



REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

MEETING DATE: SEPTEMBER 20, 2012

Session:	Public Session
Subject:	Strategic Plan: Operational Excellence: Holds Process Re-engineering
Prepared By:	Rosemary Townsend, Mary McEwen, Nancy Collister
Presented By:	Nancy Collister
Purpose of Report:	For Receipt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Library Board receive this report.

ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY

The purpose of this report is to inform the Library Board about progress on the “Holds Process Re-engineering” Strategic Initiative (Holds Initiative), a component of the London Public Library (LPL) Strategic Plan. The LPL Holds Service allows patrons to add their names to waiting lists for specific items, to reserve and set aside in-library items at a specific location, and to bring wanted items to a convenient pick-up location.

BACKGROUND & REVIEW

The LPL Strategic Plan identified the need to review our current Holds Service to insure that efficiencies and cost effectiveness were being identified and implemented. The Holds Initiative is to identify and implement effective and efficient operational procedures for holds on items in the LPL collection in order to:

- Increase organizational capacity to deliver this high-demand service and
- Maintain a high level of customer satisfaction.

The holds service continues to be one of LPL’s most popular and steadily growing services. The following chart demonstrates this growth. With a 31.3% increase in the use of this service between 2007 and 2011, there is no question of the need to streamline all staff processes related to the service.

Chart 1: Holds, 2007-2011

	Holds Placed	Percentage Change (Y-Y)	Percentage Change 2007 - 2011
2007	740,667		
2008	811,790	+9.60	
2009	893,433	+10.06	
2010	900,806	+0.83	
2011	972,592	+7.97	+31.3%

A staff project team consisting of Rosemary Townshend (project manager), Jennifer Ball, Sean Barrett, Carolyn Doyle, Maria Forte, Judy In'tveld, Cathy Loffhagen, Mary McEwen, Doug North, Luanne Olliver and Jennifer Quinton was struck. The team was tasked with:

- Examining LPL's current delivery system;
- Identifying barriers in the holds system delivery;
- Reviewing current procedures and
- Examining the potential impact of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology and e-service materials on material holds.

A progress report on RFID was made to the Library Board on June 23, 2011.

Progress to Date

The project team has completed the review of LPL's current holds procedures, delivery system for holds and has done a review of best practices of other library systems. A number of efficiencies have been implemented and others are currently being tested. The outcomes are improved services to patrons and improved working conditions for staff.

Labels for Holds

- In June, 2011a pilot project testing the use of adhesive thermal paper for labels and new receipt printers was rolled out to three (3) branch locations. The objectives were to reduce processing time of holds, improve the appearance of the labels for patrons, and to improve staff ergonomics by reducing repetitive motions associated with the process. Staff also experimented with font sizes and styling to improve readability.
- The results of the pilot project were: increased accessibility; significant reduction in the amount of paper used; decrease in repetitive strain motion; and a reduction in processing time of holds. As an example, staff at the Masonville Branch were able to reduce the daily processing time by approximately one (1) hour.
- The new adhesive thermal paper also meets LPL's strategic goal of being environmentally responsible and innovative. LPL is one of the first libraries in North America to use this new adhesive thermal paper. The paper is Bisphenol A (BPA) free. BPA is a component of thermal paper that may pose a hazard to workers who handle it on a daily basis. The new paper is also recyclable.

- Based upon these results, a rollout plan was developed. In June, 2012 all locations have been equipped with one new receipt printer and adhesive thermal paper.

Transportation Bags for Holds

- To reduce time spent on bundling, packing and labeling holds, distinctive red bags specifically to be used for transporting holds were purchased. Hold items are now packed directly into the red hold bags and no longer require the use of additional labels, tape, elastics, etc. Pre-cut, ready to use location labels are applied to the red hold bags with the end result delivering a standardized appearance.
- This has resulted in efficiencies for location staff and Facility Services Staff.

Re-organization of Work Spaces

- Working with the Rosemary Townshend, Coordinator of Lending Services, Terry Wilkes, Manager of Facility Services and Arlene Thompson, Manager of Customer Services and Branch Operations, staff in many locations re-organized their work spaces to create improved work flow. For example, Byron Branch Staff created a separate work station to handle holds, returns and delivery, while Masonville had their delivery bags raised off the ground to reduce physical strain on staff.

Inter-Branch Delivery

- An “Inter-Branch Delivery Project” was initiated in May 2012 and is in progress. LPL’s delivery service moves books, CDs, DVDs, magazines, booksale items, marketing information, such as Access and posters to the 16 branch locations across the City. Delivery insures that each location’s collection is available to all patrons no matter where they live in the City. Approximately 1,300 bags, boxes and bundles are moved each day by the delivery staff. LPL’s inter-branch delivery system requires considerable organization, scheduling and synchronization.
- During the project, different delivery schedules are being tested. Staff schedules have been re-aligned to this workflow, also ensuring appropriate staffing levels during operational hours.
- Goals include maintaining current public service standards while reducing wait times.
- Other goals are to reduce hydro and heating costs by eliminating the processing of holds and other circulation-related work on Mondays in most Branch locations and to increase the ability of Facility Services Staff to schedule building maintenance on Mondays.
- Public Services and Facility Services Staff have been actively assessing and fine-tuning delivery schedules, staff schedules and related processes.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to investigate and seek efficiencies and opportunities to improve service and reduce costs. In the upcoming months the project team will:

- Investigate the capabilities of “Sierra” the new Millennium Integrated Library System, with regards to the holds process;

- Explore Millennium system capabilities to identify the number of items moving through the inter-branch delivery system;
- Identify and remove barriers to self-checkout by patrons;
- Continue to identify and find solutions to work flow blocks; and
- Test a new service that will let patrons choose between printing a date due slip or having it emailed to them.