Ottawa Public Library

Community Development Toolkit

The Community Development Project is aimed at defining and implementing a new way of looking at community outreach activities throughout the Ottawa Public Library. It starts from the premise that we will engage with the community itself to help us define barriers to library service, identify solutions and work together to implement new initiatives.

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INTRODUCTION

What is Community Development?

- Community Development in a library context means connecting, consulting and working collaboratively with community members to understand the needs of the community and to inform the direction of library work and policies.

The Community Development Project is aimed at defining and implementing a new way of looking at community outreach activities throughout the Ottawa Public Library. It starts from the premise that we will engage with the community itself to help us define barriers to library service, identify solutions and work together to implement new initiatives.

This toolkit draws heavily on work that has already been done on Community Development in Public Libraries in Canada, Britain and the United States.

This project is based on best practices garnered from current public library projects and reports including:

- The <u>Working Together project</u> – A federally funded project to implement a community- led approach to public library service at four Canadian libraries: Vancouver, Regina, Toronto and Halifax. Vancouver Public Library initiated The <u>Working Together project</u> in 2004, using a community development approach to expand ways for libraries to work with low-income communities. Funding for this demonstration project was provided by the Human Resources and Social Development Canada over three years, and then extended to four. Led by Vancouver Public Library, the project included Halifax Public Libraries, Toronto Public Library and Regina Public Library. The main objective of this project was "to use a community development approach to build relationships and partnerships with community, individuals and groups so that the Library could better understand what they wanted and needed from the institution. The hoped for result was a service philosophy for library services that emphasized community consultation, collaboration and a willingness to change in order to meet community needs."

http://www.librariesincommunities.ca/resources/Community-Led_Libraries_Toolkit.pdf

- Edmonton Public Libraries' <u>Community Led Service Philosophy Toolkit.</u> Edmonton Public library has drawn from the Working Together experience to create a Community – Led Service Philosophy Toolkit that aims at finding and reducing barriers to service rather than focusing all efforts on serving socially-excluded communities

http://www2.epl.ca/public-files/community-led/CommunityLedServicePhilosophyToolkit.pdf

- The American Library Association's work on community engagement led by the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation called <u>Libraries Transforming Communities</u>
  http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/libraries-transforming-communities

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The focus of this toolkit is on working <u>with the community</u> to find out what <u>barriers</u> exist to using library services and how we can mitigate/correct/ break down these barriers.

This toolkit is to help branches and services develop a particular kind of community engagement, where the library works collaboratively with community members so that we can understand the needs of the community, and use this understanding to inform the direction of library work and policies.

This toolkit will help library staff build on the outreach groundwork that has already been laid to explore different ways to engage the community, to provide services and work directly with community members at implementing services that fill the needs identified by the community.

Working from the lessons learned in libraries across Canada, this toolkit defines a new approach to community outreach for Ottawa Public Library.

Community development – based on creating and maintaining meaningful and sustainable relationships with community members

Community development is working with the community to:

- Define barriers to service
- Define solutions to break down those barriers
- Define success measures
- Define partnership opportunities

The role of library staff in community development changes from being identifiers of needs and services to facilitators of a process to assist community members in identifying and articulating their needs.

This toolkit is meant to aid staffing in shifting more of their activity **from:**

Traditional Library outreach where:

- Planning is completed in the library
- Library activities are used multiple times in the community
- Library staff talk with people about the library
- Very little room is left for the community to provide input

to:

Community development where:

- Library staff listen to people talk about their needs, based on life experiences
- Programs and service planning are completed collaboratively with the community based on community identified needs.
- Programs and services are changed or modified based on community input

It is important to note that community development is **<u>not</u>** a completely new way of doing things. Much of what OPL staff are doing today falls somewhere along the community development spectrum.

OUTREACH	PARTNERSHIPS	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	CO-PRODUCTION
Library services are planned, designed, delivered and evaluated by library staff	Library services are delivered in cooperation with partner organizations	Library services are devised after developing relationships with local communities	Library services are co-produced by library workers and local communities

INFORMING	CONSULTING	INVOLVING	COLLABORATING	EMPOWERING
Providing balanced and objective information about new programs or services and about reasons for choosing them. Providing updates during implementation	Inviting feedback on alternatives, analyses, and decisions related to new programs or services. Letting people know how their feedback has influenced program decisions.	Working with community members to ensure that their aspirations and concerns are considered at every stage of planning and decision making. Letting people know how their involvement has influenced program decisions.	Enabling community members to participate in every aspect of planning and decision making for new programs or services.	Giving community members sole decision-making authority over new programs or services and allowing professionals to serve only in consultative and supportive roles.

http://ssir.org/articles/entry/community_engagement_matters_now_more_than_ever

https://ottawa.bibliocommons.com/item/show/714339026_developing_community-led_public_libraries

As a first step look at the activities your branch or services is already involved in. Plot them along the spectrum and to see what already is being done and what can be further done to engage the community

The rest of this document outlines three "building blocks" developed to aid staff in engaging in Community Development

Building Block One - Branch Audits

With these tools staff ask non or infrequent customers to rate the services and facilities of the library

Building Block Two - Community Mapping

With these tools staff are given ways to inventory and map assets in their community beyond traditional statistically based tools.

Building Block Three - Community Conversations

This tool shows staff how to engage non-customers in conversations about what would improve their community and how the library could play a role in that improvement.

BUILDING BLOCK	BRANCH AUDITS	COMMUNITY MAPPING	COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS
Description	A branch audit is a way of obtaining information about the physical layout, location and organization of your branch	Community mapping contains two approaches. In **community asset mapping**, library staff focus on learning about organized groups or institutions, which provide a launch pad into the community. **Social mapping** focuses on more informal community connections. These connections are starting points for building relationships and gathering information, upon which to build a more responsive library service.	Community Conversations allow us to ask questions, listen and learn from members of the community. As the third piece of OPL's Community Development Toolkit, Community Conversations are intended to build upon the knowledge generated in the Asset Mapping and Branch Audits stages.

