Extended Hours Pilot Project
Public Engagement Report – November 2024

Introduction

Community engagement is integrated into decision-making and planning at the Kingston Frontenac Public Library (KFPL). As part of the Library's commitment to community-informed development, patron feedback was sought as part of the evaluation of the Extended Hours Pilot Project.

The Extended Hours Pilot Project provides the community with more access to the Library by offering blended services at the Pittsburgh Branch. It empowers library users to access resources and services independently while staff are not on-site. Library staff continue to support users on-site during staffed hours and remotely via telephone during Extended Hours.

Engagement played a role in shaping the review of the pilot project, ensuring patron perspectives were considered. This report highlights the methods used to engage the community and summarizes the feedback received.

Background

The Extended Hours Pilot Project was launched in October 2023 at the Pittsburgh Branch.

The Pittsburgh Branch is in an area of significant development and requires a major renovation and expansion. The need for increased space and hours of service in this growing community was noted as far back as the 2004 Kingston Frontenac Public Library Branch Services Review. The need has only grown since, with ongoing development in the area and the opening of the Waaban Crossing. Community consultation for the 2022 Library Facilities Plan identified expanded hours as the most-requested service priority at branches across Kingston-Frontenac.

The goal of the Extended Hours Pilot Project was to increase access to and use of the Pittsburgh Branch leading into a planned branch expansion.

Engagement Objectives

The purpose of the engagement was to assist in the evaluation of the Extended Hours Pilot Project by collecting patron feedback.

Audience and Engagement Methods

Feedback via a targeted survey was sought from everyone who had registered for the service prior to September 30, 2024, as well as patrons with the Pittsburgh Branch listed as their primary branch in the Library database (5,161 patrons).

To further promote the feedback opportunity at the Pittsburgh Branch, a paper version of the survey was made available and a sign with a QR code linking to the digital survey was posted.

Survey responses were collected between October 23 and November 10, 2024, with a total of 488 survey responses received.

A blank copy of the survey is included in this report as supplementary material.

What We Heard

The engagement process was valuable in assessing how the current set-up of Extended Hours services meets the needs of patrons and in identifying areas for improvement.

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about their familiarity with the project and whether they were 'registered' or 'not registered' for the service. The remaining survey questions then focussed on the respondent's overall experiences with Extended Hours service, or their reasons for not registering.

Several questions in the survey allowed respondents to select more than one option, data for those questions in the report is based on percentage of respondents rather than on the number of respondents.

A summary of feedback collected from the survey is included below.

Familiarity with the service
Of the 488 respondents who completed the survey:
- o 88.7% (433 respondents) were familiar with the Extended Hours Pilot Project.
- o 11.3% (55 respondents) were unfamiliar with the Extended Hours Pilot Project.

Registration Rates
Of the 433 respondents who indicated they were familiar with the Extended Hours Pilot Project:
- o 70% (304 respondents) were registered for the service.
- o 30% (131 respondents) were not registered for the service.

Reasons for not registering
When asked about reasons for not being registered, 120 people responded, and

responses fell into the following categories:

- ↳ Staffing
  - ○ 28 respondents identified feeling uncomfortable with the lack of staff on the premises, whether it was in connection to library worker job loss, being opposed to the concept of using the Library without staff present or simply not wanting to be there while staff were not present.
  - ○ 6 respondents expressed a preference to go to the branch while staff are present so they may ask questions or interact with library staff.
- ↳ Safety Concerns
  - ○ 17 respondents identified safety concerns as the reason they have not registered for the service.
- ↳ Process
  - ○ 4 respondents did not know the service required registration.
  - ○ 4 respondents expressed confusion around hours for the service and when they could come in.
  - ○ 3 respondents were unclear on how they were supposed to register.
  - ○ 3 respondents felt the registration process was difficult.
- ↳ Lack of Knowledge
  - ○ 3 respondents were not familiar with the service.
- ↳ Availability
  - ○ 16 respondents stated they forgot or were too busy to register.
- ↳ No current need for service
  - ○ 32 respondents noted they did not need the service, with reasons ranging from using digital resources to being content with current staffed hours.
- ↳ Other
  - ○ 3 respondents listed being new to Kingston as the reason for not registering.
  - ○ 1 respondent preferred to go to a different branch rather than use Extended Hours.

When asked if they wanted to register for the service now:
- ○ 70% said no.
- ○ 30% said yes. Library staff will contact the 47 people who provided contact information to provide information and offer assistance to register.

When prompted to provide details about how users heard about Extended Hours:
- ○ 50% heard through the KFPL website.

- o 44% heard from KFPL staff member.
- o 24% heard through other means (sign at branch, email from KFPL, newsletter, local media).
- o 16% heard through word of mouth.
- o 9% heard through social media.
- o 4% were referred by friend or family.
- o 1% heard by searching online.

Services used during Extended Hours

Data from the survey showed the following services were used during Extended Hours:

- o 80% of respondents used the service to pick up reservations.
- o 72% of respondents used the service to return materials.
- o 47% of respondents used to service to browse the collection.
- o 47% of respondents used the service to borrow materials.
- o 19% of respondents used the service to access library space (study, read etc.).
- o 18% of respondents used the service to access washroom facilities.
- o 6% of respondents used the service for access to Wi-fi.
- o 4% of respondents used the service to print or photocopy.
- o 3% of responded selected "other," with the majority listing being registered, but not getting around to using the service yet and 1 person listing study as their main reason to use Extended Hours.

