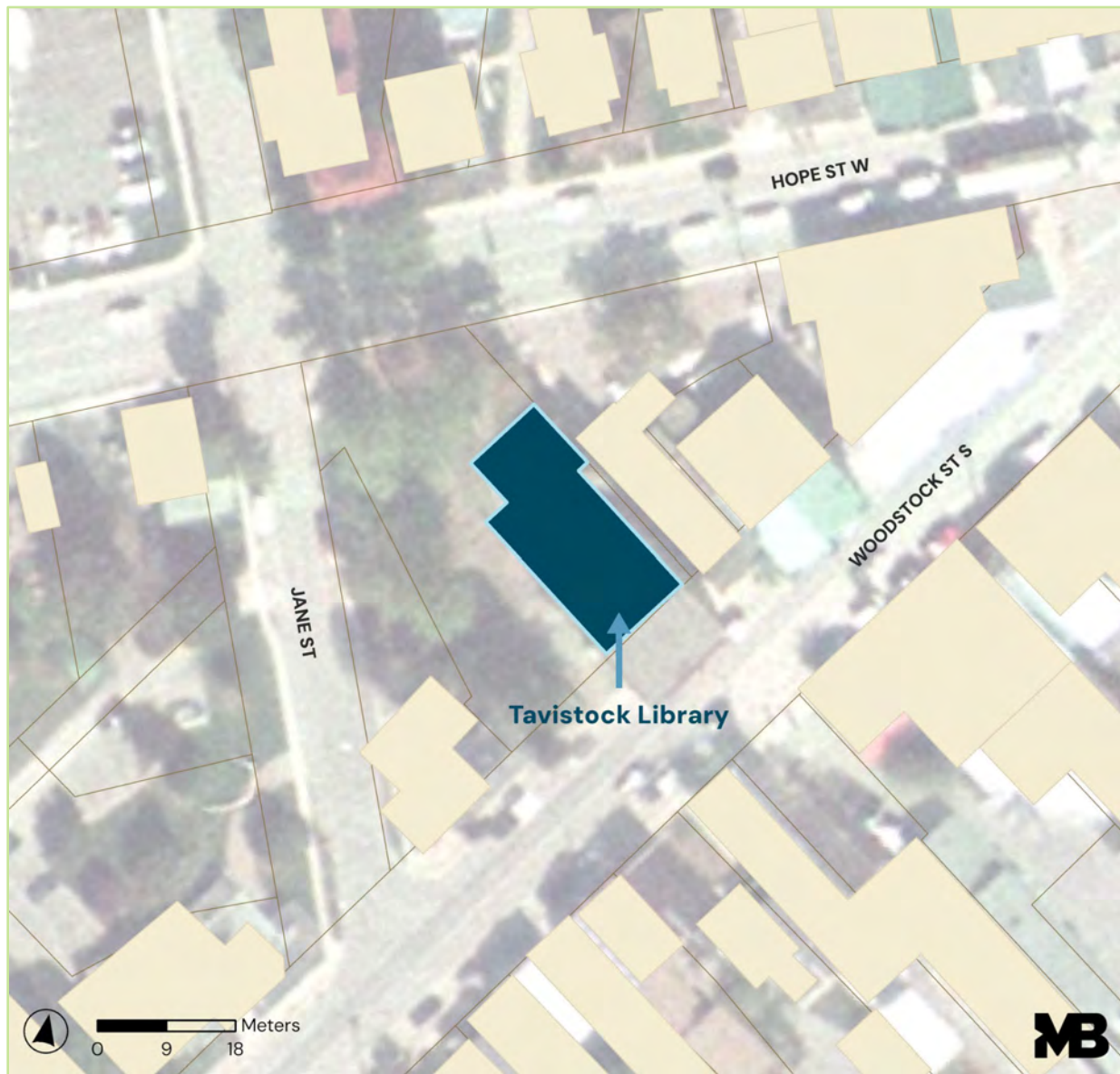


Tavistock Library Exterior



Collections

Figure 21: Tavistock Library Site Plan



Accessible Ramp



Teen Area



Children's Area

7.3 Ingersoll

2024 Population: 14,960

2034 Population Forecast: 17,540

Existing Library Space: 12,160 ft² (0.81 square feet per capita)

Number of Branches: 1

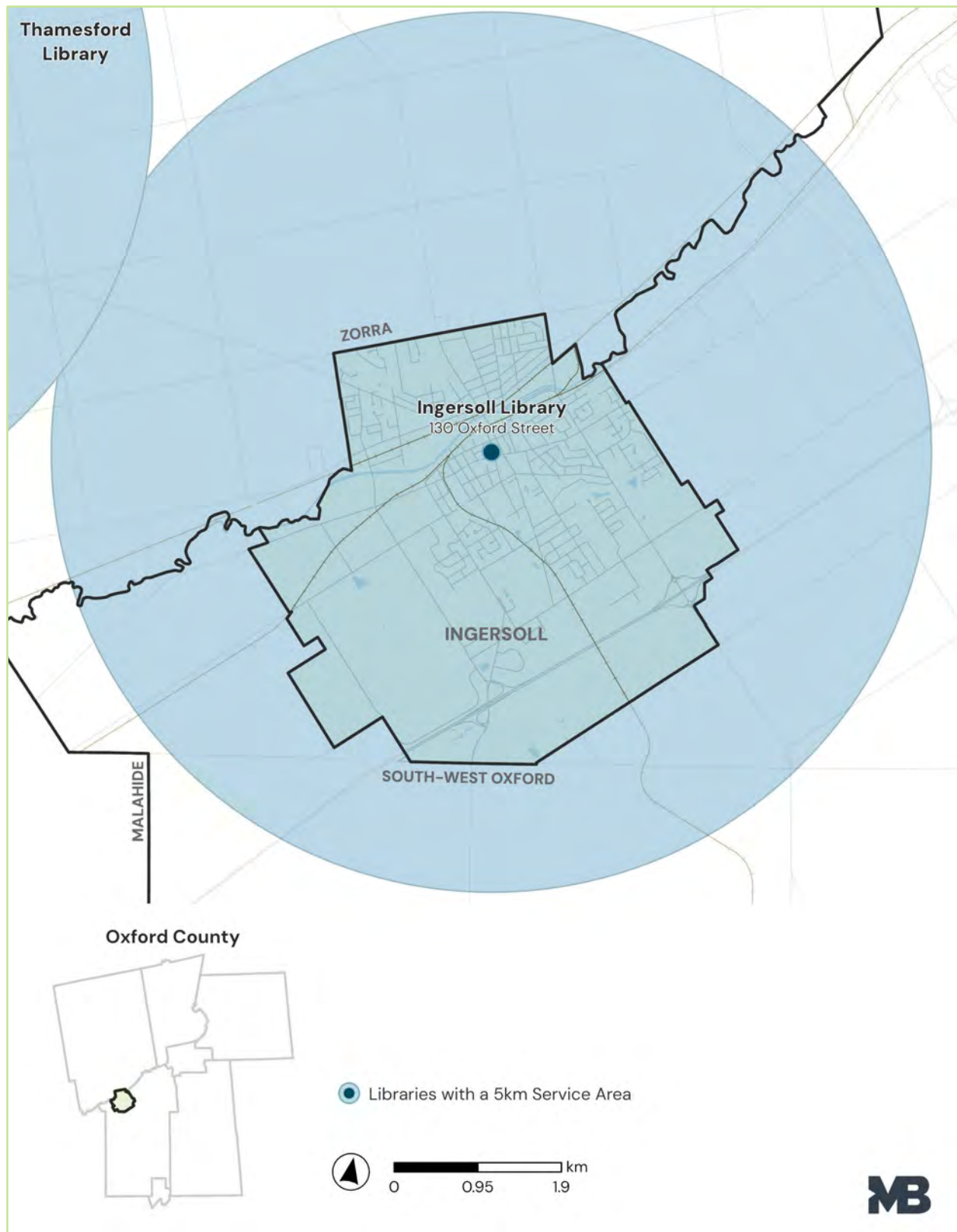
2034 Supply Required at 0.6 square feet per capita: 10,524 ft²

The Town of Ingersoll is a growing urban community whose population grew by 12% between 2016 and 2024. The Town is projected to increase by another 17% over the next 10 years and add nearly 2,600 persons. One out of every three Ingersoll residents is an active library cardholder which is the highest rate among any municipality served by OCL. Ingersoll achieves the highest rate of library space provision in the OCL service territory at 0.81 square feet per capita and the current floor space available at the Ingersoll Library will be sufficient to meet the recommended per capita target beyond 2034.



Ingersoll Library Exterior

Map 7: Distribution of Libraries, Ingersoll



Ingersoll Library

Address:	130 Oxford Street
OCL Classification:	Resource Branch
Library Type:	Integrated with Municipal Town Hall
Ownership:	Co-owned between County and Town
Net Floor Area:	12,160 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	1,106
Hours Open:	51.5 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	126,383 items / 10.4 items per ft ²

The Ingersoll Library is integrated with the Town Hall, conveniently located in the core area. The building the branch is located in was built in 1996 and has had minor renovations to the space in 2024. Ingersoll Library has a strong visibility and a welcoming frontage along a both King Street and Oxford Street.

The branch is home to the largest collection in the OCL system (27,000 items) and recorded the highest physical circulation in 2024. Only the Tillsonburg Library attracted more in-person visits and program attendees. Approximately 4,800 active cardholders report Ingersoll Library as their home branch, amounting to 30% of all OCL's active users. Vehicular parking is a reported limitation during busy periods though there is on-street parking and a parking lot available across the street.

Ingersoll Library has a dedicated program room with a kitchen for use. Between 2023 and 2024, the branch increased its program and event offerings by 25% which resulted in a 36% increase in attendance, demonstrating that OCL was able to address a degree of previously unmet demand. A recent renovation over the past year has converted a former washroom into a small Makerspace containing equipment, tools and technology including an iMac with video editing software, 3D printer, Cricut machine, sewing machine, and more.

The large basement level presents an opportunity to make more efficient use of space. OCL shares the basement with the Town who have a few staff offices that sit alongside library books and its Library of Things collection. Discussions with Town of Ingersoll staff indicate that they are beginning to experience pressures on its administrative areas and thus an overall space audit of the Town Hall and Library complex should be carried out to determine how to maximize the space for both parties. For example, OCL may find that shifting some library staff and back-of-house activities may free up ground floor space for additional public-facing services; the Town may find that some of its staff could also use the basement level thereby allowing the Library to expand its ground-floor presence.

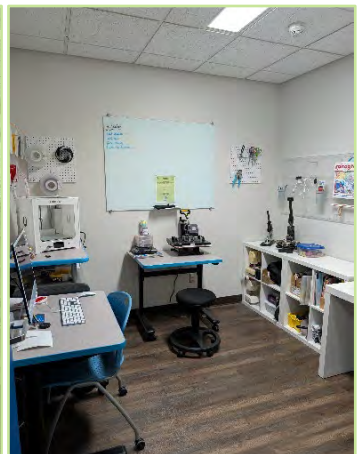
Figure 22: Ingersoll Library Site Plan



Library Exterior



Children's Area



MakerSpace

7.4 Norwich

2024 Population: 12,560

2034 Population Forecast: 14,440

Existing Library Space: 8,280 ft² (0.7 square feet per capita)

Number of Branches: 3

2034 Supply Required at 0.6 square feet per capita: 8,664 ft²

Located in the southeast quadrant of Oxford County, the Town of Norwich grew by approximately 1,000 people since 2016 with populations largely concentrated in the Burgessville, Norwich, Otterville, Oxford Centre and Springford settlements. Nearly 1,900 new residents are forecasted to arrive by 2034, growing the Township's population by 15%. The number of Norwich residents that are active OCL library cardholders equates to 15% of the municipal population.

Three libraries result in strong distribution between Burgessville, Norwich and Otterville – in fact there are overlapping service catchments between the branches – while the total amount of library space equates to 0.66 square feet per capita which is the second most among Oxford County municipalities and behind only Ingersoll. The existing supply of library space in the Township would meet most of the 10-year space requirement, leaving a nominal deficit of less than 400 square feet.



Burgessville Library

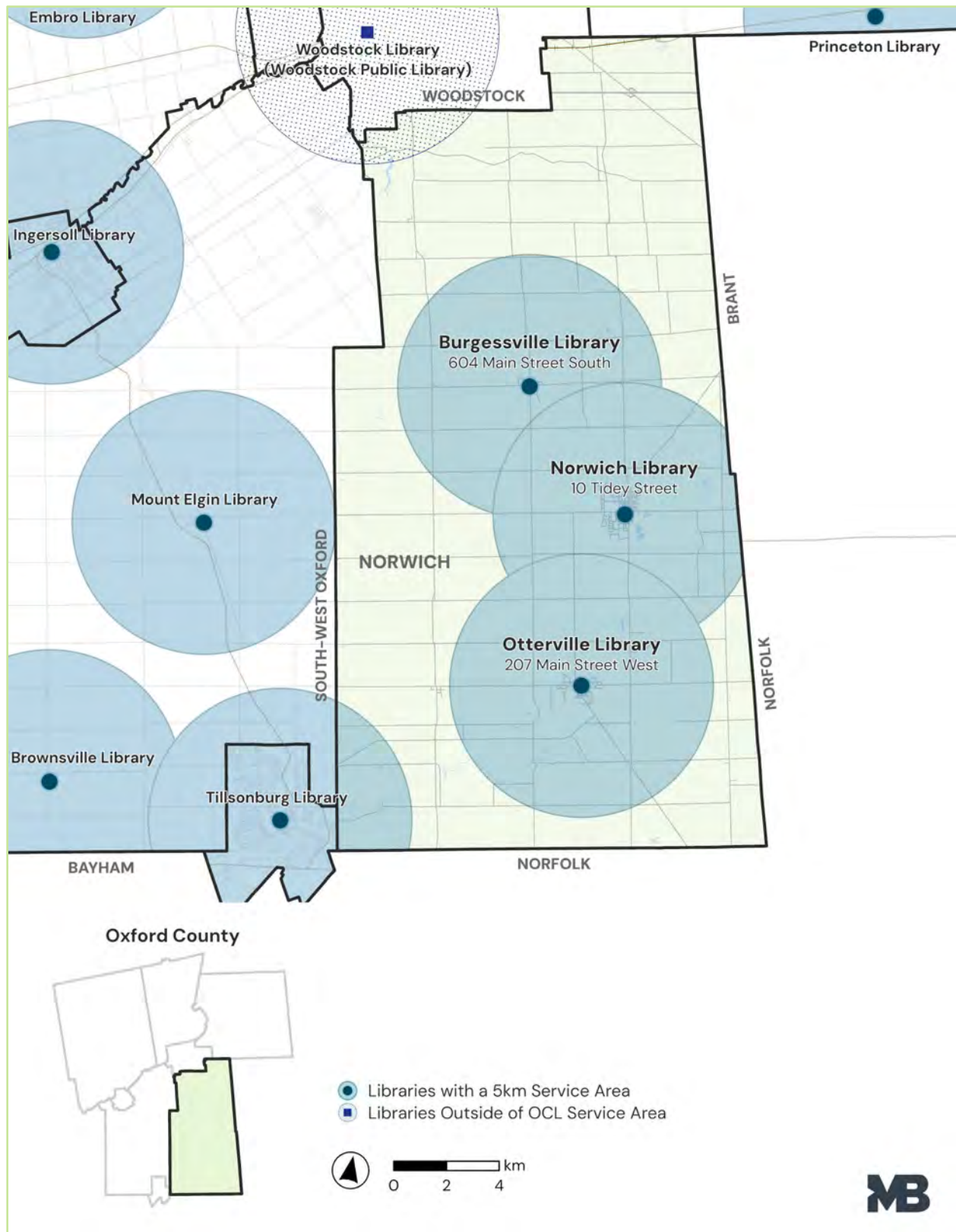


Norwich Library



Otterville Library

Map 8: Distribution of Libraries, Norwich



Burgessville Library

Address:	604 Main Street South
OCL Classification:	Village Branch
Library Type:	Stand-alone
Ownership:	Municipal
Net Floor Area:	800 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	90
Hours Open:	16 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	26,210 items / 32.8 items per ft ²

The Burgessville Library was converted from a house by the former Township of North Norwich into a library branch as a Centennial project in 1967. The Library was renovated with the assistance of community volunteers in 2007. It attracted the second highest number of in-person visits among Village Branches though it is one of the smallest libraries in Oxford County and its very small footprint makes it clear that there are pressures being placed on it. The number of visits per square foot was the second highest rate in Burgessville, behind only Tillsonburg, while circulation per square foot was the greatest of all OCL branches (total circulation ranked fifth in the system). The lack of a quality program room hinders OCL's ability to deliver a meaningful number of programs and events out of this location. Library staff indicate that most of the clientele consists of residents who are using the library for home schooling and internet access.