Goal	In seeking input from non-users or infrequent customers to your branch, our goal is to obtain a concrete list of items that are identified as barriers that we can act upon to improve our services.	Community mapping is a form of information-gathering that seeks to document a rich story about a community. It goes beyond what can be garnered from traditional sources like statistical profiles. The goal is to build a living document (map/database of community information) that will continually be updated to reflect the community.	Community conversations are formal processes aimed at engaging the community in defining aspirations for their community, identifying barriers to these aspirations, and identifying possible solutions to breaking down the barriers.
Community Participation	Non library users and infrequent library users should be targeted. Ideally try to ask people of different ages and backgrounds; a good cross-section representation of your community. Regular library users have valuable input on how to improve library services however, for this part of the community-led audit; we want to target non library users and/or infrequent users.	Library staff engage community members informally in order to gather information about community assets and services.	Who is invited to attend will depend on how specific the planned topic(s) of the conversations are. Engaging the right people to participate is the single biggest challenge of holding community conversations.
Staff participation	Branch staff at various public service levels can	Branch staff at various public service levels can be engaged to	Staff will be fully engaged in assuring the right people are invited to the conversation, based

	be engaged to help conduct branch audits.	help conduct community mapping activities.	on knowledge gained in other community development activities. Staff will be trained to be conversation facilitators, recorders and listeners. All these roles are important.
Other notes	Branch /service audits can be conducted multiple times, targeting various services and /or areas of the branch. The toolkit outlines a variety of means to conduct branch audits. Some system wide services could modify the tools to conduct audits of services such as the website.	Community mapping is an on-going activity. As staff engage in outreach and other community development activities they will continually add to the knowledge of their community. Community mapping can be geographically based or based on, select customer groups across geographic areas.	Community conversations are meant to be used once staff have gathered information about barriers to service and un-served community members from audits and mapping exercises.

Branch & Service Audits

Branch Audits

What is it?

A branch audit is a way of obtaining information about the physical layout, location and organization of your branch. In seeking input from non-users or infrequent customers to your branch, our goal is to obtain a concrete list of items that are identified as barriers that we can act upon to improve our services.

Why do it?

We as a library evaluate our programs but we really don't have any ongoing means of examining our spaces and service. Often we're so used to the spaces that we work in, that we don't see the barriers that our customers might experience.

The information you collect in this audit will help identify what most needs to change and how you can make it easier for customers to use your branch.

How do you do it?

There are multiple options.

We want to obtain both qualitative and quantitative information regarding both our physical spaces and our services. Therefore, this process is broken up into four sections: staff will evaluate the physical spaces as well as services, and members of the public will also evaluate your physical spaces and public services.

Who will be doing the audit?

Both staff and members of the public will be completing the branch audit. Non library users and infrequent library users should be targeted. Ideally try to ask people of different ages, backgrounds etcetera; a good cross-section representation of your community. Regular library users have valuable input on how to improve library services however, for this part of the community-led audit; we want to target non library users and/or infrequent users.

As such, find approximately 5-10 non library users and 5-10 infrequent library users. For example, you might want to try:

       a. Contacts in the community you have already made who are non library users and/or infrequent library users
       b. Teen Advisory Group members
       c. Seniors' Groups
       d. If you are attached to a complex you might want to ask people waiting for their kids swimming, skating, hockey to finish

These are a just few examples and suggestions. You can ask whomever you think fits the criteria.

Once identified, provide them with a verbal or written explanation (on OPL letterhead) of what they are being asked to do and why. "The Ottawa Public Library wants to make it easier for people to access the library and its services. You can help by providing us with some valued feedback. Would you be able to take some time to complete the following....."

So now what?

You've completed one or all of the options above so you should now have a list of things to consider changing. It could be as simple as replacing a sign or identifying a collection. The information you collect is not meant to be a judgement on your branch but a means to receive feedback and engage non-users.

After compiling this valuable information identify the key improvements (spaces and services) that need to be made at your branch. Provide recommendations on how to best address these issues and send the information to your Manager.

The branch audit should be a continual process of asking the community for comments and feedback and listening to their concerns. Try to complete a branch audit at least once a year. You can assign an audit to each new staff member or turn it into a game for your TAG or teen volunteers. If you've made contact with a new group in your community you can invite them to audit your branch and then host a party/debrief for them.

Part of the branch audit should be to review the recommendations made the previous year to see what has been implemented/addressed/improved at your branch in order to eliminate barriers to library services.

Staff

Branch Audit – Physical Spaces

The following is a template to help you organize your evaluation. If there is a particular concern specific to your branch, please add it. This is meant to be a general guide. Take this chart (or the public version if you prefer) and walk around your branch, noticing if there is anything that stands out or causes concern.

Staff Physical Audit	
Start well outside the branch's main entrance and follow the path a customer would take to each service point, noting what the customer encounters.	
Feature	**Comments**
Signs	
Service Hub	
Obstacles	
Shelving	
Displays	

Staff

Branch Audit – Services - Modified Mystery Shopper (Instructions)

Staff can provide valuable input about library spaces and services. What are we doing well? What could be improved upon? What barriers exist? How can we eliminate barriers?

1. At a cluster meeting, or at an alternative time, staff could conduct a 'treasure hunt' / branch audit of another location. A fresh pair of eyes can provide valuable feedback about how to 'better' a branch and reduce barriers to service.
   a) Can you find the AEOS section?
   b) Where is the washroom?
   c) If you had to change a diaper where would you go?
   d) If you were in a wheel chair could you get around?
   e) Can you print a document?
   f) Is it easy to move around the branch?
   g) What could be improved?
   h) What does the branch do well / positives?
   i) Are there any visible barriers to library services and spaces at the branch?

2. Compile a list of any changes that have been made to library spaces or services that have RESULTED from community comments / feedback. Have you / your branch made any adjustments from listening to the community? Many branches / staff may already be implementing a community-led approach and we would like you to share what you have already done.

Public

Branch Audit – Physical Spaces

Please use the following as a guide. If there are questions that do not apply to your branch, please remove them. If there is something in your branch you'd particularly like feedback on, please add it.

"The Ottawa Public Library wants to make it easier for people to access the library and its services. You can help by providing us with some valued feedback. Would you be able to take some time to complete the following....."

Branch Audit: _____	
Please start well outside of the library branch. Record your observations below.	
As you approach the building, is it easily identifiable as an Ottawa Public Library Branch?	
Was the book drop easy to find as you approached the front door?	
Were the branch's hours displayed and easy to read?	
If you have any comments or observations regarding the exterior of the building, please share them here.	
When you entered the branch, what came to mind?	
When you entered the branch, what was the first thing that caught your attention?	
If you have any comments or observations regarding the entrance way, please share them here.	
Where can you go to find help? How long did it take you to find it?	

Did you see information about programs displayed?	
Can you tell where the different areas for books are? Fiction, non-fiction, DVDs, computers etc.?	
Was signage helpful?	
Is the branch a clean, inviting space?	
Was there seating available?	
Are you able to find the computer catalogue station? How easy was it?	
Is this a place you are comfortable spending time in?	
If not, please explain why not.	
Is this a place you feel safe in?	
If not, please explain why not.	
How easy was it to figure out where to check out material?	

DATE COMPLETED:

Public

Branch Audit – Services - Modified Mystery Shopper non library users (Instructions)

To find barriers to services that might exist in your branch conduct a 'modified mystery shopper' that is task based.

