



# Council Report

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**Date:** April 7, 2026  
**To:** Anthony Haddad, City Manager  
**From:** Angela Campbell, GM of Corporate Services and Kelsey Johnson, GM of Community Services  
**Subject:** **Review of Library Service Delivery Models**

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## Staff Recommendation

THAT Council direct staff to continue investigating shifting to a regional library service delivery in Penticton with the Okanagan Regional Library (ORL);

AND THAT Council direct staff to engage with the Library Board, Library employees and the Public on the impact and opportunities of a regional library model as outlined in the report dated April 7, 2026.

## Strategic priority objective

**Mission:** Penticton will serve its residents, businesses and visitors through organizational excellence, partnership and the provision of effective and community focused services.

**Culture:** We are committed to open communication, integrity, and professionalism to build public trust through excellence in all that we do. We embrace modernization, innovation and adaptability to meet the evolving needs of our community, fostering a culture of engagement and purpose.

**Livable & Accessible:** The City of Penticton will proactively plan for deliberate growth, focusing on creating an inclusive, healthy, and vibrant community.

## Background

Per the Library Act, there are two library operating models available to deliver public library services to communities. These models are the Municipal Library Model, which is the current model Penticton Public Library (PPL) operates under and the Regional District Library Model, which is the model Okanagan Regional Library (ORL) operates under.

City staff have conducted a preliminary analysis of the two library operating models available, included as Attachment A, to determine which library service model provides the best value to the citizens of Penticton. Upon review of the public services provided by both Penticton Public Library (PPL) and Okanagan Regional Library (ORL), it's evident that the ORL would offer additional services,

expanded resources, and more convenient access throughout the region. Both models offer autonomy to the local library to provide service that is responsive to the unique needs of the local community. Additionally, the ORL Headquarters offers comprehensive internal services to each branch with dedicated teams available to provide support with IT, Finance & Accounting, Marketing & Communications, and HR & Safety. As such, under this operating model, the City would free up substantial staff time that is currently directed to providing internal service to the PPL.

In order to change operating models, the *Library Act* requires this to be done by Bylaw which requires assent of the electors, specifically through referendum and a timely opportunity exists to include the assent question as part of the upcoming General Election.

City staff are seeking direction from Council to continue exploring transitioning from an independent municipal library model to joining the Okanagan Regional Library. As part of this exploration, staff have developed a communications and engagement plan to support education, transparency and public input ahead of the potential referendum.

### **Communications & Engagement Strategy Overview**

Following the City's [Community Engagement Framework](#) (2019), this strategy outlines the planned approach to inform and engage the public ahead of the 2026 municipal election referendum question(s). Consistent with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation, this initiative falls under the "**empower**" category, as the final decision rests with voters on Oct. 17, 2026.

The strategy is designed to ensure residents have the information, context and clarity needed to make an informed choice while supporting Council's decision-making with strong public engagement data.

#### *Strategic Objective*

The goal of this engagement initiative is to support an informed electorate by providing clear, accessible and balanced information regarding the possible change in library services model.

This strategy will also gather input that will inform the final referendum question(s) brought forward for Council approval in June.

#### *Audience*

The strategy is designed for the general voting public, with additional tailored engagement for Penticton Public Library Board and staff.

#### *Approach*

The approach uses a multi-phased engagement and education model that leverages the tools and practices established in previous major City engagements, over two phases as follows:

- **Phase I: Awareness and Input (April–June 2026)**

The focus of this phase is to build broad awareness of the issue, provide foundational information and gather meaningful public feedback to support the development of a potential referendum question(s). Insights collected during this phase will be presented to Council in June to support selection of the ballot wording, in accordance with statutory timelines.

Communications strategies for this phase include:

- Dedicated Shape Your City webpage with project information
- Public engagement survey
- Social media education and promotion
- Earned media opportunities
- Inclusion in Spring Community Newsletter
- Information session
- Targeted engagement with staff and partners

### **Phase II: Public Education (June–Oct. 17, 2026)**

Should Council confirm the assent voting question, the City will shift to a comprehensive education campaign to ensure residents clearly understand what they are voting on. This will include ongoing public-facing communications and targeted outreach to ensure the community has adequate information prior to the election.

Communications tactics for this phase will include an awareness campaign so that residents are fully aware of the project, referendum question, and have the information required to vote on the matter in the upcoming election.

### **Financial implication**

Switching to a regional model would change how the City contributes to the Library's operations. There would be a reduction to the City's expenses and therefore a reduction in required taxation revenues, however this would be replaced with a requisition from the ORL, similar to how the Regional District collects through the City. The overall impact to the community will be similar in terms of dollars collected but broken out separately on the tax notice.

Over the last several months Staff have reviewed the potential implications of moving to a regional model. Preliminary forecasts, based on 2026 budget figures, show an estimated savings of \$200k, including estimated costs of staff resources, and additional lease revenues. While the City would remain responsible for the exterior capital costs to the building, the ORL would be taking on capital improvements to the interior. According to the 2026-2030 Financial Plan there are approx. \$200k of upcoming capital items in 2027-2029 that would transition to the ORL and not require City funding.

As a potential transition to the ORL model would not take place until at least 2027, costs would be recalculated based on that budget year.

Should Council direct staff to complete a third party review of the library service delivery models, the estimated cost is \$15k and would be funded from General Surplus.

**Analysis**

As a result of the review, it's evident that the ORL would offer enhanced service to our community, more development opportunities for employees and reduce the financial burden to our taxpayers.

The library system is a deeply valued and highly visible public service in Penticton and any potential change to the operating model is recognized as a significant community interest. The goal of this report and the proposed communications plan is to ensure that both Council and our community have the information they need to make an informed decision.

Should Council endorse the staff recommendation, staff will return to the regular council meeting on June 9<sup>th</sup> with a summary of the engagement results to support Council's decision in considering the assent voting questions as part of the upcoming General Election.

**Alternative Recommendation:**

THAT Council direct staff to engage a third party to review the library service delivery in Penticton and shifting to a regional model with the Okanagan Regional Library (ORL) at an estimated cost of \$15k to be funded by General Surplus;

AND THAT Council direct staff to engage with the Library Board, Library employees and the Public on the impact and opportunities of a regional library model as outlined in the report dated April 7, 2026.

**Attachments**

Attachment A – Library Service Delivery Options Preliminary Analysis

Attachment B – Letter to Council from PPL

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Campbell  
GM of Corporate Services

Kelsey Johnson  
GM of Community Services

City Manager  