Satisfaction with the service

Survey data showed overall high satisfaction levels with the service with:

- o 82% of respondents being very satisfied.
- o 11% of respondents being somewhat satisfied.
- o 5% of respondents being neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied.
- o 2% of respondents being very dissatisfied.
- o 1% of respondents being somewhat dissatisfied.

When prompted to provide details about their satisfaction levels with the services, 242 people answered, and their responses fell into the following categories:

- ↳ Convenience
  - o 152 respondents mentioned convenience and increased access as the reason they are satisfied with the service.
- ↳ Positive experience
  - o 30 respondents stated they are happy with the service but did not provide a

specific reason.

↳ Staffing

- o 19 respondents took the opportunity to mention that even though they visit the branch during Extended Hours, they still prefer staff interactions. Out of the 19 responses, 3 respondents flagged concern about library worker job loss.

↳ Increased Hours

- o 17 respondents expressed a desire for even more hours and 1 respondent suggested expanding the service to other branches.

↳ Process

- o 7 respondents mentioned challenges with the registration process; out of the 7, 6 mentioned the scanner was an issue at some point.

↳ Safety concerns

- o 5 respondents mentioned that while they had not experienced any issues, they were still concerned about safety.

↳ Quiet Time

- o 4 respondents said they enjoyed how quiet the branch is during Extended Hours.

↳ Interactions with other library users.

- o 3 respondents stated they felt awkward or uncomfortable when other library users tried to get in at the same time as them.

↳ Other

- o 1 respondent mentioned the one-hour limit on Wi-Fi does not make sense during Extended Hours.
- o 1 respondent mentioned they prefer using the branch during Extended Hours due to being COVID-cautious and preferring to be around fewer people.

Assistance during Extended Hours

When asked if they needed assistance during Extended Hours:

- o 85% of respondents said no.
- o 12% of respondents responded said yes.
- o 3% of respondents said they did not know they could ask for help.

Out of the 35 respondents that said they needed assistance, data showed they requested assistance in the following ways:

- o 45% of respondents asked for help during staffed hours.
- o 31% of respondents used the in-branch phone.

- o 20% of respondents used other methods such as asking staff that happened to be around at the time (e.g. maintenance) or asking other patrons.
- o 9% of respondents used the print binder.
- o 6% of respondents used the Extended Hours web page.

When asked about the satisfaction level with the assistance:
- o 63% of respondents were very satisfied with the assistance.
- o 28% of respondents were satisfied with the assistance.
- o 9% of respondents were neutral.
- o 0% of respondents were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Service Recommendation

Data showed users were very likely to recommend the service with:
- o 82% of respondents very likely to recommend Extended Hours.
- o 10% of respondents somewhat likely to recommend Extended Hours.
- o 5% of respondents were neutral.
- o 1% of respondents were somewhat unlikely to recommend Extended Hours.
- o 2% of respondents were very unlikely to recommend Extended Hours.

Improving Extended Hours

Survey respondents were asked for their suggestions to improve the service. 178 people answered this question, and responses fell into the following categories:

- ↳ No suggestions for improvements
  - o 100 respondents said they did not have any suggestions; of that total, 22 mentioned the service works great and therefore they had no suggestions for improvements, while 78 just said they had no suggestions.
- ↳ Hours
  - o 29 respondents suggested KFPL consider expanding extended hours. 7 respondents suggested providing extended hours on Sunday, 2 suggested more hours on Fridays and 1 suggestion to expand the service to rural branches.
  - o 3 respondents would prefer consistent daily hours.
  - o 1 respondent found it difficult to keep track of current hours.
- ↳ Staffing
  - o 11 respondents brought up staff, with 6 noting that they prefer to have staff there, 3 concerned about job loss for staff and 2 suggesting KFPL hire more staff.

- ↳ Safety
  - o 6 survey respondents provided suggestions for safety improvements with 1 person mentioning having a monitor with staff available for questions; 2 respondents suggested video surveillance; 1 respondent suggested better indoor and outdoor lighting, 1 person mentioning they feel overall uneasy and 1 wanting for the door not to stay open for as long.
  - o 1 person would like for both branch doors to be locked.
- ↳ Technology
  - o 4 survey respondents suggested the scanner could be easier to use.
  - o 2 respondents would like to be able to use the computer for more than the current 60-minute time limit.
- ↳ Communications and Signage
  - o 4 respondents would like better signage at the branch.
  - o 1 respondent wished Extended Hours was more visible on the website.
  - o 1 respondent suggested more reminders that only one patron can enter the branch at a time.
  - o 1 respondent suggested reinforcing that the service requires registration.
  - o 1 respondent suggested improvements to the Google listing to explain the service requires registration.
- ↳ Available services
  - o 3 patrons suggested service improvements with 2 wanting video games to be able available for reservation and 1 wishing for more board games.
- ↳ Other
  - o 1 patron mentioned feeling uncomfortable when other patrons knock on windows to be let inside the branch.
  - o 1 person asked that the service be discontinued but did not provide a reason.
  - o 1 survey respondent was concerned too much responsibility is placed in the hands of the library users.
  - o 1 survey respondent suggested the armchair from the large print section be moved to provide better access to shelves.

Next Steps

Data from the survey will be evaluated alongside library use data to better understand the overall impact of the service, to identify opportunities for improvement and to make a recommendation regarding the continuation of Extended Hours in 2025.

A report on the Extended Hours Pilot Project will be presented to the Library Board at their November 27, 2024 meeting.

Supplementary Materials

2024 Extended Hours Pilot Project Survey