1. To gather comments and feedback we suggest that you either walk around with the person, and talk with them, following the guide/script or, if the customer is more comfortable, provide them with the 'sheet' and let them self administer. Whatever, the customer is more comfortable with.

2. Here is a suggested list of questions/tasks to gather information, and find potential barriers to service.

   a) Check email
   b) Print a document
   c) Find books by Margaret Atwood
   d) Get a library card
   e) Register for a program
   f) Find the washroom
   g) Find the board books

These are suggestions and can be substituted for other 'tasks' that suit your branch or your community. See chart in appendix A.

How easy / difficult did you find this task?

Did you need to ask staff for help?

How helpful was the guidance you received (if you received any)?

What did you find difficult?

What, if anything, made the process easier?

General comments /feedback?

Example 1

"The Ottawa Public Library wants to make it easier for people to access the library and its services. You can help by providing us with some valued feedback. Would you be able to take some time to complete the following....."

Check your email

'TASK' **CHECK EMAIL**	COMMENTS
How easy / difficult was it for you to check your email?	
Did you need to ask for help? Yes? / No? Why?	
How helpful was the guidance you received (if you received any)?	
What did you find difficult?	
What, if anything, made the process easier?	
General comments / feedback	

DATE COMPLETED: _____

Example 2

Print a document

'TASK' **PRINT A DOCUMENT**	COMMENTS
How easy / difficult was it for you to print a document?	
Did you need to ask for help? Yes? / No? Why?	
How helpful was the guidance you received (if you received any)?	
What did you find difficult?	
What, if anything, made the process easier?	
General comments / feedback	

DATE COMPLETED:

_____

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Example 3

Find a book by Margaret Atwood

'TASK' **Find a book by Margaret Atwood**	COMMENTS
How easy / difficult was it for you to find a book by Margaret Atwood?	
Did you need to ask for help? Yes? / No? Why?	
How helpful was the guidance you received (if you received any)?	
What did you find difficult?	
What, if anything, made the process easier?	
General comments / feedback	

DATE COMPLETED:

_____

Community Mapping

Community Mapping

Introduction

Community mapping is a tool that helps library staff to work more efficiently within their communities. It assists staff in planning services and programs for the public. It helps us to build relationships and to create a knowledge-base on which branches can draw to serve more of their community members, and serve them better. Community mapping is a planning tool that helps library staff design services that are more responsive to community needs. It is an ongoing process of gathering, documenting, and understanding information about a community.

Community mapping defined

Community mapping is a form of information-gathering that seeks to document a richer, more complex story about a community's self-perception and self-definition than can be garnered from traditional sources like statistical profiles. Although the word "mapping" is part of its name, geographical maps are not necessarily involved. Community mapping is about building an information tool (map, database, and directory) that defines community assets and barriers that the library can use to develop more effective library service.

Community mapping in its best form contains two approaches. In **community asset mapping**, library staff focus on learning about organized groups or institutions, which provide a launch pad into the community. **Social mapping** focuses on more informal community connections, such as conversations with a community leader, or discussions with community members at a park. These connections are starting points for building relationships and gathering information, upon which to build a more responsive library service.

Mapping cycle

The goal of community mapping is to develop and maintain a detailed, accurate view of your community that captures its transformation over time. The diagram on the right illustrates the cyclical nature of the process. The stages of the cycle are detailed below:

1. **Prioritization**: Define community mapping priorities, in consultation with your supervisor/manager.

2. **Implementation**: Go into the community and develop relationships.

3. **Documentation**: Update your community map document as you continue to implement your priorities.

4. **Review**: Once you have reached the timeline you established in stage 1, it is time to reflect. Consider what worked and what didn't. As you debate whether you should continue to work on your current priorities or establish new ones, you will find yourself back at stage 1.

Why map?

At your OPL branch, you probably already have a formal or informal list of organizations that you visit to do outreach and to promote library services. You may wonder: "Why should I create a community map? I have more than enough organizations to work with right now!" Although information gathered from community mapping overlaps with information included in your outreach lists, it has a different emphasis. Here are some examples of how community mapping can help you to build upon the work you are currently doing:

Community mapping **makes it easier to identify gaps in service**. Your mapping can help you to reallocate resources and identify potential library customers.

Your documentation **smoothes the process of knowledge transfer** by collecting details about community connections in a meaningful way. These details can then be shared with your current and future library colleagues. Additionally, contact histories included in a community map can easily be transferred to a sister branch when a group or organization moves to another part of the city.

Community mapping **facilitates community-aligned planning.** As a planning tool, your map allows you to identify and assess potential opportunities for library service, and prioritize some contacts over others, depending on the goals that you set for your branch.

The mapping process **should lead to concrete results**. To use a simple example, if you learn that many parents do not attend your babytime because it starts ten minutes before the main bus route stops outside your door, you could consider changing the program start time.

Getting started

There is no one, best way to create a community map. Your approach will vary depending on your area of focus, your location, your knowledge and experience, your existing relationships with the community, and the resources you have available to devote to the project. Use the techniques and tools provided as a starting point. It is you, the library staff in each branch, who must determine what techniques will work best and you may have to learn this through trial and error.
This process will enable you and your branch to gain a better understanding of your service area. As you develop your map, you will be able to use this understanding to work more closely with the community around you.