Due to its era of construction and site constraints, there are pressing concerns regarding barrier-free accessibility. There is no accessible entrance to the Library with a set of stairs being the only way to gain access from the front and back of the building; OCL and County staff have investigated the possibility of adding an exterior ramp but doing so would eliminate at least two of the four parking spaces available on the site. Inside the Library, the small floor area is nearly entirely consumed with shelving, seating and the customer service desk while the washroom is not accessible. The basement level is only accessible via a set of stairs and contains a meeting room that also accommodates a limited number of programs.

As one of OCL's smallest libraries whose site is not conducive to expansion nor accessibility improvements, the building's future must be given careful consideration. As the library's total circulation ranks in the top five branches and may indicate that the community uses the library for borrowing, it is clear that residents value having a library in Burgessville for materials. Optimally, the existing library building would be replaced through a comprehensive renewal project if the intent is to retain library services in Burgessville. To rationalize an appropriate return on construction costs as well as to align with OCL Service Guidelines, a new library should be between 2,500 and 5,000 square feet in size plus space for onsite parking. Depending on the eventual size of the replacement, a different property in Burgessville may need to be secured.

Should a decision be made to not replace/redevelop the Burgessville Library, OCL must consider whether sustaining operations out of the existing building is appropriate. First and foremost, the current branch does not meet legislated standards set out through the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* while its structural and functional limitations are not conducive to in-person uses commonly requested in a library space. Accessibility improvements alone are likely to cost tens of thousands of dollars not to mention the fact that the building is approaching 60 years of service life and will thus require increasing levels of maintenance and repair as time goes on.

Costs to make the building barrier-free combined with ongoing lifecycle replacement do not present a strong case in relation to the library's limited functionality and the fact that the Burgessville settlement is located within an 8 to 12 minute drive of the Norwich and Otterville branches – which is considered to be a reasonable travel time to access library services – and within a 10 to 14 minute drive of community centres/halls in Norwich, Oxford Centre and Springford that can be used for community meetings and gatherings. In the event that the existing building is not replaced, it would be more economical for OCL to extend Ox on the Run services into Burgessville and/or consider an alternative service point such as a holds locker or book vending kiosk (e.g. at the current site, the Post Office, a local business, etc.) as a replacement to the bricks and mortar.

Capital and operating costs for the current building could then be reallocated to other OCL branches including the nearby locations to improve the overall user experience and convenience. Requests for additional library hours of operation were heard throughout Oxford County during Strategic Plan and the LFP's consultations; redistributing Burgessville Library's 16 hours per week to extend hours open in Otterville, Norwich or other nearby branches could be achieved without having to change OCL's staffing levels nor funding to support hours of operation since it would be a reallocation of hours. OCL may also be able to work with the Town of Norwich and the County Public Works Department to reallocate costs associated with asset management, cleaning and snow removal towards the Norwich Branch and Otterville to support other service improvements.

Figure 23: Burgessville Library Site Plan



Library Entrance



Collections & Workspace



Program Room (basement)

Norwich Library

Address:	10 Tidey Street
OCL Classification:	Regional Branch
Library Type:	Integrated with Daycare
Ownership:	County of Oxford
Net Floor Area:	5,400 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	401
Hours Open:	35 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	50,477 items / 9.3 items per ft ²

The Norwich Library is an excellent example of what rural libraries can aspire towards. Built by the County in 2006 as a shared building containing dedicated spaces for library and childcare services, the library component is an aesthetically-pleasing open concept space that distinguishes specific areas by age group, collections, technology, and customer service. Norwich Library had OCL's third-highest number of in-person visitation and physical circulation rates in 2024, nearly double that of the other Regional Branches. In fact, circulation increased by 123% since 2019 while Norwich Library offered the most programs and events in 2024 of any library in the OCL system (including the Resource branches) due in part to its large program room.

The library/daycare building and associated parking occupies much of the site upon which it sits, therefore expansion potential is limited. As one of OCL's newer libraries that meets accessibility requirements, no major capital recommendations have been advanced for the Norwich Library over the next 10 years beyond typical asset management activities.



Collections Area

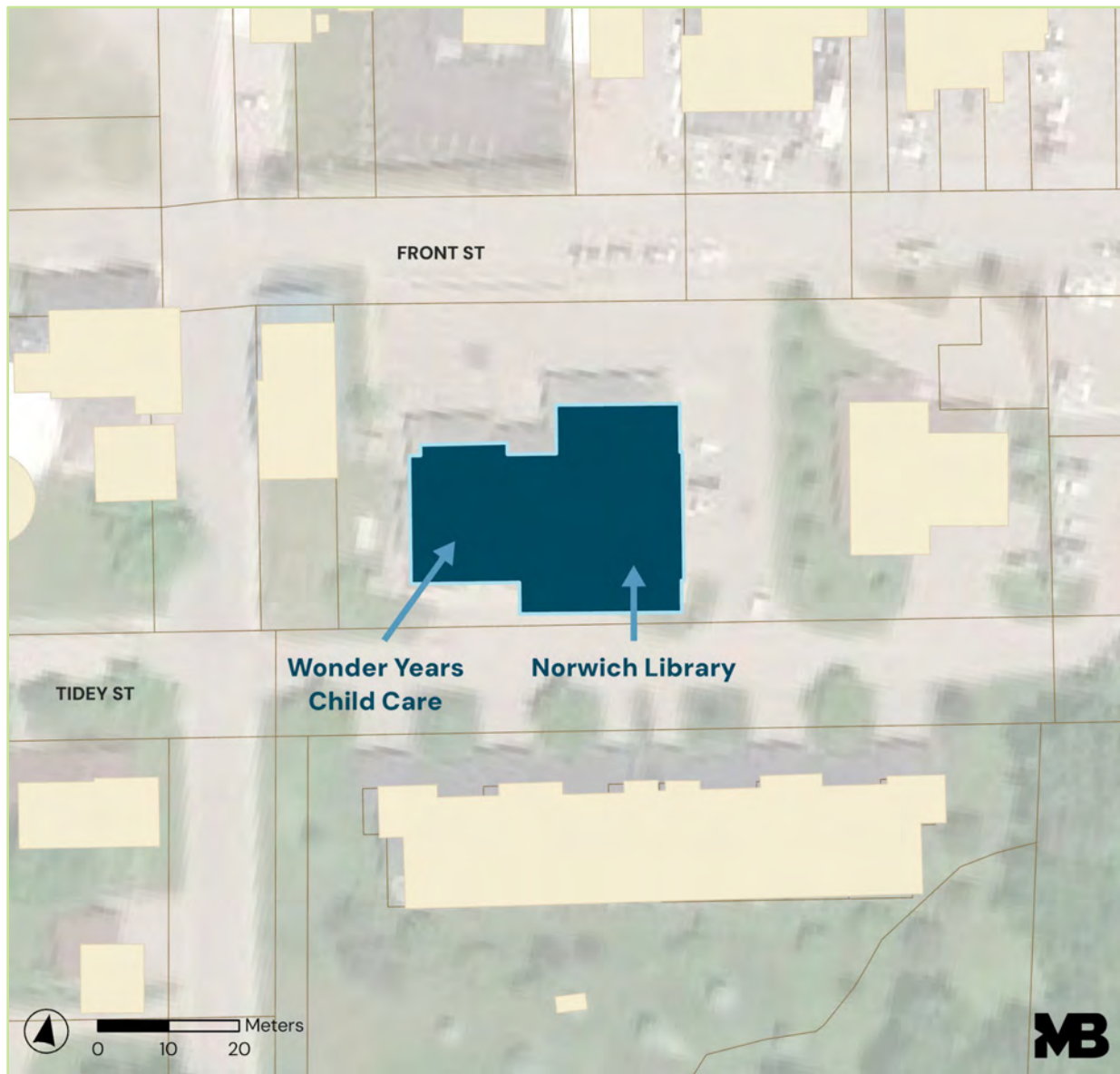


Computers



Self Checkout Kiosk

Figure 24: Norwich Library Site Plan



Library Entrance



Seating Area



Program Room

Otterville Library

Address:	207 Main Street West
OCL Classification:	Village Branch
Library Type:	Stand-alone
Ownership:	Private Property Owner
Net Floor Area:	2,080 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	84
Hours Open:	16 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	14,731 items / 7.1 items per ft ²

The Otterville Library serves the southern portion of the Town through a leased private storefront space that was specifically renovated for the library in 2008. It is the largest Village Branch in OCL system and recently had minor renovations to update carpet, paint, ceiling and accessibility improvements to the entrance. It provides an open concept and well-lit interior with a generous space devoted to the children's area and associated programming. The nearly 4,400 in-person visits in 2024 is generally in line with OCL's other Village Branches and is particularly popular among children, tweens and families along with the homeschooling community. It also houses multi-lingual collections including Dutch-language materials in response to demographics of surrounding areas.

Otterville Library's floor area, while slightly below minimum ARUPLO Guidelines, allows OCL to house a collection size in line with ARUPLO Guidelines. Circulation in Otterville ranked ninth in the system but third among the six Village Branches; circulation rates increased 12% compared to 2019 borrowing. Otterville Library is relatively modern barrier-free accessibility standards and is early in its lifecycle. Further exterior improvements are planned to improve signage and visibility from Main Street. Therefore, no major capital expansions or renovations are proposed for Otterville Library over the course of the LFP's planning period.

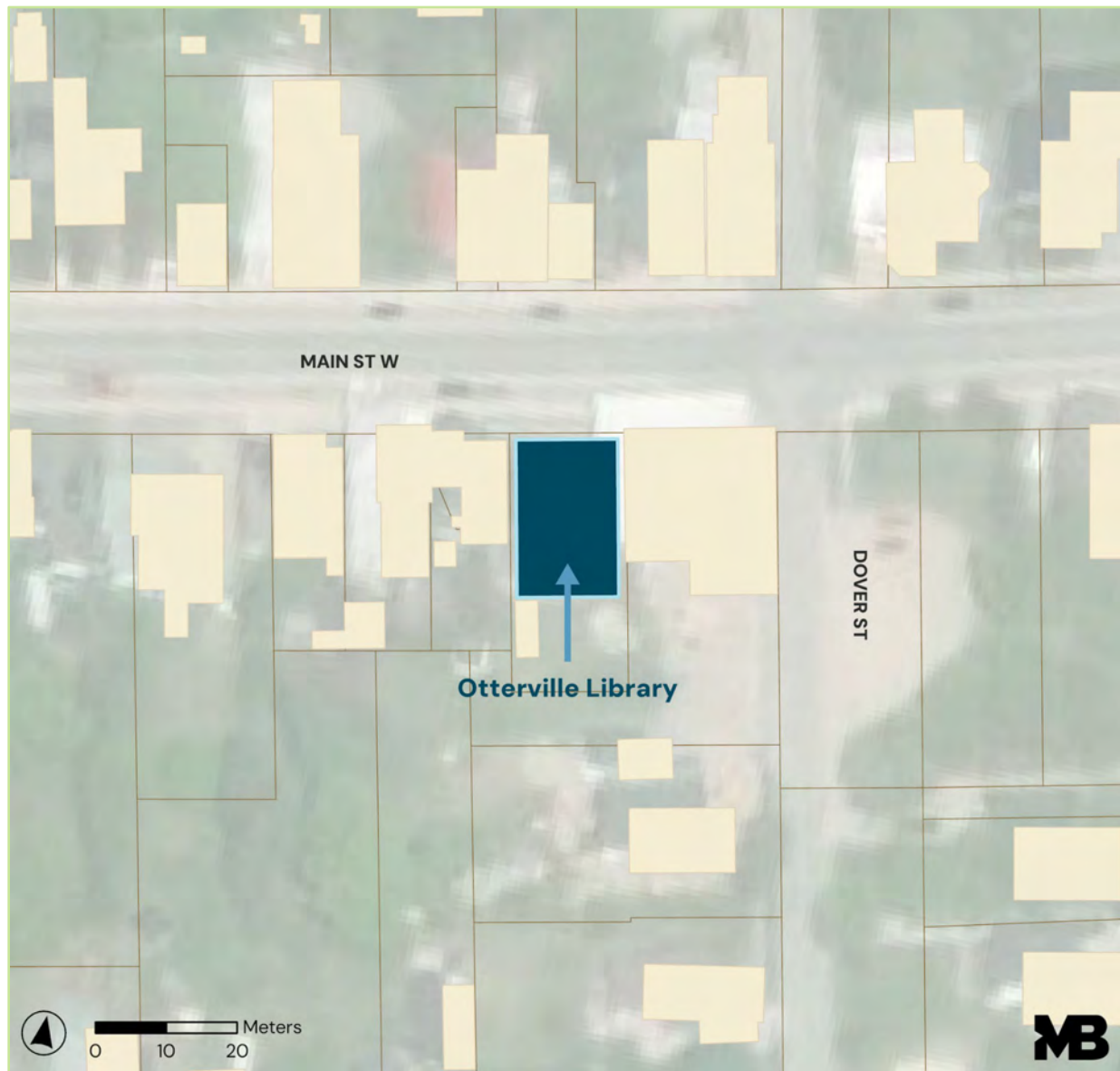


Children's Area



Collections & Workspace

Figure 25: Otterville Library Site Plan



Library Entrance



Computers



Collection Display

7.5 South-West Oxford

2024 Population: 8,420

2034 Population Forecast: 9,420

Existing Library Space: 1,426 ft² (0.2 square feet per capita)

Number of Branches: 2

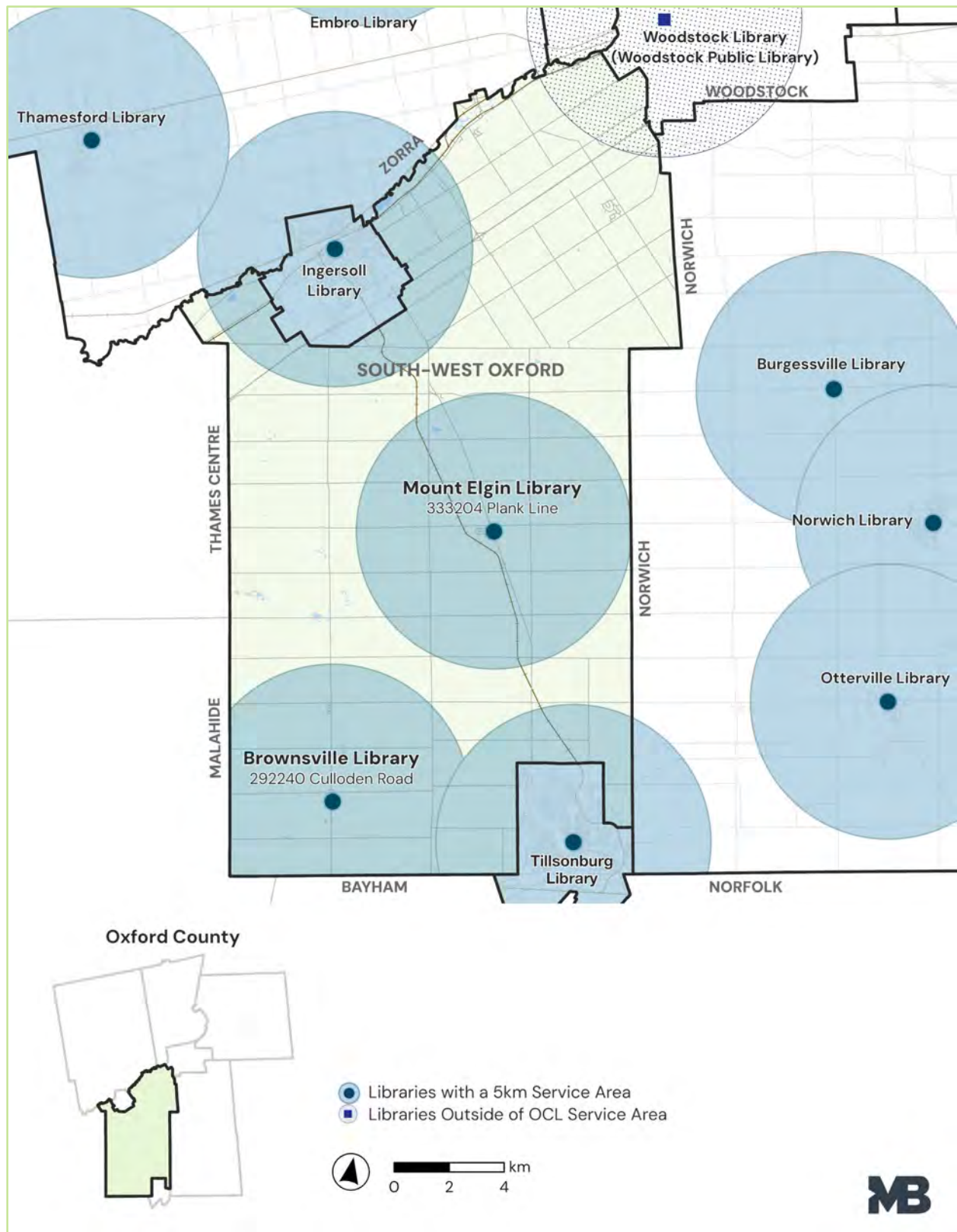
2034 Supply Required at 0.6 square feet per capita: 5,652 ft²

The Township of South-West Oxford has experienced modest growth of approximately 400 persons since 2016 although is projected to add 1,000 persons to its current population over the next 10 years. Although there are two libraries serving the central and southern areas of the Township, they are two undersized Village Branches that are under 750 square feet. The result is the lowest space provision rate of any municipality serviced by OCL.

