



Policy Title:	Operating Gateway Branches Policy		
Last Updated:	October 21, 2010	Reviewed:	Annually in June

POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the role of the PPL’s gateway library branches, which generally serve small rural catchment area populations. The Board’s policy for future library service development as articulated in the Board’s Facility Plan 2010¹ is to build branches of at least 15,000 sq.ft. Within this context, it is the Board’s intention to use this policy for administration of the current gateway branches – Claremont, Greenwood and Whitevale.²

Service Goals

The Library’s current small branches provide a gateway to PPL services as a whole; they also provide recreational reading and popular materials, with limited, if any, resources for research, reference or programming. Space provision is for reading and browsing, with no allowance for non-storytime programming or special services, since demand from these communities is consistently low for such services. Specialized or more complex services available elsewhere will not be replicated in gateway branches.

1. Gateway to PPL

While small branches cannot provide a full range of services, they will provide gateway information to services throughout the system. Resource staff may attend the branch to provide orientation to interested community members to the full range of offerings, such as the website, homework resources, special collections, etc.

2. Collections

Collections are the major service provided, and reflect the demographic and identified interests of the community. They will change in keeping with community interests with some collection areas being eliminated and

¹ Available on the Library’s website

² The Appendix *Reviewing a branch where use has fallen substantially* would, however, also be used at any branch, regardless of size, with a major drop in use.

others created. Collections will be general and of popular interest, and they will be maintained to sustain interest by ongoing additions and eliminations. If, after a period of one year and focused promotion, a particular collection area is not being adequately used it will be relocated to another higher-use branch.³

3. Buildings

Branch buildings must meet health and safety and disability access requirements. The branch service must be affordable within the municipal funding envelope, both in the near and longer term, regardless of its use level.⁴

4. Programs

Programs will be offered to the community to meet either a demographic need, such as storytimes, or because of an expressed need initiated by the community. All programs will be assessed for community interest and feasibility in terms of the resources required. If there is poor attendance or registration, they will be cancelled or discontinued. All participants will be notified in advance of these minimum attendance requirements.

Service Measurement

The Board will review and assess services at each gateway branch every two years at a minimum (please see Appendix 1). A reduction of 20% in circulation or walk-in traffic compared with use at the specific branch in the preceding two years will trigger an assessment of that branch as a candidate for closure by the Board. Measurement may also assess use patterns over seasonal periods. Some individual specific reductions, for example at holiday periods, may occur if the use falls below a reasonable and justifiable standard before the two-year period.

Any programming or other non-standard gateway branch service requires greater and intensive use of system-wide resources. These are therefore reviewed for success by senior staff on an ongoing basis, and may be cancelled or reduced if attendance does not justify scarce resources.⁵

3. A “turnover rate” describes how much of the collection is used in a specific time frame. The calculation is the number of items checked out in a given period divided by the number of collection items. A popular collection would have a turnover rate of between 6 and 10.

4 The City of Pickering’s *2010 Annual Accessibility Plan* is addressing remaining access issues at Greenwood and Whitevale.

5 In 2010 storytimes require a minimum of five children attending each session over a three-week period. For other programs (e.g. individual seasonal reading programs) a minimum of five registrations is required.

APPENDIX 1
REVIEWING A BRANCH WHERE USE HAS FALLEN SUBSTANTIALLY

1. Senior staff monitor circulation and other service statistics on a continuous and system-wide basis. The staff advise the CEO when the collection use or walk-in traffic at a branch have fallen by 20% over a measured two-year period. Collection use here means the borrowing of the collection by clients at the branch. The two previous years are first counted separately then averaged over the two years. The review is triggered if at the end of a third year, use has dropped by 20% below the average of the previous two years.
2. The CEO informs the Board and details the evidence indicating a substantial drop in use. Special circumstances beyond the control of the community will be noted.
3. The Board contacts the Councillors in the affected community to inform them of the review and its background information.
4. The CEO informs the City's CAO of the review.
5. The Board informs the affected community that a review will be taking place to determine if there is enough community interest to sustain the branch's service in that location.
6. The review is to be completed within two months so as to minimize uncertainty for both the community and the Library's operations.
7. If closure is recommended by the Board, the whole Council will be notified formally and will have an opportunity to review the recommendation.
8. If Council endorses the recommendation, an orderly reduction or elimination of services will occur with maximum effort on the part of staff to inform the affected community and minimize any negative effects on clients in the community.
9. Management, operation and any other decisions affecting the building will revert to the City, which is the legal owner of each library building.