Example of a completed map
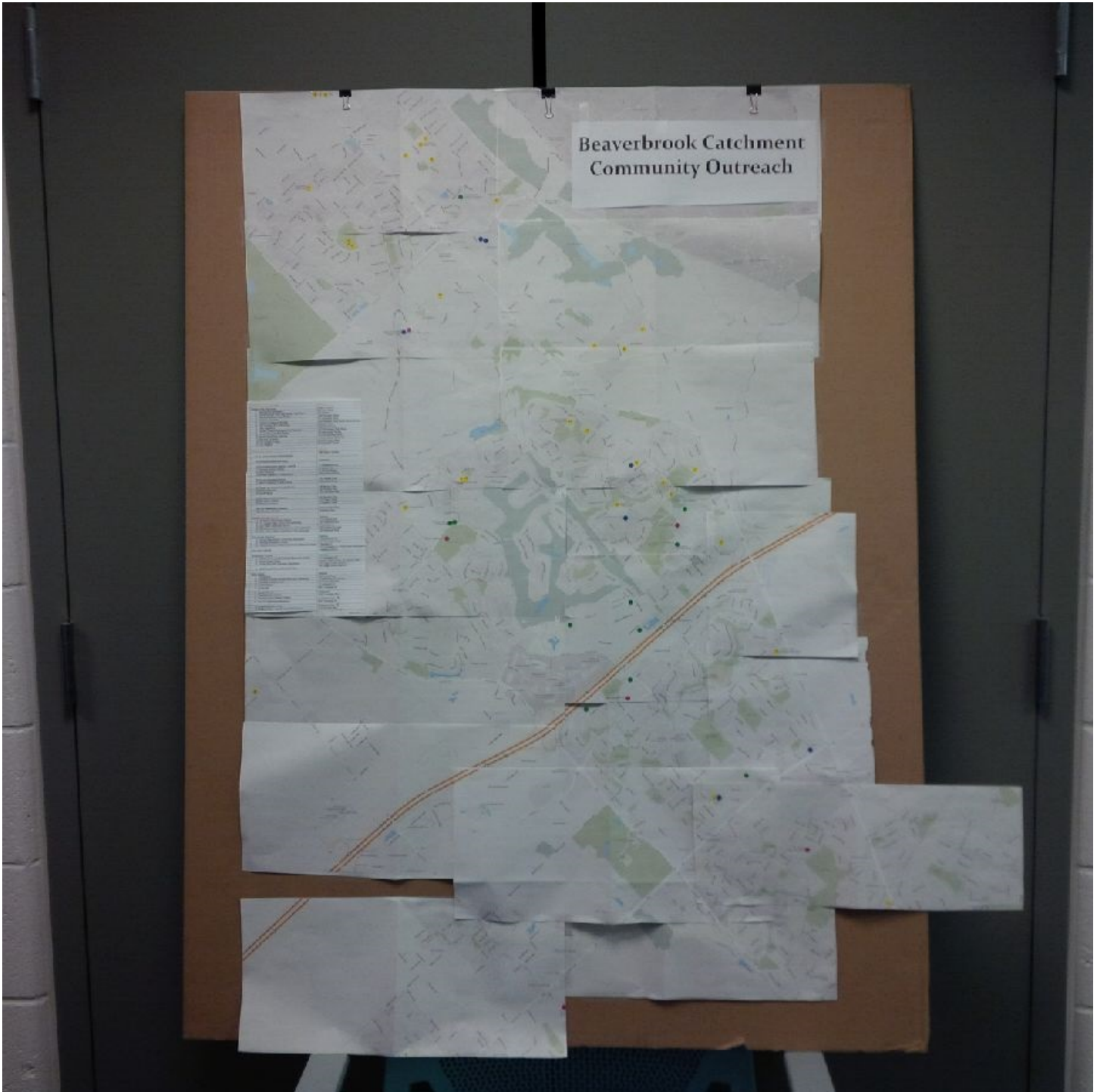
Example of a list of outreach opportunities both existing and potential

Daycares and Preschools	Address
Creative Kids Playhouse	Morgan's Grant
1) Beaverbrook Montessori	990 Teron Road
2) Centre Éducatif Cœur des jeunes – Saint Remi	100 Walden
3) Centre préscolaire école fiante	1385 Terrasse Halton
4) Children's Universe	101 Schneider Road
5) Children's Village at Klondike	1032 Klondike Road (South March school)
6) CPE Carleton /EYC (WOCRC)	2 Macneil Court
7) Elsie Stapleford	1000 Teron Road
8) Kanata Creative Kindergarten & Preschool	1617 Richardson Side Road
9) Kanata Research Park Family	100 Helmsdale, Kanata
10) Kanata-North Early Learning	103-232 Herzberg Road
11) Kids and Company	11 Hines Road, Suite 103
12) The Children's Place	310/312 Leggett Road
13) Tiny Hoppers	50 Colchester Square

Elementary Schools	Address
	1385 Halton Terrace
14) É.é.p. de Kanata (French School)	
15) École catholique Saint Remi	100 Walden
16) École élémentaire Maurice- Lapointe	17 Bridgestone Ave
17) Georges Vanier Catholic	40 Varley Drive
18) Jack Donohue	101 Penrith Street
19) Kanata Academy (Private school)	2 Beaverbrook Road
20) Kanata Montessori School	1030 Riddell Drive
21) March Academy (Private school)	325 Sandhill Road
22) Roger Saint-Denis (HA catchment)	186 Barrow Cres.
23) Roland Michener	100 Penfield Drive
24) South March	1032 Klondike Road
25) St. Gabriel Catholic School	400 Keyrock Drive
26) St. Isidore Catholic	1105 March Road
27) Stephen Leacock	25 Leacock Drive
28) The Greenwoods Academy	1056 Klondike Road
29) W.Erskine Johnston	50 Varley Drive

Middle and High Schools	Address
1) All Saints Catholic High School	5115 Kanata Ave
2) AY Jackson High School (HA catchment)	150 Abbeyhill Drive
3) Earl March Secondary School	4 The Parkway
4) École Secondaire Paul Desmarais (ST catchment)	5315 Abbott East Road
5) Holly Trinity Catholic High School (HA catchment)	180 Katimavik Road

Community Services	Address
1) Kanata Beaverbrook Community Association	2 Beaverbrook Rd
2) Richcraft Recreation Centre	4101 Innovation Drive
3) WOCRC (Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre)	2 MacNeil Ct
The Zone (red #6)	4101 Innovation Dr. Youth Room (Richcraft R.) Tuesdays 5-9 p.m.

Business & Careers	Address
4) CERC (Community Employment Resource Centre)	415 Hazeldean Rd
5) Kanata Kareer Group	Kanata United Church, 33 Leacock Drive
6) Kanata North BIA (Business Association)	555 Legget Drive, Suite 232
7) WOBT (West Ottawa Board of Trade)	555 Legget Drive, Suite 140

Older Adults	Address
1) The Atriums	950 Teron Road
2) Chartwell Empress Kanata Retirement Residence	170 McGibbon Dr, Kanata
3) Chartwell Shirley's Brook	20 Shirley's Brook Dr.
4) Fairfield Manor	17 Lombardo Dr
5) Forest Hill	6501 Campeau Dr
6) Garden Terrace	100 Aird Pl
7) Kanata Seniors Centre	2500 Campeau Drive
8) Kingsway Arms (Walden Village)	27 Weaver Cres
9) Red Oak Retirement Residence	3501 Campeau Dr
10) Symphony Senior Living	27 Weaver Cres
11) William's Court – Kanata Lakes Apartments	1203 Maritime Way

Tools and techniques

Set priorities

The very first step in community mapping is to set priorities, in consultation with your supervisor or manager. The key is to set priorities that are **SMART**.

As you develop your priorities, you will need to consider the resources you have available to dedicate to this project. You may even have to reduce some of your traditional outreach activities to make room in the schedule for community development. For example, you might reduce the number of programming visits to each daycare, if it becomes obvious that other groups are being excluded.

S PECIFIC
Target a specific area for improvement.