While of 1,000 new residents would generate a growth-related need for 600 square feet of new library space, the current space deficit in South-West Oxford is driving a need for an additional 4,000 square feet of space in the municipality. It bears noting, however, that space-related pressures are somewhat alleviated by the fact that South-West Oxford residents living near the municipality's northern boundary can draw service from the Ingersoll Branch and even the Woodstock Public Library, while the Tillsonburg Library's catchment area also extends into the Township. Based on geographic distribution, the Sweaburg settlement is considered to be a gap area.

Approximately 30% of OCL's 10-year space requirement under a 0.6 square feet per capita provision target is attributable directly to South-West Oxford. The pages that follow suggest that the primary way to address space-related deficits in South-West Oxford will be to replace and/or relocate the Mount Elgin Branch to a new and larger space (in the order of 4,000 to 5,000 square feet) that is co-located with a new Municipal Office and childcare centre. Doing so will enable OCL to deliver a broader range of quality library services to Township residents that is lacking at present due to a sizeable shortage of library space.

Map 9: Distribution of Libraries, South-West Oxford



Brownsville Library

Address:	292240 Culloden Road
OCL Classification:	Village Branch
Library Type:	Integrated with Community Hall & Fire Station
Ownership:	Municipal
Net Floor Area:	750 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	53
Hours Open:	13 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	2,624 items / 3.5 items per ft ²

Built in 2010, Brownsville Library is co-located with the Brownsville Community Centre and Fire Station. It occupies a small floor area that manages to house a limited number of collections, seating, computer workstations and the customer service desk. Washrooms are located just outside of the branch and are shared with the community centre, while OCL is able to access the community hall through the Township's booking process.

Due to its small footprint and among the fewest hours of operation in the OCL system, the Brownsville Library generates a below-average number of visits. It has the lowest circulation rate of any OCL branch which is also partially due to the fact that its collection size is about half the minimum recommended through ARUPLO Guidelines and only the Harrington Library offers fewer in-branch materials. That being said, circulation in the post-pandemic period has increased by 86% compared to 2019.

While Brownsville Library could benefit from a larger floor area, it is serving a fairly remote area of the County where a portion of the population can also make use of the Tillsonburg Library for more robust range of programs and services. There is a sizeable open space to the back of the building that could be expanded into if there is a desire to enlarge the branch; at this time, however, it is believed that capital investment in South-West Oxford be targeted to Mount Elgin where there is an opportunity to develop a larger branch as part of a broader institutional hub. Should that project not come to fruition, then expansion of Brownsville Library could be contemplated.

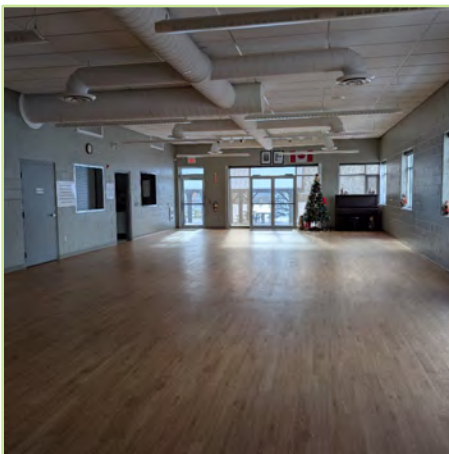


Brownsville Community Centre, Brownsville Library & Brownsville Fire Station

Figure 26: Brownsville Library Site Plan



Library Entrance



Community Hall (Township owned)



Book Return Box

Mount Elgin Library

Address:	333204 Plank Line
OCL Classification:	Village Branch
Library Type:	Integrated with Community Centre
Ownership:	Municipal
Net Floor Area:	676 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	33
Hours Open:	13 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	8,093 items / 12.0 items per ft ²

Built in the 1970s, the Mount Elgin Library is the smallest branch in the OCL system and is co-located with a community centre, park and playground. Mount Elgin Library received the fewest number of in-person visits in 2024 and circulation was below the Village Branch average. While libraries that are integrated with community centres often benefit from higher levels of foot traffic, this does not appear to be the case in Mount Elgin. In addition to its small size limiting capacity and collections, it is not readily apparent that a library exists alongside the community centre but OCL will be updating window signage with the hopes of drawing greater attention from those driving along Highway 19. The exterior entrance to the library is situated to the side of the building which can also limit visibility. Once inside, the floor space is nearly entirely occupied by collections, seating, and a small customer service desk while washrooms are located within the broader community centre.

The Township of South-West Oxford purchased land in Mount Elgin and is presently contemplating the development of a new Municipal Office and childcare facility.¹⁵ With the lowest per capita rate of library space in Oxford County and a sizeable deficit of library space in the Township, OCL should engage the Township in discussions that would replace the current library branch with a new library as part of the institutional hub. Doing so would leverage efficiencies already exemplified in Ingersoll where a library is integrated with Town Hall as well as in Norwich where a branch is successfully co-located with a childcare centre.

A new Village Branch in Mount Elgin should be designed between 4,000 and 5,000 square feet in size which is generally consistent with the template in Norwich. It should contain sufficient area to house collections, seating areas, and ideally a dedicated program room at a minimum. Being centrally located in the Township with access to Highway 19, this type of library would position South-West Oxford well into the future. Assuming a 5,000 square foot library is constructed, the Township would attain a provision rate of 0.6 square feet which would put it in line with provincially accepted standards and meet OCL's recommended target.

¹⁵ Township of South-West Oxford. Media Release: Purchase of land for potential 88-space Child Care Facility & South-West Oxford Municipal Office in Mount Elgin. Dated November 6, 2024. Accessed on March 25, 2025 at <https://www.swox.org/news/posts/>

Figure 27: Mount Elgin Library Site Plan



Main Entrance



View of Library



Workspace

7.6 Tillsonburg

2024 Population: 20,360

2034 Population Forecast: 26,280

Existing Library Space: 8,400 ft² (0.41 square feet per capita)

Number of Branches: 1

2034 Supply Required at 0.6 square feet per capita: 15,768 ft²

OCL operates one Resource Library in Tillsonburg, centrally located in the downtown. Tillsonburg's population now exceeds 20,000, having added almost 4,000 new residents since 2016, and is projected to grow by another 6,000 persons over the next 10 years. Already the most visited and highest circulating branch in the OCL system, the Town's growth has and will continue to place pressures on the Tillsonburg Library along with the fact that its service catchment extends into parts of South-West Oxford and Norwich. Over 5,000 Tillsonburg residents (25%) are active OCL library cardholders which is the second highest rate among all municipalities in OCL's jurisdiction.

The Town of Tillsonburg is projected to grow more than any other municipality served by OCL, accounting for 21% of all future population growth in the OCL service area. The addition of 6,000 persons by 2034 would generate a growth-related need for 3,600 square feet of new library space in Tillsonburg plus additional floor area to address current space shortfalls. Of OCL's system-wide deficit of space, 54% is attributable to needs in Tillsonburg.

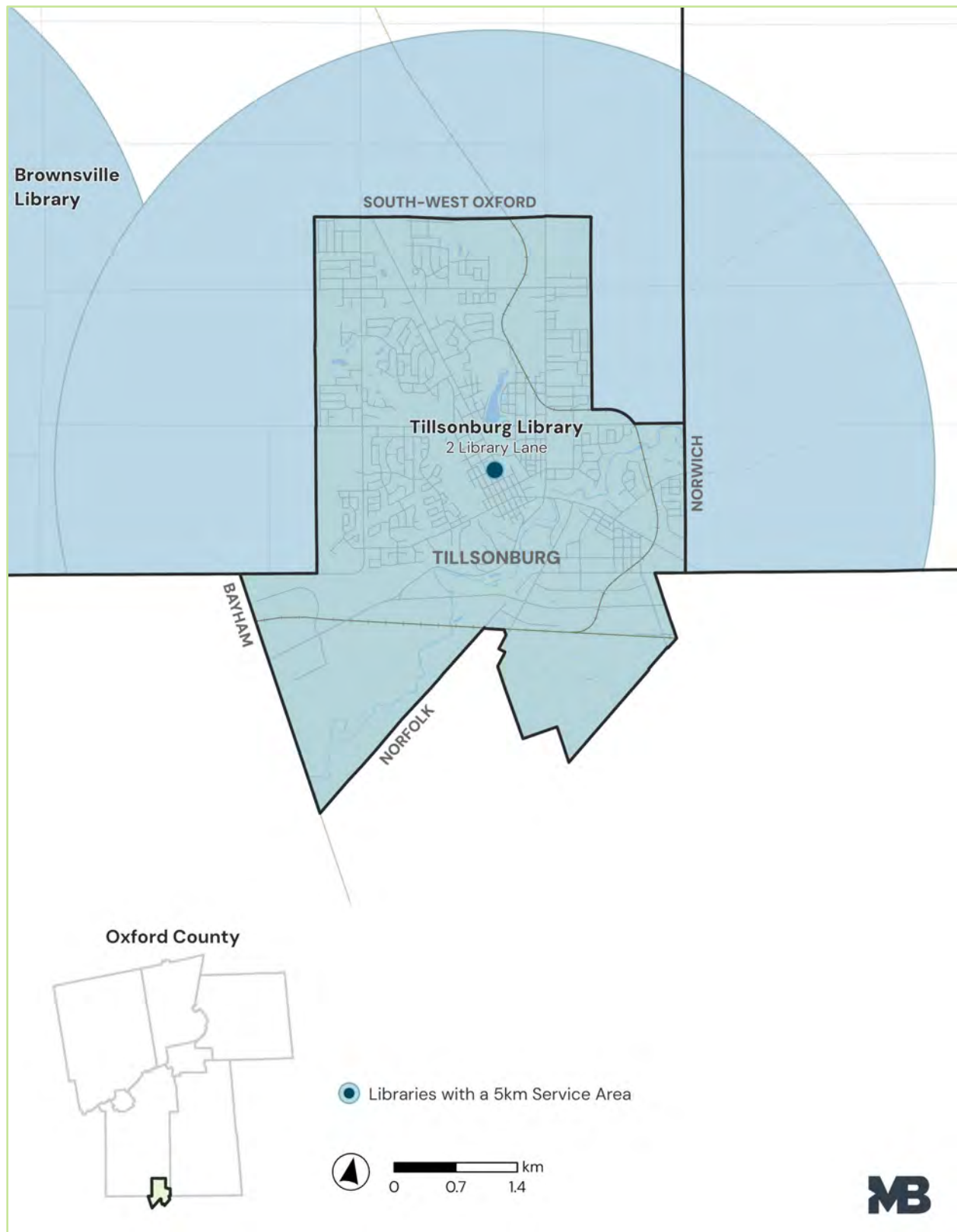


Workspace & Collections in Tillsonburg Library



Community Puzzle Table

Map 10: Distribution of Libraries, Tillsonburg



Tillsonburg Library

Address:	2 Library Lane
OCL Classification:	Resource Branch
Library Type:	Stand-alone
Ownership:	County
Net Floor Area:	8,400 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	1,594
Hours Open:	54 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	80,396 items / 9.6 items per ft ²

Tillsonburg Library is the most visited library within the OCL system with over 25,000 more in-person visits than the next closest branch as well as attracting the highest program attendance. It also attracted over 1,000 new library cardholders in 2024, the most of any branch, and ranks second in circulation behind only the Ingersoll Library. As such the importance of the Tillsonburg Library is apparent and is one of two Resource Branches operated by OCL.

The branch is not without challenges as it grapples with the Town's strong population growth rates and resulting. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in greater rates of marginalization across Canada and the Town of Tillsonburg is no exception with a growing population of people that are experiencing low-income, homelessness, mental health challenges and addiction. The Tillsonburg Library is on the frontlines of experiencing growth-related pressures for library services and programs, including multi-lingual and newcomer services, as well as being compassionate and empathetic to people requiring access to social services. With security incidents having occurred in recent years, this branch is now staffed with a full-time security guard.

The County of Oxford purchased the 1970s era library building from the Town in 2013 when Tillsonburg was integrated into the OCL system. At that time, a significant renovation was completed including an expansion of the program room. The library's ground floor is dedicated to public use using a well-lit, open-concept layout with the customer service desk located centrally near the entrance. The second floor contains staff offices and limited storage as well as mechanical systems; it is only accessible via stairs and thus would not meet barrier-free standards although accessibility improvements have been undertaken for public-facing areas including an exterior ramp and automatic doors at the entrance, wide aisles between shelving units, a lowered portion of the service desk, and an accessible washroom. Staff workspace on both the ground and upper floors is tight while storage capacity is very limited in relation to the level of use placed on the library.

To meet community needs now and into the future, between 5,000 and 7,000 square feet of additional space is required in Tillsonburg. Expansion could be a complex undertaking due to site constraints and two options are presented for consideration:

- Option 1: Constructing a one-storey addition to the rear of the building, towards Bidwell Street, which would require removal of the community garden, playground and potentially parking spaces. Doing so could add an estimated 5,000 square feet of net new library space.
- Option 2: Building a two-storey addition to the rear of the library that consumes less of the open space to the rear than in Option 1 while adding the same square footage (5,000 square feet) although the playground would still require relocation. Adding and redeveloping the second floor would allow more public use and house collections while retaining a sufficient amount of space for back of house functions including staff offices, break room, storage and washrooms. This action would require an elevator to be added to allow for barrier-free access.
- Option 3: Building a two-storey addition at the front of the library which would result in the same benefits noted for Option 2 and would not require playground relocation. An addition presents an opportunity to increase the prominence/presence of the library from Broadway Street through architectural design and placemaking principles. This option would add an estimated 5,450 square feet of net new space.
- Option 4: Demolishing and rebuilding the library utilizing a new design would allow for a purpose-built structure that is positioned to meet modern needs for the foreseeable future. As is discussed in Section 8.2, this may be a more cost-effective option than second-floor additions which may be subject to structural limitations that require additional costs to carry out the work. Rebuilding the library on its current footprint would not require removal of the playground or parking at the rear while adding over 5,800 square feet of net new library space, the most of any option.

All options could result in a significant disruption of service and/or periods of time that the library is closed during construction. OCL should work with the Town to explore setting up a temporary or pop-up branch, potentially across the street in the mall, while construction is underway. Unfortunately, the Tillsonburg Library is under significant pressure right now and these demands can be expected to intensify as time goes on without capacity-related investments in the space.

The alternative to reinvesting in the existing library would be to construct a new one at a different location, however, this is not a preferred approach given that the Tillsonburg Library is centrally located in the downtown and having two libraries would duplicate their service catchment, resulting in an inefficient operational and staffing model.

