Decision-making considerations for locating sortation equipment at EPL

Space requirement

- Will sorter demand additional space not initially planned for? Calculate cost of additional land/leasehold space required, if any, i.e., acquisition cost for land, additional rental/lease costs for space.
- Will sorter installation result in diminished public space? Consider "soft" cost of customer impact of lost space.
- Will the space require the conveyor path to include turns? If so, consider it a significant negative – straight-line paths are less complicated and less expensive.
- Does the available space place the sorter in, or adjacent to, staff work areas? If not, consider it a significant negative: more complicated machinery, e.g., conveyor belts, and/or additional staff time and effort will be required to move materials through the facility for processing.
- Does the available space facilitate a return location for customers that is logical and consistent with traffic flows? Requiring that customers must re-route themselves to a return location that is inconvenient is a significant negative.
- Does the available space allow the installation of a logically-placed exterior return for customers, feeding directly into the sorter? Consider the requirement of more complicated machinery and/or staff time and effort to transport materials to staff work areas a significant negative.

Construction/renovations

- What is the total cost of renovations required for the project? Renovations may include, and may not be limited to, some or all of the following:
    - Physical renovations (e.g., construction of facility extensions, renovations to additional acquired leasehold space, construction/removal/modification of interior/exterior walls)
    - Infrastructure upgrades (e.g., electrical or HVAC capacity)
    - Physical reorganization of space
    - Noise, climate, temperature, dust and/or other controls
- If facility is leasehold, what renovations are acceptable to the landlord?

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Activity cost benchmarks

- Determine the benchmark time required per manual check-in, including all aspects of the transaction that would be automated: removing item from book drop/return area, checking it in, and moving it and/or placing it on a truck or in a bin to be shelved or routed. Extrapolate this figure to the current check-in volume of the branch(es) under consideration. Calculate staffing cost for this time figure, based on Page or Circulation Assistant-level staffing.
- Determine benchmark time required per automatic check-in/sort and extrapolate to the current circulation of the branch(es) under consideration. Calculate staffing cost for this time figure, based on Page or Circulation Assistant-level staffing.

Total cost of ownership

- One-time costs
    - Purchase of equipment
- Installation
- Ongoing costs
    - Maintenance
    - Upgrades

Soft considerations

Size of location

- Install sorters initially in larger facilities whose check-in activity warrants automation: these are generally locations with larger collections and higher check-in numbers, serving larger populations than smaller locations.

Activity and catchment area population trends

Check-in and visit volume

- What is the current check-in volume, and the five-year trend?
- What is the current visit volume, and the five-year trend?
- EPL generally assumes a 30% increase in facility use following a renovation project.
- Install sorters first at locations with the highest check-in volumes and greatest visits, likely the branches with the largest collections and greatest number of customers.

Population/population density

- What are the current population and population density of the area surrounding the location, and the five-year trend?
- Place sorters in locations where the greatest population is served and the facility is convenient to the largest number of people.

Expected growth

- What is the 5-year projection for population growth in the area surrounding the location?
- What is the 5-year projection for residential and commercial building projects in the area surrounding the location?

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