M EASURABLE
Suggest an indicator of progress.

A TTAINABLE
Can the end goal be achieved?

R EALISTIC
Is the goal realistic, given available resources?

T IME BOUND
Specify when the result should be achieved

You could decide to focus on the needs of older adults for the next eight months. Or you could decide to introduce yourself to every city service, daycare, and non-profit in the new subdivision being built near your library.

Capitalize on what you are doing already

You already work in the community by doing outreach visits and putting up event posters. You can leverage your existing knowledge and add a more community-centric dimension to your outreach using these simple techniques.

Interview your colleagues What stories can they tell you about the community? What knowledge can they share that has never been communicated to the rest of your team? Expand?

Build extra time into your outreach visits to speak with staff and customers about their community.

Take a different route to the library and watch for unknown organizations, businesses and gathering places.

Get outside!

The best way to map the community is to get out of the branch and into your surrounding area. Here are some tools that will help you focus your efforts outside the branch.

Travel the community; leave the library and…..

- Walk around in the community
- If walking is not possible, choose the mode of transportation (bike, bus, etc) that makes you the most accessible and allows you to take note of things that are new to you.

Introduce yourself to

Depending on your community and the organization, it might be better to drop in or to set up an appointment.

- When you work directly in the community, you will find organizations that may not be listed in a directory. And you will develop an understanding of the community not conveyed by a directory.

- Learn about the organization and what is important to the staff and the people they serve. Focus on the organization and NOT on the library.
- Look for ways to move beyond initial meetings with service providers and identify ways to interact directly with community members as soon as possible.

Attend regular meetings and events, such as school council meetings, condo association meetings, weekly lunches, and community housing association meetings. Remember to talk with community members, not just with business leaders and service providers. Consider asking if you can have a few minutes to introduce yourself at the start of a meeting, to let people know that you work for the library.

Ask some community members to fill in their personal "social map." To do this, make a rough map of the area that only shows key streets. Ask people to fill in the map with details that are important to them. The goal is to give community members the opportunity to make a pictorial representation of what matters to them in their community. For example: → (APPENDIX B)

Make an informal site visit (a.k.a "hang out") in the community. Try to go into another space as an equal and not as the authority or expert from a large community institution. This can change the engagement level and result in a more critical assessment of library services and a more revealing list of people's needs and wants.

Social mapping - where to start

To build relationships, you will need to visit places where community members feel comfortable. If you try this approach, remember that it will take time and effort. People need to feel comfortable before they are willing to share their thoughts and ideas
The activity room or common room of a service provider may be a good place. Examples include Neighbourhood Houses, community centres, senior's centres, churches, youth services programs, community kitchens, shelters, ESL classes, Ontario Works offices, and women's resource centres.

Also remember to look beyond formal service providers, as people who are socially excluded may not have a connection with such places. More informal gathering places could include parks, places of worship, coffee shops, outdoor skating rinks, or other spaces used by members of a particular ethnic or cultural origin

Engaging community members

Most people find it intimidating to insert themselves into a group of people who already know one another. The techniques below can help you to initiate conversations and to feel more comfortable becoming part of the group you choose to visit, whether it be a youth drop-in centre, knitting club, mahjong circle, or halfway house.
Before you go, think of some **conversation openers** that relate to the activity or location you are visiting. These will allow you to initiate a conversation, rather than waiting for someone else to make the first move.

- At an ESL class: "What skills are you working on?"
- At a craft fair: "How long have you been interested in [craft name]?"
- At a senior's program at the community centre: "Have you lived in this neighborhood long?"

Practice an **elevator pitch** that explains why you're visiting. This technique can be used with both organizations and individuals.

- When visiting to discuss the needs of older adults: "I'm from the XXX branch of the Ottawa Public Library. We are trying our best to serve all residents of the City of Ottawa. What do you think [we/the City] could do to serve [retirees/senior citizens/older adults]?"
- When visiting to get to know organizations in a new subdivision-- "I'm from the XXX branch of the Ottawa Public Library. Since there are so many new [daycares/businesses/organizations] in this area, I'm trying to get out and meet as many as possible. Can you tell me about [name of organization you're visiting]?"

If you're uncomfortable with the idea of "hanging out" in an unfamiliar location, **bring a prop** or something to do with your hands to help you feel more relaxed. For example, you might bring:

- an eBook reader or tablet loaded with an eBook
- Bookmarks
- Coffee/beverage to hold
- Books that relate directly to the activity at hand
- A simple craft such as adult colouring books, origami, or clay. Have a few extras on hand in case people would like to join in.
- Food that you can share (only for groups/organizations of competent adults)

Be prepared to join in with the group, whether it is by cooking, playing cards, or sharing the meal.

Wear your OPL Hello/Bonjour badge so that people will be able to differentiate you from service providers and community members.

Bring a notebook so that you can jot down notes without having to wait until you're back at the branch. Remember not to do this in front of the people you speak with, if you think it may make them uncomfortable. Be mindful that some information you hear may not be appropriate to record.

Documentation

The product you create, based on the information you gather from going out into the community, is less important than what you and your library do with it. Keep in mind that this document should be a tool that captures your improved knowledge of your community and that allows you to share information with other staff members. As long as it allows you to do both of these things, you are documenting successfully!

Templates are available in [##location]. You are free to modify these templates or to create your own, but please include the following key information:

- ◆ **Name:** Name of service provider or gathering place
- ◆ **Profile**: Explain what they do, who they serve, and a brief history of their relationship with the OPL
- ◆ **Contact information**: The best way to contact them
- ◆ **Relationships**: This key section should be updated often to include a summary of your relationship with them. This could include a summary of meetings, evaluation of the relationship (good or bad), possible partnerships, and outreach history.
- ◆ **Last update**: each entry should indicate the month and year it was last updated. To maintain its currency and value, your map should be updated at least once a year.

Helpful hints

➔ Listen more than you speak, especially in the beginning. The purpose of community mapping is to achieve concrete results through increased connectivity and understanding. A great deal of listening is required before you and your partner organization can start to develop shared programs and solutions

➔ Your community boundaries are fluid and not necessarily contained within your traditional catchment area. If you feel that your community overlaps with another branch's, consider it an opportunity to contact their outreach team to discuss the best approach.

➔ Community mapping is an ongoing process, not a one-time event. Your living document will be updated as you meet other people and learn more about their activities.

➔ Initially, community mapping provides a profile of the community, as well as ideas about where you might work. Later, mapping can act as an impetus to deepen your work within the community, or to approach it from a different angle.

➔ Your overall goal is to have the library's vision of the community align as closely as possible with the community's vision of itself.

➔ Your map can include entries for informal places or groups who don't have a contact person. For example, you could include a nearby park and list times when you know parents gather with their young children.