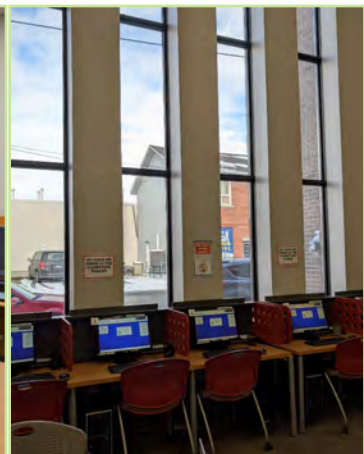
Figure 28: Tillsonburg Library Site Plan



Library Exterior



Study / Workspace

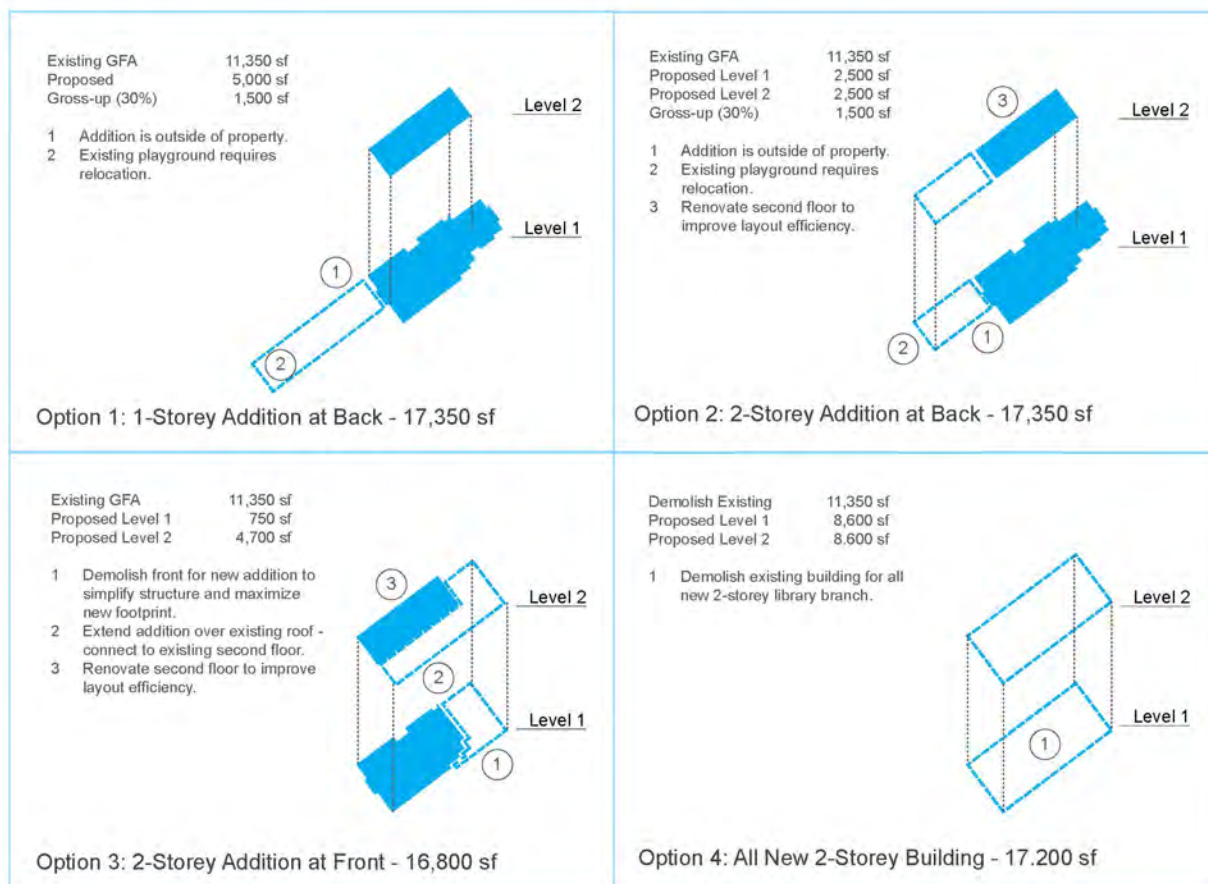


Computers

Figure 29: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Tillsonburg Library

TILLSONBURG

Existing Level 1	7,600 sf
Existing Level 2	3,750 sf
Total Gross Floor Area	11,350 sf



7.7 Zorra

2024 Population: 9,780

2034 Population Forecast: 11,780

Existing Library Space: 6,000 ft² (0.61 square feet per capita)

Number of Branches: 3

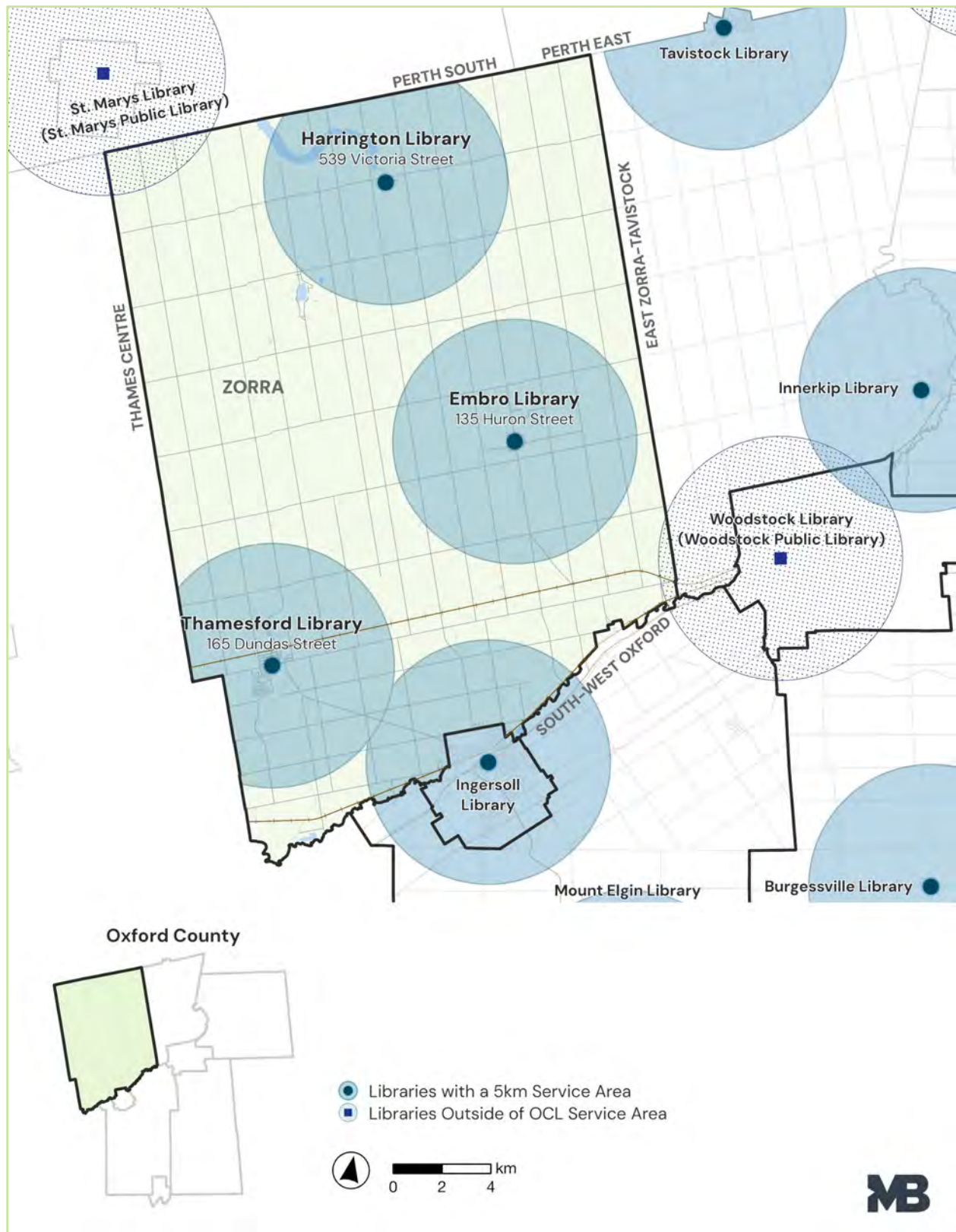
2034 Supply Required at 0.6 square feet per capita: 7,068 ft²

The Township of Zorra is located in the northwest quadrant of Oxford County. It has grown by approximately 1,200 persons since 2016, the majority of which are attributable to recent residential developments in the Thamesford settlement and have contributed to growing use of the Thamesford Library. Other settlements in the Township include Embro and Harrington, which are both served by library branches, as well as Kintore. Continued growth in Thamesford along with limited residential development anticipated in Embro are forecasted to contribute another 2,000 residents by the end of the LFP planning period which would generate a need for approximately 1,200 square feet of new library space.

Zorra is one of two municipalities in Oxford County that has three library branches, thus geographic distribution is strong, particularly with the Ingersoll Library's service catchment extending into the southern part of the Township; in addition, libraries in the City of Woodstock and the Town of St. Marys are located within driving distance of certain populations living in Zorra. 15% of Zorra residents are active OCL library cardholders. There is limited service available in the central areas of the municipality around the Kintore settlement. The modest space deficit projected in Zorra over the next 10 years is insufficient to support costs of building a fourth branch and lends rationale to continue regular mobile outreach to Kintore through Ox on the Run.

To meet the 10-year space requirement in Zorra Township, it is recommended that the Embro Library be relocated and replaced with a new 2,500 square foot Village Branch elsewhere in the Embro settlement, potentially in conjunction with childcare or affordable housing development. In addition, enlarging the Lions Den program room at the Thamesford Library would add modest square footage for the Township but more importantly allow OCL to deliver more programs and accommodate a greater number of program participants in the Thamesford settlement.

Map 11: Distribution of Libraries, Zorra



Embro Library

Address:	135 Huron Street
OCL Classification:	Village Branch
Library Type:	Integrated with Fire Station & Community Space
Ownership:	Municipal
Net Floor Area:	800 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	38
Hours Open:	13 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	8,243 items / 10.3 items per ft ²

Embro Library is housed in a former church that dates back to the 1800s and is shared with a theatre company who operate on the upper level while. While there is a rustic appeal to the building, there are inherent limitations due to it being a century building and was not purpose-built as a library. There is a steep set of stairs to access the building along with an exterior lift that requires operation by a library staff person. The 800 square feet is divided roughly in half with a program room and washrooms that are shared with the Theatre on one side. This leaves approximately 400 square feet to house the collection, seating areas and a small customer service desk / staff workspace though this public area is impeded by a number of structural columns. As a result, the library meets minimum AODA standards but is not considered to be fully accessible despite best efforts of the Township to add the lift and build accessible washrooms. Discussions with staff suggest that the library's primary clientele consists of young children and their caregivers, along with seniors.

As a relatively remote settlement combined with the library's small and outdated interior, is not a heavily visited branch (only Mount Elgin and Harrington had fewer visitors in 2024) nor is its circulation particularly strong compared to certain other Village Branches. That said, there has been some residential development in Embro which may have contributed to a 10% increase in visits compared to 2023 along with a 12% increase in circulation since 2019. Only 21 programs were offered at the library, the fewest of any branch, amounting to less than one program every two weeks.

The functional and barrier-free constraints of the Embro Library are such that it would be better to replace it with a new Village Branch elsewhere in the settlement. It is understood that Embro has infrastructure capacity for another 400 to 500 homes, which could mean approximately another 1,000 residents. It is recommended that OCL work closely with the Township to explore and understand its future land development plans and applications in order to determine if an opportunity exists to construct a new library branch. This would allow OCL to vacate the current space and build a modern Village Branch that is able to offer the types of library services and programs that are in line with best practices. A new library should be a minimum of 2,500 square feet in line with ARUPLO Guidelines and could be explored in conjunction with a mixed-use residential and/or affordable housing development (as is the case in Tavistock) or childcare centre (as is the case in Norwich).

Figure 30: Embro Library Site Plan



Library Entrance



Children's Area



Program Room

Harrington Library

Address:	539 Victoria Street
OCL Classification:	Village Branch
Library Type:	Stand-alone
Ownership:	Municipal
Net Floor Area:	1,200 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	36
Hours Open:	13 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	6,392 items / 5.3 items per ft ²

Harrington Library is located in the basement of a former church that was constructed in 1876. Like the Embro Library, there are functional limitations due to its age including barrier-free accessibility; while there is a ramp leading to the exterior entrance, the basement level is only accessible via a stair lift while the washroom would not meet barrier-free standards. Minor updates were completed in 2024 including new paint and window treatments.

Harrington Library received among the least in-person visits in 2024 while only the Brownsville Library had fewer circulated materials. Although the branch receives little use, it is recognized that it is one of the few public indoor meeting and gathering points in the northern part of Zorra Township. As such, continuing to explore ways to improve the user experience is recommended over time. While there is a rustic charm to the space, the branch could benefit from new furniture and shelving, and exploring whether additional interior accessibility enhancements can be carried out recognizing there may be structural limitations.



Library Exterior

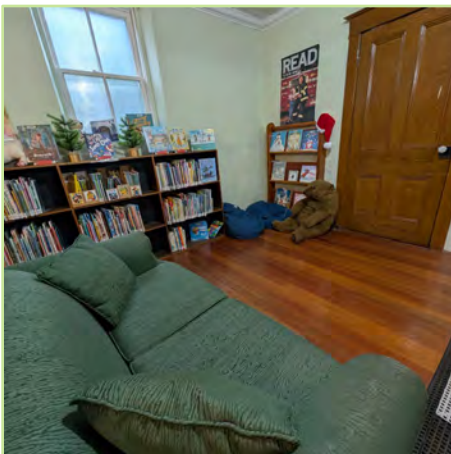


Collections & Workspace

Figure 31: Harrington Library Site Plan



Library Entrance



Collections & Seating



Accessible Stair Lift

Thamesford Library

Address:	165 Dundas Street
OCL Classification:	Regional Branch
Library Type:	Stand-alone
Ownership:	Co-owned between County and Township
Net Floor Area:	4,000 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	196
Hours Open:	35 hours per week
2024 Circulation:	23,271 items / 5.8 items per ft ²

The Thamesford Library was built in partnership between the County and the Township in 2003. In-person visits and circulation rank fifth and sixth, respectively, in the OCL system. The library provides a welcoming atmosphere and aesthetic with comfortable seating areas, community artwork displays, good lighting, and is largely barrier-free. A gazebo and well-maintained garden bed enhance the outdoor experience for library users as well.

The recent population growth in Thamesford is well documented and there are plans for a new elementary school in the community which will further make the area attractive to younger households. As such, the library can expect additional pressures for services over the next 10 years including for early childhood programs. The Lions Den is a program room with kitchenette dedicated to the library though it is of a smaller size and may not be sufficient for the demands for in-branch programming. In consultation with the Township, OCL should explore willingness to expand the Lions Den into the shared lobby towards the Library's interior entrance; this is largely a wide and empty corridor and could be better utilized for valuable community programs. Doing so would be a cost-effective way to add over 300 square feet of functional space within the existing building's footprint. Another way to increase programming capacity would be to add mobile shelving units to the children's area in order to easily and temporarily expand the space for programs that attract larger numbers of participants.

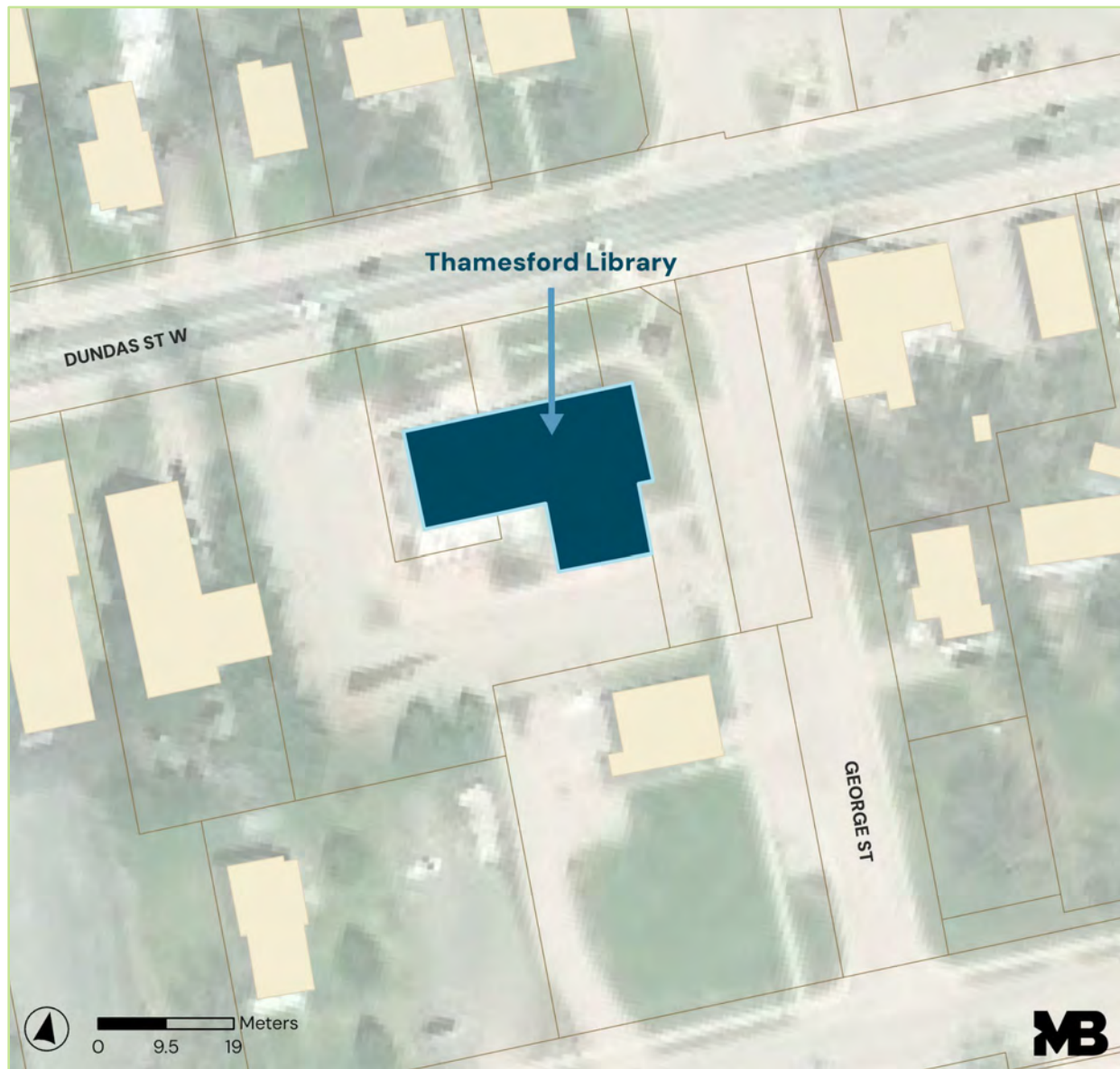


Program Room

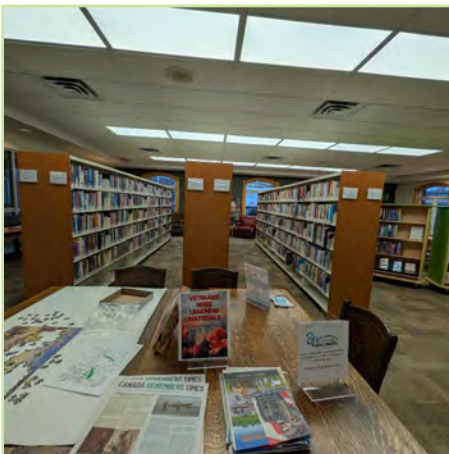


Lobby Space (Opportunity to Expand Program Room)