➔ Be humble.

➔ You may hear stories from groups or individuals in extreme difficulty. Focus on opportunities for the library system, not for you, as an individual, to contribute to the situation.

➔ Always be aware of, and abide by, requirements regarding retention of personal information and protection of privacy.

*some of the hints above are borrowed from the "Keep in Mind" section on p.60 of the *Community-Led Libraries Toolkit*.

http://www.librariesincommunities.ca/resources/Community-Led_Libraries_Toolkit.pdf

Examples

Example 1: Word document in table layout

Centre Communautaire de la basse-ville / Lowertown Community Resource Centre

Profile:	Located in the Le Patro build in complex. The CRCBV has a playgroup which meets in a separate location. They run the youth after school program at York Street PS. The bilingual services are offered by a primarily francophone staff. The director is enthusiastic about doing things with the library, but doesn't seem to have enough time to follow through.
Address :	40 Cobourg
Phone :	613-789-3930
Website :	http://www.crcbv.ca/
Contacts:	Playgroup: Maria del Carmen – x315 (cell 210-7969) mdclazzaro@crcbv.ca, Director: Diane Major x317
Relationships:	We have been visiting different programs provided by the CRCBV since at least 2007, but on a sporadic basis. Beth G was a regular visitor at the Teen Girls' program and offered a pilot program where she loaned girls at the program books on an honour system. Quite a few of those books went missing, and the program was ended when she left her position as svp lib. Sporadic visits have occurred since then (2013), but no regular contact with the leadership. The staff from the York Street PS program are enthusiastic about bringing their kids to programs at the library and having a book deposit in the 2014-2015 school year. Suggested max group size is 20 kids and they are very rowdy.
Possible partnerships:	
History:	2007-2009 – regular group visits by both playgroup (Eng. and Fre.) and after-school club (Club 310). Fall 2010 – e-mailed regroup visits & sent Children's poster Fall 2011 – Called Sonia : explained about visits SRC 2012 outreach Summer 2012 - BG presented storytime for 2 groups Summer 2012 – BG worked with day camp for 2 SRC program visits Oct 2012 – BG presented booktalk to after school program Dec 2012 – BG presented booktalk to after school program Jan 2013 – PR and BG presented 3 babytimes to train Patrick May 2013- BG presented booktalk to afterschool group June 2013- BG presented new books to Teen Girls' Drop-In Program July 2013- Camp groups visiting for SRC Sept 2013- BG visited French playgroup and Bilingual babytime Sept 2013- BG visited Teen Girls' program for booktalk Sept 2013- Club 310 came for booktalk/activity Nov 2013- BG visited Teen Girls' program for booktalk Nov 2013- Club 310 came for booktalk/activity Nov 2013 – BG and CF delivered a babytime to drop-in group

Example 2: Word document in paragraph layout

Centre Communautaire de la basse-ville / Lowertown Community Resource Centre

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Located in the Le Patro build in complex. The CRCBV has a playgroup which meets in a separate location. They run the youth after school program at York Street PS. The bilingual services are offered by a primarily francophone staff. The director is enthusiastic about doing things with the library, but doesn't seem to have enough time to follow through. Website: http://www.crcbv.ca/

Address: 40 Cobourg

Phone: 613-789-3930

Contacts:
Playgroup: Maria del Carmen – x315 (cell 210-7969) mdclazzaro@crcbv.ca,
Director: Diane Major x317

Relationships:
We have been visiting different programs provided by the CRCBV since at least 2007, but on a sporadic basis. Beth G was a regular visitor at the Teen Girls' program and offered a pilot program where she loaned girls at the program books on an honour system. Quite a few of those books went missing, and the program was ended when she left her position as svp lib. Sporadic visits have occurred since then (2013), but no regular contact with the leadership. The staff from the York Street PS program are enthusiastic about bringing their kids to programs at the library and having a book deposit in the 2014-2015 school year. Suggested max group size is 20 kids and they are very rowdy.

Possible partnerships:

History:
2007-2009 – regular group visits by both playgroup (Eng. And Fre.) and after-school club (Club 310).
Fall 2010 – e-mailed re: group visits & sent Children's poster
Fall 2011 – Called Sonia: explained about visits
SRC 2012 outreach
Summer 2012 - BG presented storytime for 2 groups
Summer 2012 – BG worked with day camp for 2 SRC program visits
Oct 2012 – BG presented booktalk to after school program
Dec 2012 – BG presented booktalk to after school program
Jan 2013 – PR and BG presented 3 babytimes to train Patrick
May 2013- BG presented booktalk to afterschool group
June 2013- BG presented new books to Teen Girls' Drop-In Program
July 2013- Camp groups visiting for SRC
Sept 2013- BG visited French playgroup and Bilingual babytime
Sept 2013- BG visited Teen Girls' program for booktalk
Sept 2013- Club 310 came for booktalk/activity
Nov 2013- BG visited Teen Girls' program for booktalk
Nov 2013- Club 310 came for booktalk/activity
Nov 2013 – BG and CF delivered a babytime to drop-in group

Community Conversations

Community Conversations

 "It's only through conversation that we discover what we care about, we discover shared meaning, and we discover each other". *Lead the Change*

Community Conversations allow us to ask questions, listen and learn from members of the community. As the third piece of OPL's Community Development Toolkit, Community Conversations are intended to build upon the knowledge generated in the Asset Mapping and Branch Audits stages.

Community conversations serve two purposes:

- They are a way to authentically engage members of the community.
- They can be used to generate public knowledge that can be used to inform decision-making.

They engage the community to:

- Build relationships between library staff, library users and non-users.
- Identify and assist in articulating individual or community needs.
- Allow for collaboration in the development of more responsive library services
- Connect and empower individuals and communities

The Value of Public Knowledge:

- Roots your work and decisions in what matters to people
- Identifies key issues and their connections in language that people use
- Uncovers a sense of common purpose
- Informs your choices so your work is more relevant and has greater impact.
- Comes from engaging with people around their aspirations, their concerns, how they see their community.

NOTE: This document has been adapted from the Libraries Transforming Communities Community Conversation Workbook**, which provides a more detailed step-by-step account of how to conduct a Community Conversation.**

PART 1: Planning the Conversation

Step 1: Recruiting Conversation Participants

The ideal size for these conversations is between 8 and 15 people. To get that many participants, invite at least 20 people, as some will be unable to make it. If fewer than 8 show up, that's fine. Go ahead. It'll be worth your time.

Decide whom to invite:

- Think about what you want to learn. Do you want to get a general understanding of how people see the community? If yes, then invite a broad group of people to come and talk. This is a great starting point.
- Maybe you want to get a better sense of how a specific group of people or people from a certain part of town think and talk about their community. Then you will want a more targeted strategy in inviting people.
- Consider taking extra steps to recruit groups who often don't participate. One of the biggest challenges is recruiting people who aren't typically invited or don't feel they will be welcome. Some of these groups might include the following: youth, culturally and economic diverse groups.

Plan how you will reach out to those you want to invite:

After you've identified whom you want to engage, think about different techniques, individuals and groups who could help you reach those people.
- Who knows the part of the community or the people we want to talk to?
- Who already brings people together? Think about asking for help from: Local businesses, religious leaders, book clubs, parenting groups, neighborhood associations, community groups, and traditional media.
- Invite people personally and encourage your staff and partners to do the same.
- Ask people to suggest others to invite (friends, neighbors, peers).
- Set clear expectations in the invitation. (See next section.)
- Follow up by email or phone to determine how many people are coming.
- When possible, try to invite people at least two weeks before the event.

Prepare the Community Conversation invitation:

Think about answering the following when finalizing your invitation.
- What are these conversations about:
    - Sixty-minute to two-hour conversations that help us better understand the community and how we can restore our belief that we can get things done together.
    - Focused on learning. We pledge to follow up with you after the conversation to share what we've learned and how we will use that information.

- What these conversations are not:
    - A town hall, academic research or a focus group. They are conversations.
    - Sponsored by a political party, a business development effort, etc.
    - About trying to sell a particular solution or approach.
    - A gripe session.

- Where to hold community conversations:
  - Offers a comfortable environment.
  - Is considered to be part of the community (libraries, community centres, community organizations).
  - Has a second or third room available if you need to divide up a large group.
  - Is available in the evenings and/or on weekends.
  - Is not too noisy or full of distractions.
  - Is easily accessible to all participants: plenty of parking, centrally located, safe, near public transportation, accessible to those with disabilities.

Suggested community conversation invitation template:

Dear ......,

Please find enclosed an invitation to a Community Conversation being held at **(_location_)** from (**_start time to end time_**) on **_(date)_**.

This conversation is one of several that the Ottawa Public Library will be hosting with people across the community. Each one is a chance for us to better understand people's aspirations for their community, the concerns they have and what they believe might make a difference in strengthening the community. We'll take what we learn from these conversations and use it to help make our work in the community more effective.

We can't promise the conversation will lead to a new program or policy. We do pledge to get back to you with what we learned and let you know how we'll use what we heard.
Hopefully you'll be able to join us. For more information and to RSVP, please contact **_(person)_** at **_(contact info)_** so we can be sure to have enough refreshments on hand.

Thank you,

....

Step 2: The Logistics

The most important step you can take is to get out into the community and get started. Consider following these steps to help you prepare:

Logistics (_Where, Who, When, What_):

- When can we get started?
- Where to hold a conversation?
- Besides the location and schedule, other things to consider when planning the conversation could include:

1. Translators
2. Refreshments
3. Transportation arrangements
4. Arrangements for hearing- or visually impaired participants
5. How to notify people about cancellations

Potential locations	Person responsible to identifying location	Confirm location by (*date*)	Start and end time

Groups/individuals to help invite participants	Person responsible for recruitment	Finalize recruitment of participants by (*date*)

Person responsible for coordinating conversation event	Note-taker(s)	Conversation Leader

Other logistics to be considered	Supplies
Arrive one hour early to set up the room.	Copies of the ground rules
Put up signs to direct people from the main entrance to the meeting room.	Extra Pens/Pencils
Make sure the room has tables. Tables signal we're doing work, and it's easier to take notes.	Name tags, table tents and sign-in sheet
Put refreshments in a location easily accessed without interrupting the discussion.	Refreshments
Find the restrooms so you can tell people where they are before the discussion begins.	Charts and easels (if needed)

Step 3: Choosing a Conversation Leader and a Note-taker:

The Role of the Conversation Leader:

Once your conversation has been planned, it's time to prepare yourself for the role of Conversation Leader. Good Conversation Leaders are good listeners, focused on creating a conversation where people can discover and learn from one another and explore their own ideas.

An effective Conversation Leader:

- remains neutral
- displays a genuine sense of curiosity
- listens to people and builds trust
- remembers that the goal is to *learn*, not to promote the library
- remembers that they are there to guide, not to participate in the conversations

It's quite possible that for certain Community Conversations, you are not best suited to be the conversation leader. If your conversation is taking place within a marginalized community, or a community with a first language other than yours, you may want to ask someone who is trusted and respected within that community to facilitate the conversation.

The Role of the Note-Taker:

Note-takers work with conversation leaders to identify themes within conversations and across several conversations. The following are guidelines to consider when taking notes:

Starting points	What are participants' initial thoughts and perspectives? How do their starting points differ with where they end the discussion?
Language	What words do participants use? How is their language distinctive?
Body Language	Are participants engaged or do they hang back?
Emotions	What feelings do participants bring to the table? How strongly do they feel these emotions? What emotions prevail in the conversation?
Common ground	Where do folks agree? How strong are these areas of agreement?
Tension	Where do participants disagree? What is at issue for them?
Ambivalence	On what issues are participants torn and why?
Obstacles	What emotional, factual or perceptual barriers are preventing participants from moving forward? How intractable are these barriers?
Connections	What issues do participants seem to link together?

Hidden Story	What are participants not saying? What is going on beneath the surface that drives what people are saying?
Turning Points	Where were you able to break through in the conversation? What questions or issues triggered that?

*Use a note-taking tool **(Appendix C)** during conversations to capture the key points voiced. After the conversation, take the time to talk with the Conversation Leader to compare insights.

PART 2: Hosting the Conversation

STEP 1: Setting up the Conversation

It's time to start your Community Conversation. Once everyone is assembled, it's time to set the stage for a thoughtful and respectful conversation. Here are some suggestions for how Conversation Leaders can set up the conversation.

1. Introduce yourself.

2. Thank any groups or individuals involved in setting up the conversation. Thank participants for coming.

3. Set expectations. "Tonight's conversation is a chance for us to better understand how you see the community. It will help us learn how the library contributes to this vision of the community".

4. Review Ground Rules **(Appendix D)** "Do these rules work for everyone?"

5. Explain role as a conversation leader. "Tonight by role is to ask questions and ensure we have a good conversation. I won't participate or offer my views. I may ask follow-up questions or play "devil's advocate", and I will do my best to ensure that everyone is heard".

6. Identify note-taker. Point them out. Names will not be included.

7. Getting started. Have everyone introduce themselves.

STEP 2: Asking the Questions

The following questions are purposefully general to allow the issues relevant to your community to come forward.