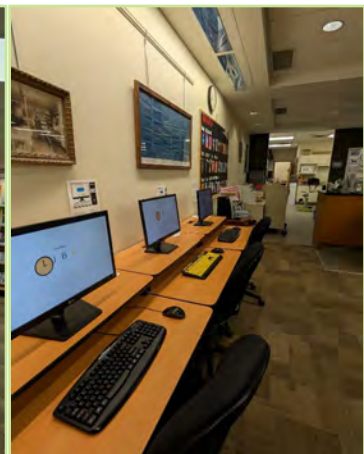
Figure 32: Thamesford Library Site Plan



Library Exterior



Collections & Workspace

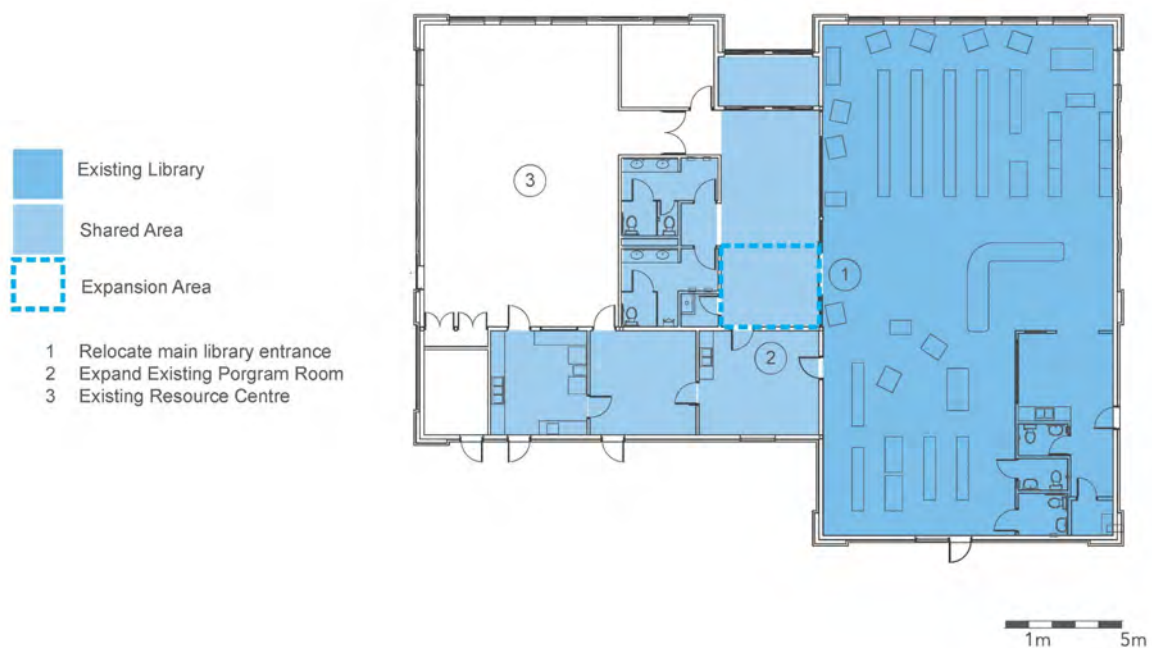
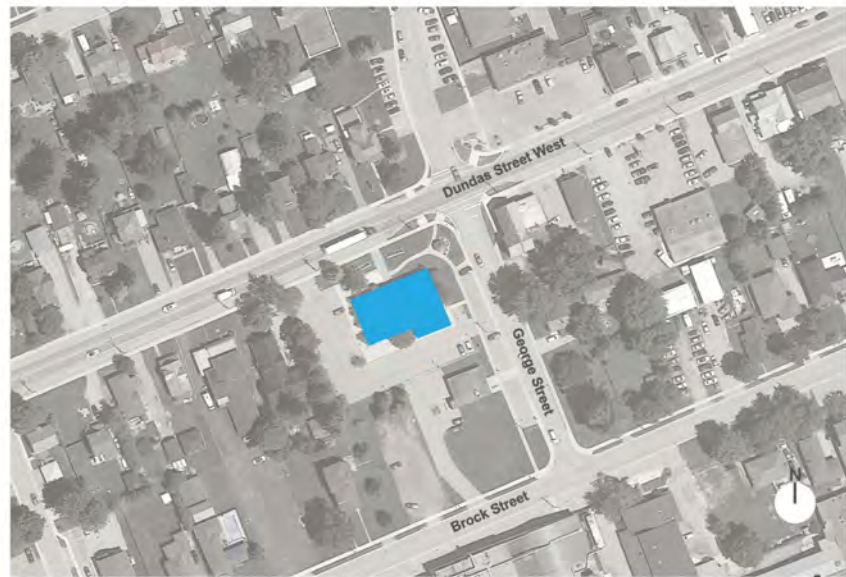


Computers

Figure 33: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Thamesford Library

THAMESFORD

Existing	4,000 sf
Expansion in Hallway	360 sf
Total Net Floor Area	4,360 sf



7.8 Ox on the Run

OCL implemented the Ox on the Run (“Ox”) as a two-year pilot project recommended by its Service Delivery Review. By all accounts, the Ox initiative has been a remarkable success by bringing library services to previously underserved settlements while also signing up new library cardholders and introducing them to the array of services offered by OCL.

Ox is a mobile outreach service delivered through a bookmobile, with its service offerings described in greater detail in Section 2.4. Bookmobiles are typically repurposed vehicles that provide library services to people that might face challenges to visiting a bricks and mortar branch due to distance, time or mobility constraints. Like any modern library, Ox has allowed visitors to access and borrow a physical material collection, register for a library card, connect to Wi-Fi, participate in a library program, or find assistance from a member of OCL’s enthusiastic outreach team.

Over its two year trial, Ox has reached over 8,700 people and made over 375 stops across Oxford County. This is an impressive number considering that building awareness of the service is in its infancy but OCL has benefited from promotion and support from most of its municipal partners. Discussions with elected officials and other municipal representatives through this LFP frequently mentioned how valuable Ox has been in their communities, particularly in those municipalities that do not otherwise directly deliver their own recreation or culture programs. Due to its flexibility, Ox is able to setup at major community destinations (e.g. community centres, parks, fire stations, commercial areas, etc.) and participate in community events in addition to its own regularly scheduled stops.

Figure 34: Ox on the Run Selected Performance Indicators, 2023-2024

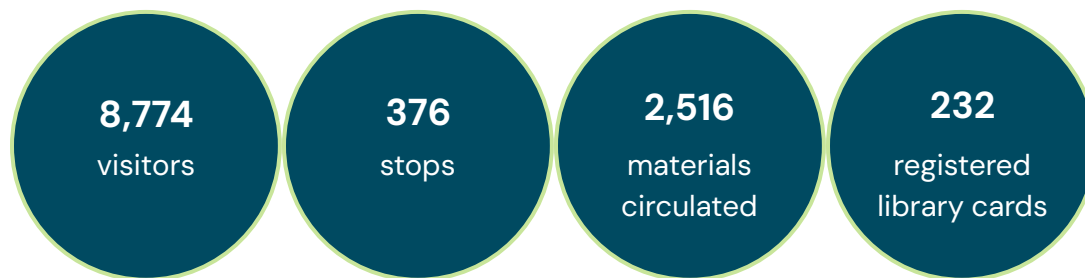


Figure 35: Ox on the Run - Total Visitors, Stops, Circulation & Registered Library Cards, 2024



Certainly there can be some challenges with bookmobiles based on the provincial experience, particularly in areas that encompass a large geographic territory as is the case in Oxford County where there are higher travel-related costs for fuel, maintenance, and staff time compared to compact urban centres. That said, these costs are a fraction of what would otherwise be spent on constructing, staffing and maintaining built structures over their lifecycles. The number of visitors increased in 2024 as a result of Ox making over 100 more stops.

While Ox does not replicate a bricks and mortar branch, it bears remembering that mobile outreach is not intended to. Rather, Ox supplements physical branches by serving settlements that fall outside of a bricks and mortar catchment (e.g. Drumbo, Beachville, Sweaburg, Kintore, etc.) along with people that face barriers to access. As noted, Ox is a way that OCL can continue to embed the library into the community by participating in events as well as delivering targeted programs to specific areas in the County. As such, the LFP recommends continuation of the Ox program due to the benefits provided as well as the pressure that it relieves on physical library branches that exist or would otherwise have to be built.

7.9 Recommendations

- Rec 7. Future Engagement:** Major capital projects undertaken by OCL – including any new builds, renovations, or adjustments to the number of libraries – should be informed by consultations with elected officials, municipal decision makers, community partners, and the public where appropriate.
- Rec 8. Programming:** Where libraries are co-located with municipal halls and program rooms, engage the municipalities to discuss ways to increase the amount of time available for library programs to serve local residents.
- Rec 9. Storage Space:** Explore opportunities to address storage needs at all OCL locations – through shelving, cabinetry, or other means – in relation to functional constraints and costs of each branch.
- Rec 10. Ox on the Run:** Make the Ox on the Run mobile outreach service a permanent fixture in Oxford County Library’s service delivery model to supplement services available in physical branches.
- Rec 11. Minor Updates & Improvements:** Carry out interior updates and improvements to the Plattsville, Princeton, Harrington and Tavistock Libraries focused on elements such as flooring, furniture and shelving, and painting as appropriate.
- Rec 12. Plattsville Library:** Explore the feasibility of integrating collections and physical space within the Plattsville Library in consultation with the Thames Valley District School Board with a view to maximizing the use of space for the library and the school.
- Rec 13. Innerkip Library:** Expand the Innerkip Library by a minimum of 1,400 square feet in order to improve barrier-free accessibility, increase programming capacity, and add areas for study, collaboration and storage.
- Rec 14. Ingersoll Library:** In consultation with the Town of Ingersoll, explore ways to make more efficient use of the entire Town Hall and Library complex with a particular focus placed on the basement level. A space audit could determine how to redistribute administrative activities of both parties in order to maximize and make the most efficient use of space for the purposes of both OCL and municipal services.

- Rec 15. Burgessville Library:** Replace the existing building with a 2,500 square foot library (minimum) that meets barrier-free accessibility standards and allows for the full range of services delivered by a Village Branch. In the event that a replacement is not supported, consider the closure of the Burgessville Library and service the settlement through alternative means such as mobile outreach and/or holds lockers.
- Rec 16. Mount Elgin Library:** Engage the Township of South-West Oxford in their discussions for a new Municipal Office and explore the willingness to co-locate a 4,000 to 5,000 square foot Village Branch to replace the existing Mount Elgin Library.
- Rec 17. Tillsonburg Library:** Expand the Tillsonburg Library by a minimum of 5,000 square feet in order to alleviate the high degree of pressures being experienced as a result of population growth and socio-demographic diversification in the Town and surrounding areas.
- Rec 18. Embro Library:** Relocate and replace the existing branch with a 2,500 square foot library (minimum) that meets barrier-free accessibility standards and allows for the full range of services delivered by a Village Branch. If possible, integrating a new library as part of a mixed-use development, affordable housing project or community hub such as a childcare centre is preferred.
- Rec 19. Thamesford Library:** Explore the feasibility of expanding the Lions Den (program room) into the lobby along with purchasing mobile shelving for the children's area in order to accommodate the growing community's needs for programming.

Section 8.0 Implementation Plan



Section 8.0

Implementation Plan

This Section summarizes Recommendations arising out of the LFP, assigns timing and capital cost implications to them, and articulates a process for monitoring and reviewing the LFP.

8.1 Summary of the Space Development Strategy

The LFP recommends OCL to keep pace with population growth at its rate of 0.6 square feet per capita, a total of 13,700 square feet of new library space would be required by the year 2034. The LFP proposes the addition of at least 13,545 square feet to OCL's total system-wide floor area through the following capital projects distributed between the urban and rural municipalities.

- Addition of 1,460 square feet of net new library space through an expansion of the Innerkip Library that results in a minimum total floor area of 2,500 square feet being provided for library services.
- Addition of 1,700 square feet of net new library space through the replacement of Burgessville Library with a new 2,500 square foot (minimum) Village Branch in the settlement.
- Addition of 3,825 square feet of net new library space through the replacement and relocation of the Mount Elgin Library with a new 5,000 square foot Village Branch potentially co-located with a new Municipal Office.
- Addition of 1,700 square feet of net new library space through the replacement and relocation of the Embro Branch with a new 2,500 square foot (minimum) Village Branch in the settlement.
- Addition of between 4,500 and 6,500 square feet of net new library space through an expansion of the Tillsonburg Library – depending on the option chosen – that results in a minimum total gross floor area of approximately 17,000 square feet being provided for library services.
- Addition of 360 square feet of net new library space through an extension of the Lions Den at Thamesford Library that would increase the size of the branch to 4,100 square feet.

The LFP proposes 13,725 ft² of new library space across Oxford County, resulting in 0.6 ft² per capita by the year 2034.

These noted actions would result in a system-wide supply of 59,629 square feet, translating into 0.60 square feet per capita by the year 2034. Doing so would fulfill all of OCL's space requirements associated with the per capita provision target.

8.2 Establishing Capital Budgets & Timelines

Due to OCL and its partners taking a proactive approach to library facilities through historical and recent investments, the LFP results in a strategy that is fiscally aligned to population growth to meet 10-year needs. The LFP's Recommendations carry a preliminary capital estimate of \$22.1 million to \$25.4 million, dependent on the option chosen for the Tillsonburg Library expansion (the four options are described in Section 7.6). Please note that this amount excludes typical asset management activities associated with lifecycle repair and renewal to ensure state-of-good-repair.

Table 16: Preliminary Capital Construction Costs

Library	Total Floor Area Constructed	Estimated Construction Cost
Burgessville	2,500 ft ²	\$2,125,000
Embro	2,500 ft ²	\$2,125,000
Innerkip	1,460 ft ²	\$4,250,000
Mount Elgin	5,000 ft ²	\$4,250,000
Thamesford	360 ft ²	\$72,000
Interior Updates for Princeton, Plattsville, Harrington & Tavistock	n/a	\$200,000*
Subtotal excluding Tillsonburg	11,820	\$13,022,000
Tillsonburg		
Option 1:	6,500 ft ^{2**}	\$9,100,000
Option 2:	6,500 ft ^{2**}	\$9,100,000
Option 3:	5,450 ft ²	\$12,350,000***
Option 4:	17,200 ft ²	\$12,100,000
Total including Tillsonburg	17,270 to 29,020 ft²	\$22,122,000 to \$25,372,000

Notes: costs are order of magnitude estimates stated in 2024 dollars, excluding escalation, and assume optimal site development conditions. All options that include a second-storey expansion to the existing structure require a structural engineering assessment to determine feasibility, complexity and financial implications.

* assumes lump sum average cost of \$50,000 per library for interior finishes, furniture and equipment noting actual costs will depend on the extent of upgrades.

**Includes Gross-up of 30% to account for structure, circulation, building systems, and other systems

*** Includes a 30% contingency to account for unknown structural capabilities.

OCL will need to work with its municipal partners to confirm capital cost estimates through detailed work design. Timing of major capital projects summarized in Table 17 will also need to be confirmed and coordinated with partners so that municipal and County budgets are aligned. The LFP capital strategy takes a fiscally responsible approach by indexing investments to the rate of population growth while retaining the existing service level for library space so that Oxford County keeps pace. Not only will these investments allow OCL to keep pace with growth-related needs but can also act as a catalyst to encourage non-municipal investment in rural and urban communities. Provision of sufficient and modern library space can support community revitalization efforts through business and employee attraction, encouraging development of creative industries, and empowering residents with knowledge and skills required to succeed academically and professionally.

Further, the LFP investments/reinvestment strategy sets a foundation for higher operating efficiencies that increase the potential for a higher return on investment. Potential to share capital and operating resources with OCL's partners to redevelop certain branches as part of mixed-use projects can attain larger and higher quality libraries. For other projects, reconfiguration and updates to existing library interiors can help attain cost savings while providing better value to library users without having to carry out major construction.



Plattsville Library Exterior, Collections & Seating

Table 17: Summary of Major LFP Capital Items

Recommendation	Suggested Timing
Blanford–Blenheim	
Princeton Library Interior Updates & Improvements	2025–2028
Plattsville Library Interior Updates & Improvements	2029–2031
East Zorra–Tavistock	
Innerkip Expansion	2029–2031
Tavistock Library Interior Updates & Improvements	2031–2034
Ingersoll	
Town Hall / Library Space Audit	2025–2028
Norwich	
Burgessville Library Replacement	2025–2028
South–West Oxford	
Mount Elgin Library Replacement	T.B.D. with Township
Tillsonburg	
Tillsonburg Library Expansion	2025–2028
Zorra	
Harrington Library Interior Updates & Improvements	2025–2028
Thamesford Library Program Room Expansion	2025–2028
Embro Library Replacement	T.B.D. with Township

Note: Suggested Timing is subject to revision depending upon factors such as (but are not limited to) rate of population growth relative to forecasts used to underpin LFP assessments, input from public and interest holder consultations, grant and external funding opportunities, lifecycle conditions and asset management planning for existing branches, and financial contributions provided by OCL’s partner municipalities.

8.3 Monitoring & Reviewing the LFP

The LFP is built upon a number of foundational inputs of which some have the potential to change over the planning period. For example, County-wide and certain lower-tier municipal population forecasts could change over time. As a result to any changes to such inputs, OCL should regularly review, assess, and periodically revise the LFP's Recommendations in order to ensure that they remain reflective of the community's needs.

Through these mechanisms – or as a result of internal or external factors – adjustment in resource allocations and priorities may be required. The steps below should be considered to conduct annual reviews of the LFP.

- Review of the past year (recommendation implemented, capital projects undertaken, success of new and existing initiatives, changes in usage levels, areas for improvement or adjustment, etc.).
- Review the LFP to identify and/or confirm short-term initiatives based on staff reviews and consideration (e.g., trends, consultation, usage data, funding, partnerships, etc.).
- Identify potential challenges for the upcoming year, including information discussed during recommended annual walk-throughs of library buildings with municipal partners.
- Communicate the status of ongoing and future projects with OCL staff, municipal Councils, and the public.
- Revise the capital budget and propose external funding opportunities, as necessary.
- Update the LFP in five years.



Oxford County Library Board - Key Agenda Items 2025

Agenda items	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Sep	Oct	Nov	Notes
2024 Board Evaluation		X									Yearly Agenda Item
2024 Year End Statistics						X					Yearly Agenda Item
Librarian's Report and Monthly Statistics	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	Regular Agenda Item
Quarterly Metrics		Q4 (24)			Q1			Q2		Q3	Regular Agenda Item
2025 Business Plan and Budget Update					Q1			Q2		Q3	Regular Agenda Item
2024 Annual Community Report						X					Yearly Agenda Item
2024 Financial Audit						X					Yearly Agenda Item
2026 Business Plan								X			2024 Planning
2026 Budget									X		2024 Planning
Library Facilities Plan					X						2024 / 2025 Goal
CEO/Chief Librarian Performance Goals										X	Yearly Agenda Item
2025 Board Meeting Dates and Library Closures									X		Yearly Agenda Item

[illegible]



Report 2025-20
CORPORATE SERVICES
Board Date: May 20, 2025

REPORT TO LIBRARY BOARD

Librarian Report

To: Oxford County Library Board

From: CEO / Chief Librarian

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Library Board receives Report 2025-20, Librarian Report, for information and discussion.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- This report highlights the monthly usage statistics, quarterly statistics; as well as further information regarding library service.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's operating budget.

Communications

Library staff regularly use e-blasts, social media, in branch signage, and other sources for the promotion of library services and programs. Some programs are given further consideration, utilizing social media boosts, print ads, and news releases with the assistance of Strategic Communications and Engagement.




Library statistics gathered for this document are utilized to present the yearly Community Report Card statistics.

2024-2028 LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN

Oxford County Library Board approved the **2024-2028 Library Strategic Plan** on February 20, 2024. The Plan outlines three key goals to advance the Library's vision to "Connect, discover, share, become." These goals are: (1) *Sustain service excellence*, (2) *Grow engagement and member relationships*, and (3) *Innovate access to service*.

The recommendation in this report supports the following strategic goals.

Strategic Goals and Strategies

GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3
 <p>Sustain service excellence</p>	 <p>Grow engagement and member relationships</p>	 <p>Innovate access to service</p>
<p>Strategy 1.1 – Develop and implement a long-term facilities plan to meet changing demands and create enjoyable and dynamic spaces for our communities.</p> <p>Strategy 1.2 – Develop and implement a referral framework to ensure that customers with diverse needs are referred to program and service supports provided by the most appropriate community organizations.</p> <p>Strategy 1.3 – Develop and implement a strategic approach to attract, retain and develop employees and volunteers to enhance and sustain OCL service excellence.</p>	<p>Strategy 2.1 – Create and implement a Communications Strategy to build OCL's brand awareness and service offerings in the community.</p> <p>Strategy 2.2 – Develop and implement a Patron Management and Growth Plan to increase usership and community engagement with library programs, services and spaces.</p> <p>Strategy 2.3 – Plan and implement the expansion of non-traditional services to include more digital resources, access to technology and unique collections.</p>	<p>Strategy 3.1 – Plan, design, and implement a Programs and Services Accessibility Strategy to make OCL inclusive and accessible to all residents.</p> <p>Strategy 3.2 – Expand the availability of self-service options and introduce more technology to increase access.</p> <p>Strategy 3.3 – Expand the Ox on the Run program to increase library access in communities without branches and to meet residents where they are to drive engagement.</p>

See: [Oxford County Library 2024-2028 Strategic Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

CEO / Chief Librarian

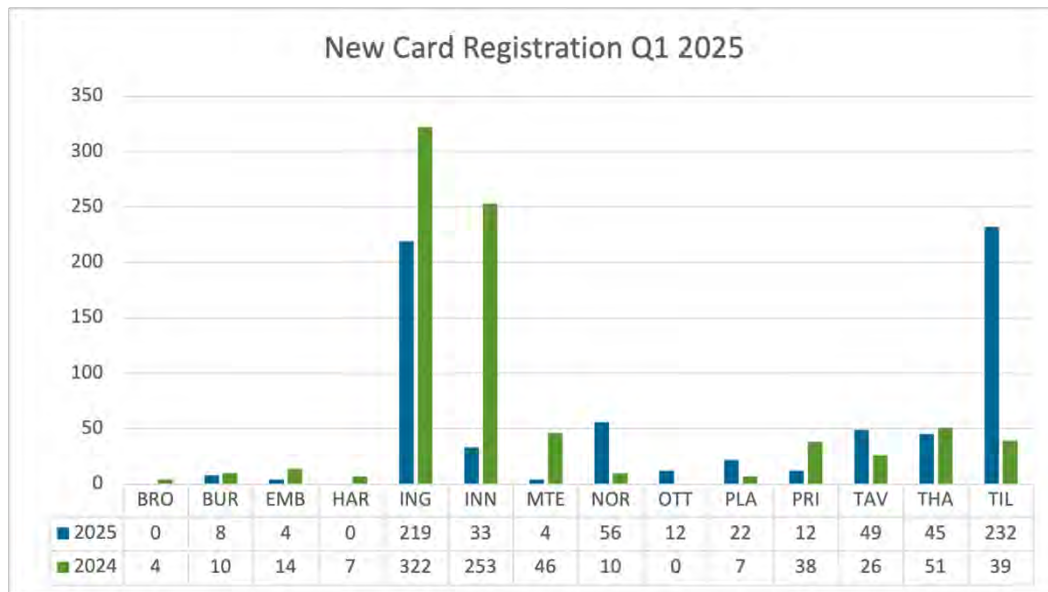
- April 22 – w/ Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Re: Facilities Plan
- April 23 – A.I. + Collections Working Group
- May 2 – SWOLA (South-western Ontario Library Association) @ Brantford Public Library

- May 6 – Oxford Leads: Leadership Cafe

Quarterly Statistics

New Card Holders

Thought there was an overall decline in new card registration over Q1 2024, Tillsonburg, Tavistock and Norwich should be noted for their large increases in new registered card holders in the first quarter of 2025.

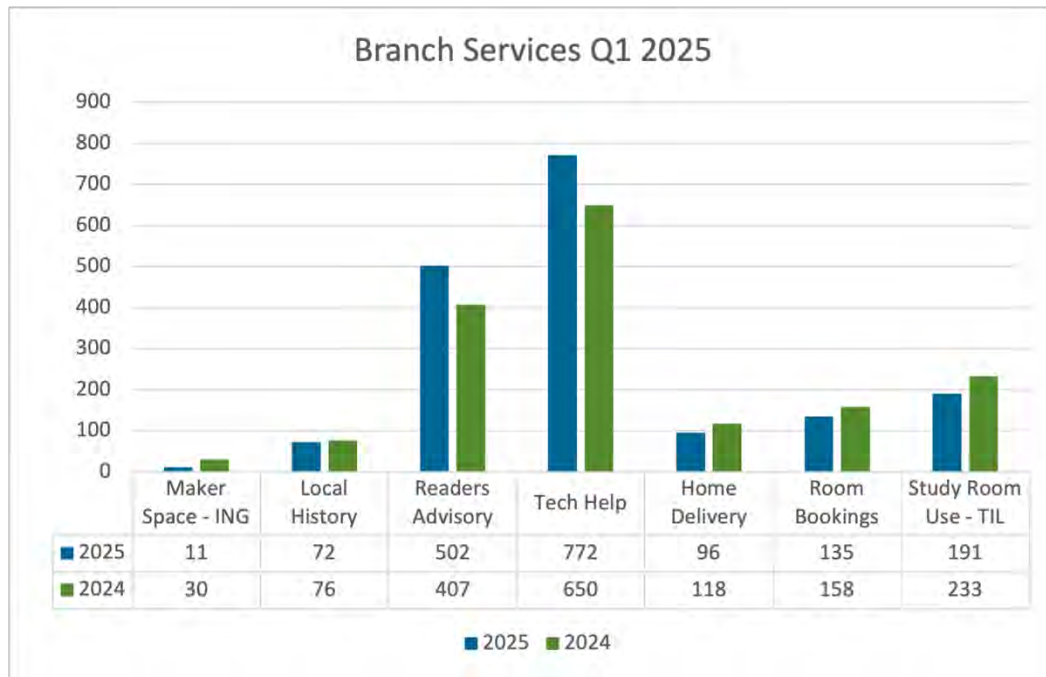


Q1 Total New Card Holders		
2025	2024	% Change
696	827	-16%

Branch Services

Readers Advisory and Technology Help showed strong growth in the first quarter, pushing total branch services up by 3%.

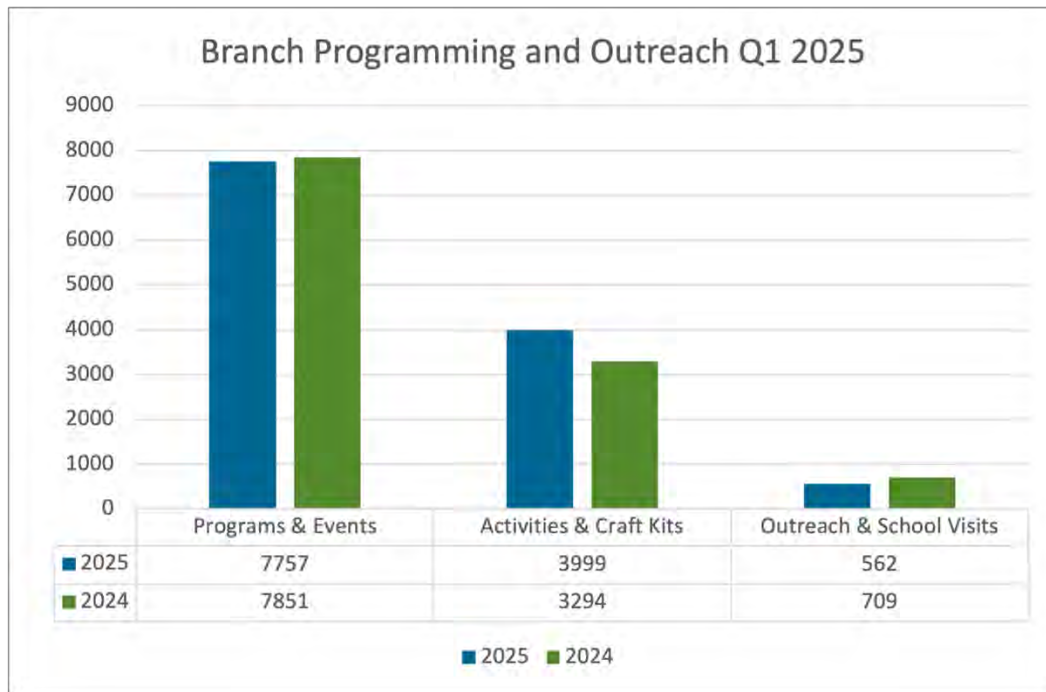
Report 2025-20
CORPORATE SERVICES
Board Date: May 20, 2025



Q1 Total Branch Services		
2025	2024	% Change
3804	3696	3%

Programming and Outreach

A modest decline in programming attendance (1% or nearly 100 people) was noted in the first quarter. However, increased in branch activities and take-home craft kits grew by nearly 21% to help boost the Library's programming and outreach totals to 4% over 2024.



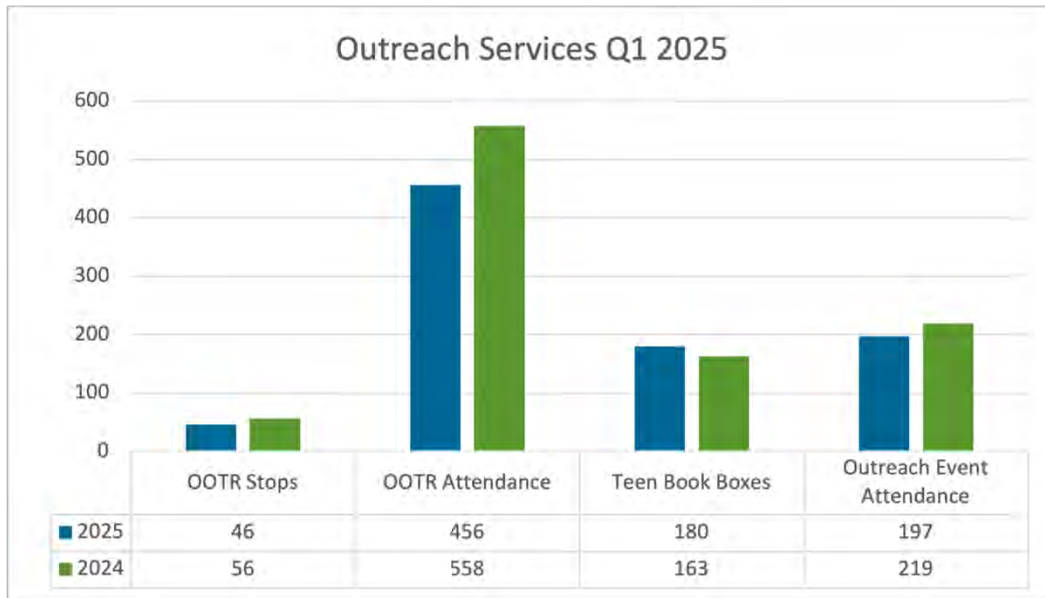
Q1 Total Branch Programming and Outreach		
2025	2024	% Change
12,318	11,854	4%

Outreach Services

Outreach Services, including Ox on the Run showed slightly lower service levels and attendance in Q1 2025. Specifically, vehicle trouble kept Ox on the Run off the road during the first quarter for several weeks. While staff were able to utilize their own transportation during much of that time to maintain some stops, growth in attendance was likely affected by potential customers not seeing the distinctive bookmobile on the road. Ox on the Run also had to cancel a number of stops in Q1 due to weather such as icy conditions.

Teen Book Box numbers continued to show strong growth. While the main program is unable to grow due to staff limitations, the Helping Hands Foodbank program has seen modest growth in popularity that led to the stronger 2025 numbers.

Report 2025-20
CORPORATE SERVICES
Board Date: May 20, 2025



Q1 Outreach Services		
2025	2024	% Change
879	996	-12%

Monthly Statistics

Branch Attendance

Though overall attendance is down throughout the system, the following branches should be noted for their increased attendance during April.