Keep in mind:

Community Conversations are not the same as focus groups. Focus groups are a research method used to draw upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions on a particular issue or topic, which is generally predetermined. While similar to focus groups, community conversations are meant to identify community issues and aspirations.

1. **What kind of community do you want?**
   - Why is that important?
   - How is that different from the way things are now?

2. **Given what we just said, what are the two or three most important issues when it comes to the community?**
   - Decide which issue is most important for the group and use it for the discussion.

3. **What concerns do you have about this issue?**
   - Does it seem like things are getting better? Worse? What makes you say that?
   - How do you think the issue/concern came about?

4. **How do the issues we're talking about affect you personally?**
   - What personal experiences have you had?
   - How about people around you? Family? Friends? Coworkers? Neighbours? What do you see them experiencing?
   - Are some people more affected than others? Who? In what ways? Why?

5. **When you think about these things, how do you feel about what's going on?**
   - Why do you feel this way?
   - How do you think other people (in different parts of town) feel about this?

6. **What do you think is keeping us from making the progress we want?**

7. **When you think about what we've talked about, what are the kinds of things that could be done that would make a difference?**
   - What do you think these things might accomplish?
   - How about in terms of individuals: What are the kinds of things that people like us could do to make a difference?
   - What's important for us to keep in mind when we think about moving ahead?

8. **Thinking back over the conversation, what groups or individuals would you trust to take action on these things?**
   - Why them and not others?
   - How could the Ottawa Public Library take action on this issue?

9. **If we came back together in six months or a year, what might you see that would tell you that the things we talked about tonight were starting to happen?**
   - Why would that suggest things were changing? What would it mean to see that?

10. **Now that we've talked about this issue for a bit, what questions do you have about it?**
   - What do you feel you'd like to know more about that would help you make better sense of what's going on and what should be done?
   - What kind of follow-up would you like out of this conversation?

A Powerful Question
• Is simple and clear
• Is thought-provoking
• Generates energy
• Focuses inquiry
• Surfaces unconscious assumptions
• Opens new possibilities

From: "A Quick Reference Guide for Hosting World Cafe"

http://www.theworldcafe.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Cafe-To-Go-Revised.pdf

Ask Exercise:

The purpose of this exercise is to get a sense of people's aspirations for their community and learn about the kind of community they want to create. Introduce yourself and say, "We're trying to learn more about people's aspirations for their community. Would you be willing to answer four quick questions?"

1. What kind of community do you want to live in?

2. Why is that important to you?

3. How is that different from how you see things now?

4. What are some of the things that need to happen to create that kind of change?

PART 3: After the Conversation

Immediately after the conversation:

1. Talk with the conversation leader to compare notes. Ask:
   - What did you make of the conversation?
   - What ideas, actions or comments really seemed to resonate with the group?
   - What did you notice in terms of the group's energy and emotion?
   - What quotes stood out for you? What do we need to write down while it's fresh?

2. Organize notes into six categories. These categories will be critical for identifying themes and implications later in the process:
   - Aspirations
   - Main concerns
   - Specific issues
   - Actions
   - Questions

3. Make sure to record:
   - Who you spoke to
   - Key ideas you want to remember

The community narrative template is a great way to summarize the key findings of your conversation:

People want_____ (aspirations), but they're concerned that _____(main concerns). As people talk more about those concerns they talk about _____(specific concerns). They say that we need to focus on _____(actions) and if _____(groups) play a part in those actions, folks would more likely trust the effort and step forward.

Follow Up:

Make sure you follow up with those who have attended your Community Conversation. Provide them with your notes and findings. Keep participants up to date with any actions resulting from your conversations.

APPENDIX A

Branch Activities Analysis

Use the following chart to analyze where your current branch activities and partnerships fall on the community development spectrum.

	OUTREACH Library services are planned, designed, delivered and evaluated by library staff	PARTNERSHIPS Library services are delivered in cooperation with partner organizations	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT Library services are devised after developing relationships with local communities	CO-PRODUCTION Library services are co-produced by library workers and local communities
EVALUATION QUESTIONS	Did the staff plan all activities before the event/visit? Was it evaluated using library-defined metrics? Was library staff the only professionals involved in the planning and development of the service?	Was this activity/event planned in consultation with partner organizations? Did partner organizations take part in the planning? How involved was the partner organization in defining needs?	Were expressed community concerns used to define the service? Were community groups/members involved in parts of the planning process? Was the community informed of how their concerns are being met with the development of the new service?	Was there community involvement in every aspect of the planning process, including evaluation of outcomes? Did community members have decision-making authority in the development and implementation of the service? Did library staff serve only in a consultative, supporting role in the planning process?
BRANCH ACTIVITIES/ SERVICES				

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLE OF SOCIAL MAPPING

Put your neighborhood on the map!

Use this map to mark the places, people, things, and event that are most important to you.

These could be anything…a person...a store…a drop-in centre…a street corner…a park… a friend's home…a support group…a safe place…a regular meeting…an event…a place of worship…a restaurant…a regular coffee date…anything!

On your map, try to show approximately where each thing is located. If you want, write something describing it; explain why it is important to you.

APPENDIX C

Community Conversations: Note Taking Tool

1. What kind of a community do you want?
   (Listen for aspirations.)

2. Given what we just said, what are the two or three most important issues when it comes to the community?

3. What concerns do you have about this issue? Why?

4. How do the issues we're talking about affect you personally?
   (Look for connections people make between ideas.)

5. When you think about these things, how do you feel about what's going on?
   (Listen for emotions and intensity and for places where people voice a sense of hope.)

6. What do you think is keeping us from making the progress we want?
   (Listen for barriers in the community or in the nature of relationships.)

7. When you think about what we've talked about, what are the kinds of things that could be done that would make a difference?
   (Listen for what gives people hope, who they think could/should act.)

8. Thinking back over the conversation, what groups or individuals would you trust to take action on these things?

9. If we came back together in six months or a year, what might you see that would tell you that the things we talked about tonight were starting to happen?
   (Listen for what gives people confidence, where they see a place for individuals to act.)

10. Now that we've talked about this issue a bit, what questions do you have about it?

From: Libraries Transforming Communities Community Conversation Workbook

APPENDIX D

Community Conversation Ground Rules

1. Have a "kitchen table" conversation
   Everyone participates; no one dominates.

2. There are no "right answers"
   Draw on your own experiences, views and beliefs. You do not need to be an expert.

3. Keep an open mind
   Listen carefully and try hard to understand the views of those who disagree with you.

4. Help keep the discussion on track
   Stick to the questions; try not to ramble.

5. It is okay to disagree, but don't be disagreeable
   Respond to others how you want to be responded to.

6. Have fun!

From: Libraries Transforming Communities Community Conversation Workbook