Branch	April	Notes
Embrow	67%	Increase of 1 hour over April 2024
Harrington	9%	Increase of 3 hours over April 2024
Innerkip	37%	Increase of 3 hours over April 2024

Report 2025-20
CORPORATE SERVICES
Board Date: May 20, 2025

Norwich	9%	No hours changed
Otterville	15%	Increase of 3 hours over April 2024
Plattsville	22%	No hours changed
Tavistock	2%	No hours changed

When looking specifically at the attendance at Village Branches with increased hours from 2024, nearly all branches show increased usage when looking at 2025 year to date. The exceptions being Burgessville (-9%), Mount Elgin (-16%) and Princeton* (-20%).

% Total Change	April	Year to Date
2023 to 2024	-4%	-5%

Computer Use

While April statistics show a slowing of usage, overall computer and WIFI usage for the year is still showing growth at 4.9%.

Several branches are also showing strong usage for computers and WIFI as noted in the chart below.

Branch	April	Type of Use
Brownsville	33%	Computer use
Burgessville	43%	WIFI use
Embro	126%	WIFI Use
Harrington	27%	WIFI use
Norwich	9%	WIFI use
Plattsville	98%	Computer use
Thamesford	29%	Computer Use

Report 2025-20
CORPORATE SERVICES
Board Date: May 20, 2025

% Total Change	April	Year to Date
Total Computer Use	-6%	8%
Total Wireless Use	-6%	3%
Total Use Overall	-6%	4.9%

Physical Circulation

Physical circulation continues a downward trend in April. Staff will be doing a fuller in-depth analysis of physical circulation to see which areas are most effected.

Two branches continued to see positive circulation in April; Burgessville at 7% and Plattsville at 7%.

% Total Change	April	Year to Date
2023 to 2024	-13%	-8%

Digital Circulation

Declines in digital circulation also continued in April. Growth has remained steady in Digital TV & Movies with a 23% increase. Digital Audiobooks grew by 1% in April after staff loosened restrictions on Hoopla audiobooks.

% Total Change	April	Year to Date
2023 to 2024	-3%	-1%

Community Outreach & Engagement

Ox on the Run

The Ox on the Run team is finalizing their summer schedule. This will include shortening some stops to 1 hour to add more reoccurring visits on a bi-weekly basis.

The team recently celebrated surpassing their Year 1 visitor total and anticipate exceeding 10,000 visitors as part of the two-year pilot project.

Report 2025-20
CORPORATE SERVICES
Board Date: May 20, 2025

Year	Dates	Total Visits
Year 1	June 2023 – May 2024	4,814
Year 2	June 2024 – May 13, 2025	4,837

In April and May Ox on the Run attended the following community events, along with their regular stops with EarlyON and Bookmobile stops:

- Reussa-palooz-Aha (Sweaburg)
- Oxford Children's Water Festival (Woodstock)
- Beachville Car Show (Beachville Museum)
- Bre's Marketplace (Ostrander)

In June they hope to attend the Oxford Pride Family day, Folden's Family Fun Day and the Cops and Roddders Car Show in Ingersoll.

Spring is also busy with school visits to promote the Library's annual Summer Reading Club with two school visits already on the books and five more visits upcoming.

Bundles of Joy

The Bundles of Joy program opened on May 13 for registration. Staff reported that by the second day of opening, the program already had several people registered. The Library's social media post was also getting positive reactions and resharing by May 14. A media release was issued on May 14 along with an interview on the program with Heart FM. To learn more about the program visit: <https://www.ocl.net/our-services/bundles-of-joy/>

Ontario Legislative Assembly Display

Library staff have worked with Oxford County Archives to create a historical exhibit at the Ontario Legislative Assembly in celebration of Oxford County's 175 years. The display will be exhibited until December of this year.

Connecting through Partnerships

The Community Liaison Coordinator has been working closely with Alzheimer Society Southwest Partners to showcase the informative and engaging presentations happening in multiple branches. These sessions, covering a range of important topics related to memory care and support, have been well received by patrons and help position the Library as a hub for lifelong learning.

Additionally, staff are excited to highlight a creative partnership with Aftermath Tattoo, who generously donated sketchbooks for the Library's Teen Book Boxes. This unique collaboration supports youth creativity and self-expression, while also strengthening the Library's ties with local businesses that value community engagement.

Oxford Reads

Voting is underway for the 2025 Oxford Reads Title. With a new social media marketing push, the program has seen an all-time high of 450+ votes, with voting open until Friday, May 23. In comparison, 2024 saw only 168 votes. This is, in part, due to increased online engagement by the authors included in the shortlist.

Oxford Reads is also starting a new joint project between OCL and WPL with a new series of programming branded “Oxford Reads Presents.” Staff are currently finalizing the first program for this series with local author C.J. Frederick. Oxford Reads Presents is intended to highlight local authors with special events at OCL and WPL locations throughout the year.

Collections and Technology

Library Collections

Staff expanded the Library’s “Cool Stuff to Borrow” collection with the addition of a metal detector. Within a few days of the social media promotion of the item, it was checked out and has two holds for borrowing.

The 2025 Ontario Parks and Upper Thames Conservation Area Park Passes are now available and in branches that carry them. Grand River Conservation Park Passes will be available by the end of May. These park passes continue to be a well-used and valuable part of the Library’s collections during the summer months.

In electronic resource news, Signing Savvy has been discontinued due to poor usage over multiple years. Content that was developed by the Signing Savvy team is also currently available in the Library’s Transparent Language resource as well. The last day of access for the Signing Savvy resource will be May 20.

Branch iPads

Staff have streamlined the public facing iPads located in branches. The Teen iPads found at Ingersoll and Tillsonburg have been eliminated due to low usage. Children’s iPads, found in a variety of branches, have been streamlined with enhanced security and controls; along with a curated list of literacy-based apps selected by the Literacy Program Specialists and Librarians. The Lock/Home Screens were also updated with the help of the Community Liaison Coordinator.

Branches and Programming

Branch Improvements

Princeton Branch received a new staff desk recently to help improve workflow and create a more welcoming branch atmosphere.

Burgessville Branch is preparing to be repainted Monday, June 9 to Wednesday, June 11. This will impact branch hours for Tuesday, June 10.

Norwich Branch now has fully accessible and gender-neutral washrooms.



Construction and Renovation Impacts

Innerkip Branch has been minimally affected by the Innerkip Community Hall renovations taking place at the building's main entrance. Renovations are expected to be complete in June. As washrooms have been included in the renovation, library customers are able to utilize the outdoor washrooms when visiting the branch.

Princeton Branch continues to be affected by the road work being done on Main Street. Alternative routes are available to the branch. However, it is anticipated that Princeton statistics will be impacted for the remainder of the year.

Neighborhood Forest Partnership

Oxford County Library once again celebrated Earth Day by providing free trees to families in partnership with Neighborhood Forest. This year 613 customers registered to receive a free white spruce sapling, a 14% increase in registration from last year.

Local History Programming

The Digital Literacy and Local History team has been busy with outreach presentations and library events.

In April "Carnegie Libraries in Canada: A History" was presented to the Zorra Caledonians and "Twice a Pioneer: A History of Oxford's County Library Services" was presented at a meeting of the Tillsonburg & District Historical Society.

The Local History Speaker Series will be hosting Oxford County Archivist, Liz Dommasch on May 3 at the *Tillsonburg branch* where she will speak on "Gowning Stronger Together: A Celebration of Oxford County's Past."

Harrington Branch Ongoing School Partnership

The *Harrington Branch* has continued its ongoing partnership with the Coyote Nature School, seeing approximately 22 students twice a week. The school regularly shares positive comments about library services and photos of the library activities on their school blog: <https://www.coyotenatureschool.ca/blog>



Pride Programming

Once again, the Library will be partnering with Oxford Pride and Woodstock Public Library to present Pride Rainbow Storytime on June 7 at the Early Bird Café in Woodstock. The event will run from 11 to 12:30 and is free, with registration required.

Movie Shoot at Ingersoll Branch

An independent film company recently shot scenes for their upcoming thriller titled *Severamente* at the *Ingersoll Branch* on Monday, May 12. The branch was not closed during filming, though some areas were closed off for short periods of time throughout the evening.

To view our Program Calendar, go to:

<https://engagedpatrons.org/EventsCalendar.cfm?SiteID=2048>

Staff News

Little Branches, Rural Routes Conference

Two staff members attended the Little Branches, Rural Routes Conference in Pembroke, Ontario. The conference focuses on networking and learning opportunities for small library systems in Ontario.

CONCLUSIONS

Library Staff continue to work toward continued service excellence through community outreach; collections and technologies; and branch services and programs.

SIGNATURES

Departmental approval:

Original signed by

Lisa Marie Williams
CEO/Chief Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 Monthly Statistics
Attachment 2 Ox on the Run Schedule

[illegible]

PLATTSVILLE	25	2024	689	900	965	940	892	841	980	871	756	1,016	1,051	659	3,494	10,560
	25	2025	806	944	958	1,145									3,853	3,853
	% Change		17%	5%	-1%	22%									10%	
PRINCETON**	*16	2024	408	439	524	464	367	314	467	332	272	362	400	252	1,835	4,601
	16	2025	296	350	471	359									1,476	1,476
	% Change		-27%	-20%	-10%	-23%									-20%	
TAVISTOCK	35	2024	721	721	744	775	885	778	953	1,041	684	962	783	501	2,961	9548
	35	2025	679	680	918	791									3,068	3068
	% Change		-6%	-6%	23%	2%									4%	
THAMESFORD	35	2024	865	753	922	928	981	785	987	965	750	820	826	608	3,468	10,190
	35	2025	756	714	842	844									3,156	3,156
	% Change		-13%	-5%	-9%	-9%									-9%	
TILLSONBURG	54	2024	6,728	7,219	7,104	7,387	6,690	6,213	7,996	7,660	5,934	7,786	7,342	4,830	28,438	82,889
	54	2025	5,951	5,592	6,927	6,970									25,440	25,440
	% Change		-12%	-23%	-2%	-6%									-11%	
TOTAL	*351.5	2024	16,933	17,517	18,940	19,207	16,432	16,794	21,366	20,162	15,335	20,082	19,065	12,517	72,597	214,350
	352	2025	15,918	15,506	19,189	18,387	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	69,000	69,000
TOTAL Change 2024 to 2025			-6%	-11%	1%	-4%									-5.0%	

*Village Branch Hours Increased - September 9 2024

**Princeton Branch statistics may be affected by road construction April to December 2025

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]



Physical Circulation 2025

BRANCH	YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YTD	TOTAL
OTTERVILLE	2024	1,108	1,147	1,281	1,289	1,383	1,291	1,271	1,277	1,363	1,107	1,219	995	4,825	14,731
	2025	1,055	1,108	1,445	1,303									4,911	4,911
	% CHANGE	-5%	-3%	13%	1%									2%	
Ox on the Run	2024	64	115	144	77	188	72	277	478	143	99	37	51	400	1,157
	2025	66	72	64	68									270	270
	% CHANGE	3%	-37%	-56%	-12%									-33%	
PLATTSVILLE	2024	1,600	1,805	2,109	1,941	1,732	1,903	2,062	2,294	1,970	1,758	1,859	1,533	7,455	22,566
	2025	1,652	1,746	2,210	2,071									7,679	7,679
	% CHANGE	3%	-3%	5%	7%									3%	
PRINCETON*	2024	1,334	1,627	1,923	1,486	1,185	999	1,342	1,129	1,211	1,758	1,321	1,048	6,370	16,363
	2025	1,274	1,157	1,441	999									4,871	4,871
	% CHANGE	-4%	-29%	-25%	-33%									-24%	
TAVISTOCK	2024	2,486	2,257	2,480	2,299	2,145	2,344	2,607	2,687	2,167	2,161	2,118	1,862	9,522	27,613
	2025	2,149	2,052	2,479	2,325									9,005	9,005
	% CHANGE	-14%	-9%	0%	1%									-5%	
THAMESFORD	2024	1,925	1,764	2,106	1,965	1,700	1,857	2,334	2,571	1,962	1,841	1,911	1,335	7,760	23,271
	2025	1,559	1,430	1,626	1,844									6,459	6,459
	% CHANGE	-19%	-19%	-23%	-6%									-17%	
TILLSONBURG	2024	6,978	6,630	6,702	6,973	6,265	6,805	7,172	7,525	6,412	6,485	6,687	5,761	27,283	80,395
	2025	5,767	6,150	6,133	5,328									23,378	23,378
	% CHANGE	-17%	-7%	-8%	-24%									-14%	
TOTAL	2024	35,563	33,857	36,585	36,452	33,393	37,456	41,028	42,188	34,138	35,294	34,340	28,790	142,457	428,496
	2025	32,210	32,583	34,536	31,692	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	131,021	131,021
	% CHANGE	-9%	-4%	-6%	-13%									-8%	

* Princeton Branch statistics may be affected by road construction April to December 2025



Digital Circulation 2025

	YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YTD	TOTALS
Digital TV & Movies	2024	740	703	764	696	744	704	769	726	693	733	850	867	2,903	8,989
	2025	853	910	955	853									3,571	3,571
	% Change	15%	29%	25%	23%									23%	-60%
Digital Magazines / Newspapers	2024	5,237	6,149	5,521	4,532	3,899	3,852	4,152	3,785	4,719	5,035	5,170	5,402	21,439	57,453
	2025	5,747	5,246	5,095	4,301									20,389	20,389
	% Change	10%	-15%	-8%	-5%									-5%	-65%
Tumble Books	2024	174	213	192	135	128	183	73	19	36	64	56	53	714	1,326
	2025	52	119	72	37									280	280
	% Change	-70%	-44%	-63%	-73%									-61%	-79%
Digital Music	2024	1,527	1,323	1,357	1,219	1,310	1,393	1,121	1,235	1,179	1,070	1,203	1,519	5,426	15,456
	2025	1,310	1,519	1,266	1,158									5,253	5,253
	% Change	-14%	15%	-7%	-5%									-3%	-66%
Digital Audiobooks	2024	4,685	4,574	4,908	4,638	4,674	4,516	5,027	5,009	4,801	5,023	4,998	4,248	18,805	57,101
	2025	4,986	4,475	4,851	4,666									18,978	18,978
	% Change	6%	-2%	-1%	1%									1%	-67%
Digital ebooks	2024	7,180	6,431	7,148	6,915	6,562	6,720	6,894	7,153	6,894	6,806	6,586	6,297	27,674	81,586
	2025	7,402	6,641	7,280	6,537									27,860	27,860
	% Change	3%	3%	2%	-5%									1%	-66%
TOTAL Digital Circulation	2024	19,543	19,393	19,890	18,135	17,317	17,368	18,036	17,927	18,322	18,731	18,863	18,386	76,961	221,911
	2025	20,350	18,910	19,519	17,552	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	76,331	76,331
	% Change	4%	-2%	-2%	-3%									-1%	-66%

Definitions:

Digital Movies include the following: Hoopla Movies, Hoopla TV, Hoopla Binge Passes, Kanopy

Digital Magazines and Newspapers include the following: Overdrive Magazines, Press Reader

Digital Music includes the following: Freegal, Hoopla Music

Digital Audiobooks includes the following: Hoopla Audiobooks, Overdrive Audiobooks

Digital eBooks includes the following: Freeding, Hoopla Comics, Hoopla eBooks, Overdrive eBooks



OX ON THE RUN

MAY 2025

Report 2025-20
Attachement 2

Page 187 of 199



SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

Please note that stops are subject to change, and may be cancelled due to inclement weather. Please check our social media pages for updates.

4



5

6

7

Beachville District
Museum 1:30-3:30

8

9

Drumbo Township
Office 1:30-3:30

10



11

12

13

Springford Hall
1:30-3:30

14



Embro Community
Centre
10-11:30am

15

EZT Admin Building
Hickson 10am-12pm
Oxford Children's
Water Festival
Pittock
Conservation 5-8pm

16

Chalmers United
Church
Kintore
10am-12pm

17

18

19



20

21

Beachville District
Museum 1:30-3:30

22

23



Mount Elgin
Community Centre
10-11:30am
Drumbo Township
Office 1:30-3:30

24

25

Beachville Car
Show 12-4pm

26

27

Springford Hall
1:30-3:30

28

29

EZT
Administration
Building
Hickson
10am-12pm

30

Chalmers United
Church
Kintore
10am-12pm

31

To: Oxford County Library Board

From: Director of Corporate Services

2025 Q1 Library Business Plan and Budget Update

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Library Board receives Report 2025-21, 2025 Q1 Library Business Plan and Budget Update, for information.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Delivery of the 2025 goals and objectives is progressing as planned
- Budget variance report is projecting a year end surplus of \$9,049

Implementation Points

Staff will continue to monitor rising inflation's impact on the Library's budget and take appropriate action where required. The next financial update for the Board will be in September for the period ending June 30, 2025.

Financial Impact

The 2025 year-end forecast as of March 31, 2025 projects a minor surplus of \$9,049. Additional detailed information regarding the forecasted variances can be found on Attachment 2 to this report.

As the much of the Library's programming is concentrated in Q2 and Q3 of the year, the year to date figures are not indicative of the remaining year's financial activity.

Communications

This report is intended to update the Board on the Library's progress in meeting the goals and objectives set out for 2025 and a view of the Q1 budget variance with forecasted year end results.

DISCUSSION

Background

In accordance with the reporting provisions contained within the Long Term Financial Sustainability Plan, staff have prepared progress updates for each of the approved goals and objectives within the business plan, accompanied by budget variance reports as of March 31, 2025.

Comments

The 2025 Business Plan is progressing as planned. Details regarding each of the goals are provided in Attachment 1.

Staff continue to promote the Library's pilot mobile outreach programming and support program under the guise of *Ox on the Run*, documenting activities and feedback for assessing the program's continuation later this fall.

The 2024-2025 Library Facilities Plan continues to progress with plans to deliver the report to the Board in May 2025.

Staff review the financial activity on a monthly basis for potential areas of concern and to ensure spending will remain within the budget provisions approved by the Board. To date, the financial activity is as expected for the first quarter with the only variances forecasted related to the final insurance premiums paid which came in slightly below budget. The year-to-date expenses and forecast figures as of the end of Q1 2025 are presented on Attachment 2 with no emergency or unplanned expenses recorded.

Conclusions

Overall, this report indicates that as of the end of the first quarter of 2025, the Library is well positioned to deliver the 2025 Business Plan and Budget as approved.

SIGNATURES

Departmental Approval:

Original signed by

Lynn S. Buchner, CPA, CGA
Director of Corporate Services

Report 2025-21
CORPORATE SERVICES
Board Date: May 20, 2025

Approved for submission:

Original signed by





Lisa Marie Williams
CEO/Chief Librarian





ATTACHMENTS


Attachment 1 – 2025 Q1 Library Business Plan and Budget Update


Attachment 2 – 2025 Q1 Library Variance Report


Goals and Objectives

Description	2025	2026	2027	Strategic Plan	Status Update
Organizational Review and Onboarding Plan Oxford County Library is at a critical growth stage and intends to optimize staffing in order to meet future demands. The Library aims to achieve Strategy 1.3 in the Library Strategic Plan by developing and implementing “a strategic approach to attract, retain and develop employees and volunteers to enhance and sustain Oxford County Library service excellence.” The review, undertaken by staff with the help of County Human Resources, will look at the current organizational structure and recommend changes to meet current and future needs. Goals of the review will be to: design an effective organizational structure, develop and strengthen the onboarding and training processes, and develop processes to assist with change management. The review should be completed prior to July 2025 in order to assist Library Administration with changes that may influence the 2026 budget.	●			 Goal 3.3: Attract, retain and engage staff	Librarian Team is working on an onboarding plan; CEO/Chief Librarian is making progress on reviewing position descriptions and re-aligning organizational structure. Overall progressing well to meet expected completion timeline.
				LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN  Goal 1: Sustain service excellence	
Branch Level Payment Solution With the help of County Corporate Services, Library staff will investigate and implement payment solutions that can be scaled for usage at all Oxford County Library branches. Staff will look at current payment solution in place at Resource Branches and the needs of smaller Regional and Village branches to find a solution that is budget friendly, while also providing expanded options for customer service.	●			 Goal 3.1: Continuous improvement and results-driven solutions	Pending corporate-wide review planned to begin in Q3.
				LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN  Goal 3: Innovate access to service	

Description	2025	2026	2027	Strategic Plan	Status Update
Communication Strategy for Patron Management, Brand Awareness and Growth In order to increase community awareness of Oxford County Library's programs, services and collections, staff will work closely with Strategic Communications to create a communication strategy focused on deepening relationships with existing and new members and increasing usership and community engagement. Through this goal, the Library aims to achieve Strategies 2.1 and 2.2 in the Library Strategic Plan. Key Performance Indicators will be developed to show success of the strategy over the short, mid and long term.	●			 Goal 3.2: Collaborate with our partners and communities LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN  Goal 2: Grow engagement and member relationships	New Community Liaison position has been filled and progress is made – participating in preparing for the 60 th anniversary events; setting up automated notification of library card renewals; creating social media guidelines for all staff; and implementing social media engagement strategies to further the Library's reach..
Oxford County Library 60 Year Anniversary Collaborate with Oxford County Archives and Strategic Communications and Engagement for the celebration of Oxford County Library's 60-year anniversary, along with the anniversaries of Oxford County (175) and Archives (25). Planning will include communications plan and programming plan. Key performance Indicators such as program attendance, social media statistics, and other engagement Key Performance Indicators will be reviewed for effectiveness.	●			 Goal 3.2: Collaborate with our partners and communities LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN  Goal 2: Grow engagement and member relationships	Staff are working in collaboration with the Communications and Strategic Engagement Team – designing a wrap for the Library van to recognize the milestone; creating a 1–2-minute library history video; utilizing Speak Up Oxford for a Library Memory Wall; and creation of pop-up banners to mark 60+ years of library history in Oxford County. Staff are also planning a 60 year celebration event this Fall.

 LIBRARY March Variance Reporting For the Period Ending March 31, 2025					
	YTD		REVISED	FORECAST	FORECAST
	ACTUAL	FORECAST	BUDGET*	VARIANCE	VARIANCE
				\$	%
CAPITAL					
LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION					
60000 LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION	53,983	287,800	287,800	-	-
92605 R - LIBRARIES - CAPITAL	(51,948)	(287,800)	(287,800)	-	-
TOTAL LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION	2,035	-	-	-	-
OCL ING					
80000 CAPITAL	-	99,788	99,788	-	-
92605 R - LIBRARIES - CAPITAL	-	(99,788)	(99,788)	-	-
TOTAL OCL ING	-	-	-	-	-
Norwich Library					
80000 CAPITAL	8,511	15,000	15,000	-	-
92605 R - LIBRARIES - CAPITAL	(8,511)	(15,000)	(15,000)	-	-
TOTAL Norwich Library	-	-	-	-	-
THAMESFORD LIBRARY					
80000 CAPITAL	9,703	7,200	7,200	-	-
92605 R - LIBRARIES - CAPITAL	(5,822)	(7,200)	(7,200)	-	-
TOTAL THAMESFORD LIBRARY	3,881	-	-	-	-
TOTAL CAPITAL	5,916	-	-	-	-
OCL					
LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION					
60000 LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION					
REVENUES					
GENERAL REVENUES					
3200 REV - PROVINCIAL GOVT	-	(135,675)	(135,675)	-	-
3203 REV - PROV-PAY EQUITY	-	(3,229)	(3,229)	-	-
3325 REV - SERVICE RECOVERY FEES	(4,196)	(20,000)	(20,000)	-	-
3332 REV - INTEREST	(986)	(986)	-	986	-
3334 REV - DONATIONS	-	(1,880)	-	1,880	-
TOTAL GENERAL REVENUES	(5,182)	(161,770)	(158,904)	2,866	(1.8%)
TOTAL REVENUES	(5,182)	(161,770)	(158,904)	2,866	(1.8%)
EXPENSES					
SALARIES AND BENEFITS					
SALARIES	142,101	741,068	741,068	-	-
HONORARIUM	1,300	5,500	5,500	-	-
BENEFITS	48,738	220,089	220,089	-	-
TOTAL SALARIES AND BENEFITS	192,139	966,657	966,657	-	-
OPERATING EXPENSES					
5000 MEETING COSTS	-	200	200	-	-
5002 CREDIT CARD COSTS	43	150	150	-	-
5003 BAD DEBTS EXPENSE	1	1	-	(1)	-
5012 COMPUTER SOFTWARE & SUPPORT	25,360	40,529	42,750	2,221	5.2%
5015 ADVERTISING/MARKETING/PROMO	295	25,000	25,000	-	-

 LIBRARY March Variance Reporting For the Period Ending March 31, 2025					
	YTD		REVISED	FORECAST	FORECAST
	ACTUAL	FORECAST	BUDGET*	VARIANCE	VARIANCE
				\$	%
5018 TELECOMMUNICATIONS	446	3,290	3,290	-	-
5020 MEMBERSHIP/DUES/SUBSCRIPTIONS	12,523	12,978	13,480	502	3.7%
5021 TRAINING/SEMINARS/CONFERENCE	4,055	18,600	18,600	-	-
5023 POSTAGE	1,161	8,900	8,900	-	-
5025 TRAVEL-EXPENSES, MILEAGE	1,133	14,000	14,000	-	-
5026 TOOLS/EQUIPMENT PURCHASE	2,241	5,000	5,000	-	-
5029 R & M - EQUIPMENT	24	14,500	14,500	-	-
5045 OFFICE SUPPLIES/EXPENSES	1,525	4,000	4,000	-	-
5303 INSURANCE	15,356	15,356	18,050	2,694	14.9%
5308 PURCHASED SERVICES	63	1,000	1,000	-	-
5310 CONSULTANT FEES	20,952	74,485	74,485	-	-
6006 DONATION WITHDRAWAL	1,880	1,880	-	(1,880)	-
6019 SUPPLIES/PROGRAM EXPENSES	3,699	11,000	11,000	-	-
6020 BOOKS - HARD COPY	5,187	15,000	15,000	-	-
6023 CULTURAL PROGRAMS	8,857	45,500	45,500	-	-
6024 GUIDES & TOOLS	16,137	20,756	20,756	-	-
6028 BOOKS - ELECTRONIC	96,747	262,338	262,338	-	-
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	217,685	594,463	597,999	3,536	0.6%
INTERDEPARTMENTAL CHARGES	235,734	897,459	897,459	-	-
TOTAL EXPENSES					
PROGRAM SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)					
TOTAL PROGRAM SURPLUS/(DEFICI	-	-	-	-	-
91600 DC - LIBRARY	19,159	(204,170)	(204,170)	-	-
92141 R - GROWTH - LIBRARY	27,644	18,375	18,375	-	-
92600 R - LIBRARIES	-	(18,665)	(18,665)	-	-
92605 R - LIBRARIES - CAPITAL	61,250	245,000	245,000	-	-
TOTAL LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION	748,429	2,337,349	2,343,751	6,402	0.3%
BRANCH LIBRARIES					
61000 BROWNSVILLE LIBRARY	10,683	39,134	39,127	(7)	(0.0%)
61001 BURGESSVILLE LIBRARY	17,904	86,446	86,436	(10)	(0.0%)
61002 EMBRO LIBRARY	8,507	45,127	45,107	(20)	(0.0%)
61003 HARRINGTON LIBRARY	10,193	43,886	43,884	(2)	(0.0%)
61004 INGERSOLL LIBRARY	169,400	843,755	843,581	(174)	(0.0%)
61005 INNERKIP LIBRARY	43,168	83,631	86,589	2,958	3.4%
61006 MT-ELGIN LIBRARY	9,720	51,354	51,355	1	0.0%
61007 NORWICH LIBRARY	69,879	271,035	271,022	(13)	(0.0%)
61008 OTTERVILLE LIBRARY	15,177	84,822	84,812	(10)	(0.0%)
61009 PLATTSVILLE LIBRARY	16,059	133,109	133,084	(25)	(0.0%)
61010 PRINCETON LIBRARY	15,810	69,577	69,563	(14)	(0.0%)
61011 TAVISTOCK LIBRARY	63,946	253,283	253,291	8	0.0%
61012 THAMESFORD LIBRARY	52,241	234,179	234,168	(11)	(0.0%)

 LIBRARY March Variance Reporting For the Period Ending March 31, 2025					
	YTD		REVISED	FORECAST VARIANCE	FORECAST VARIANCE
	ACTUAL	FORECAST	BUDGET*	\$	%
61013 TILLSONBURG LIBRARY	166,981	816,875	816,841	(34)	(0.0%)
92600 R - LIBRARIES	(2,974)	(2,974)	(2,974)	-	-
92605 R - LIBRARIES - CAPITAL	43,250	173,000	173,000	-	-
TOTAL BRANCH LIBRARIES	709,944	3,226,239	3,228,886	2,647	0.1%
SPECIAL PROGRAMS					
61004 INGERSOLL LIBRARY	222	-	-	-	-
62006 MOBILE OUTREACH	42,401	173,819	173,819	-	-
TOTAL SPECIAL PROGRAMS	42,623	173,819	173,819	-	-
TOTAL OCL	1,500,996	5,737,407	5,746,456	9,049	0.2%
TOTAL LIBRARY	1,506,912	5,737,407	5,746,456	9,049	0.2%

REPORT TO LIBRARY BOARD

Caffyn Bequest Expenditure Request – Children’s Spaces Refresh in Rural Branches

To: Oxford County Library Board

From: CEO / Chief Librarian

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Board approves up to \$4,700 to be expended from the Peg Caffyn Bequest Fund to enhance children’s play spaces as set out in Report 2025-21 titled “Caffyn Bequest Expenditure Request – Children’s Spaces Refresh in Rural Branches”.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Library staff are seeking approval to extend funds from the Peg Caffyn Bequest for a refresh of the children’s play spaces and programming tools for use at the Regional and Village branches.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

Upon approval, library staff will purchase equipment designed for high-traffic educational environments that are easy to clean and maintain.

Staff will also develop regular cleaning and maintenance procedures for equipment to extend the life of items purchased.

Financial Impact

The funding request for the children’s spaces refresh in rural branches is \$4,600. This request would see a refresh of the children’s areas at the Regional and Village branch locations.

The funding details and impacts on the Bequest are outlined in the tables below.

Table 1 Funding Request

Report 2025-21
CORPORATE SERVICES
Board Date: May 20, 2025

ITEM DESCRIPTION	FUNDING REQUEST
Children's Educational Equipment and Manipulatives	\$4,200
Storytime Materials (Shakers, Scarves)	500
Total Cost	\$4,700

Table 2 Bequest Fund

PEG CAFFYN BEQUEST	FUND
Projected Balance prior to Report 2025-21	\$54,347
Requested Funds	4,700
Remaining Balance	\$49,647

Communications

Publicly recognizing the impacts that a donor's generosity makes is good stewardship practice. As such, library staff will create signage for all Regional and Village Branch children's spaces to recognize the Peg Caffyn Bequest's funding of upgrades.

2024-2028 LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN

Oxford County Library Board approved the [2024-2028 Library Strategic Plan](#) on February 20, 2024. The Plan outlines three key goals to advance the Library's vision to "Connect, discover, share, become." These goals are: (1) *Sustain service excellence*, (2) *Grow engagement and member relationships*, and (3) *Innovate access to service*.

The recommendation in this report supports the following strategic goals.

Strategic Goals and Strategies

Report 2025-21
CORPORATE SERVICES
Board Date: May 20, 2025

GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3
 <p>Sustain service excellence</p>	 <p>Grow engagement and member relationships</p>	 <p>Innovate access to service</p>
1.1 Develop and implement a long-term facilities plan to meet changing demands and create enjoyable and dynamic spaces for our communities.	2.2 Develop and implement a Patron Management and Growth Plan to increase usership and community engagement with library programs, services and spaces.	

See: [Oxford County Library 2024-2028 Strategic Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

In 2019 Oxford County Library was the recipient of a bequest in the amount of \$75,562.28 from the Estate of Margaret (Peg) Caffyn. At the May 2019 meeting, the Library Board authorized the placement of those funds into a deferred revenue account. The Library Board stipulated that the funds be used to enhance library services, with a preference to be given to projects targeting vulnerable and at-risk children and teens.

In recent years Library staff have requested funds for enhancements to branch children's spaces; launch the Library's children's Maker Kit collections; enhance the Read with Me book pack collection; and pilot a children's multilingual collection with books in Ukrainian, Arabic and Punjabi. In January, staff also requested funds to launch the Bundles of Joy program with an anticipated start date of late Spring 2025.

Comments

Regional and Village branches currently offer limited play-based equipment and manipulatives in their children's areas. Such equipment has been well-loved and donated by local community members, rather than purposely selected for the space. Staff also recognize that play imparts cognitive, physical, and social skills to children and is as important as reading and writing to healthy brain development.

As such, staff are requesting a refresh of branch children's spaces with educational equipment that will promote sustained family engagement in library spaces, foster literacy development through play-based learning, and support families who cannot afford a variety of educational toys and equipment at home.

While branches look to refresh their children's spaces, they have also seen an increase in storytime and children's programming attendance. Staff want to recognize that open-ended, play-based programming alongside more traditional storytime sessions signifies to the community that play is an important part of learning and development. The request for funding, therefore, also includes funding for programming equipment that is vital to keep children, their parents/caregivers, and other adults attending our children's programming engaged through play-based learning.

CONCLUSIONS

Library staff believe that a refresh of the children's spaces and storytime resources for the Regional and Village branches will allow for an enhancement of welcoming library spaces and engaging experiences for members of Oxford's rural communities.

SIGNATURES

Departmental approval:

Original signed by

Lisa Marie Williams
CEO/Chief Librarian