



Toronto Public Library Board – Strategic Planning Steering Committee – Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Details

Meeting Number: 04

Date: Tuesday, 08 October, 2024

Time: 3:00 p.m. to 4:26 p.m.

Location: Toronto Reference Library, Executive Boardroom and Teleconference

Members Present

Amina Mohamed (Committee Chair)

Jonathan Hoss

Anne Maggisano (TPL Foundation Board)

Members Present (WebEx)

Councillor Paul Ainslie

Regrets

Tamara Balan

Alim Remtulla

SPSC Call to Order

24-023 Amina Mohamed, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. and welcomed all to the meeting.

Amina then introduced Shawn Mitchell, Director, Policy, Planning and Performance Management.

Shawn recognized that it is important to acknowledge that the land on which Toronto Public Library is located is Indigenous. He indicated this is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Wendat, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Toronto Public Library gratefully acknowledges these Indigenous nations for their guardianship of this land.

Shawn then introduced the participants in the meeting.

SPSC Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

24-024 There were no *Declarations of Conflicts of Interest* by members of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

SPSC Approval of Agenda

24-025 *Moved by Anne Maggisano*
That the Strategic Planning Steering Committee:
1. *approves the agenda.*

Carried

SPSC Communications

24-026 There were no *Communications* items at the October 08, 2024 meeting.

SPSC Presentations

24-027 There were no *Presentations* items at the October 08, 2024 meeting.

Items for Information

SPSC 24-028

Strategic Plan 2025-2029: Phase Two Consultation Results and Draft Priority Areas

Shawn Mitchell introduced Laural Raine, Senior Manager, Strategic Planning, Policy & Evaluation and Mabel Ho, Manager, Strategy Development & Engagement. Together, they delivered a presentation reviewing the Phase Two Consultation results and priority areas for the Strategic Plan 2025-2029.

The recommended four priority areas for the Strategic Plan 2025-2029 are:

1. Democracy, civic engagement and social connections
2. Shared community spaces
3. Learning and growth
4. Awareness and access

The plan will also include a focus on staff within each priority, with TPL investing in their development to provide the tools, learning, and collaboration needed to meet the Library's priorities.

The questions asked at the session were:

- Do the priority areas clearly reflect the needs and opportunities we've heard in the consultation process?
- How will these priority areas and outcomes help the library to be successful over the next five years?

The Steering Committee commended library staff for their thorough consultations that informed priorities and outcomes that are overall very responsive to Toronto's current context.

The Steering Committee asked questions about the following:

- How the three scenarios from the wind-tunneling exercise were selected and other options considered. Library staff chose these scenarios based on the most significant and uncertain trends for the next five years identified through research and the environmental scan. Other scenarios included increasing cost of living and financial instability, a growing digital divide, and a widening skills gap and labour shortage, among others;
- Whether feedback from residents outside the downtown area reflected different perspectives. Feedback from these areas highlighted the need for standardized programs and improved access to services in neighbourhoods across the city;
- What non-users want from the library and if Torontonians' needs are changing. A [recent third-party survey](#) showed TPL has a wide reach among Toronto residents, indicating opportunities for deeper engagement with existing and potential customers. Opportunities for social connections, free

third spaces, and skills to respond to rapidly evolving technologies like AI are becoming increasingly important.

The Steering Committee provided the following general comments:

- While environment sustainability is an important issue, it was not ranked as a top priority in recent consultations. Staff acknowledged its importance and the need to determine how the library can support it;
- It is encouraging to see how the library has become an increasingly important third space in a City with rising cost of living and diminishing free public spaces.

The Steering Committee suggested the following:

- Loneliness and social isolation emerged as significant issues in the research and consultations. While they are represented in the "democracy, civic engagement and social connections" and "shared community spaces" priorities, this could be more prominent;
- Consider broader goals that extend beyond the City and recognize TPL's provincial and international role, such as TPL's leadership globally in democracy and intellectual freedom;
- Increase TPL's marketing approaches and particularly presence online and on social media to raise awareness of its services and staff;
- Highlight how the new priorities are different from the current plan, and how TPL's new Strategic Plan will respond to the current needs and challenges faced by Torontonians, creating strong connections to the community's current context;
- Consider articulating more clearly the strategic focus of the "learning and growth" priority and where TPL adds unique value. For example, beyond traditional learning opportunities, the library serves as a go-to-place for residents in need of assistance;
- Clearly articulate the expansion and enhancement of collections and other services in the "awareness and access" priority given that the consultation results showed that many customers want TPL to invest in and strengthen its collections;

- Clearly communicate the library's offerings to Toronto residents in simple, plain language, highlighting its value and excellence in its communication and implementation plans.

Moved by Jonathan Hoss

That the Strategic Planning Steering Committee

1. *receive the phase two consultation results as outlined in Attachment 1;*
2. *receive the draft priority areas and outcomes for the Strategic Plan 2025-2029 as outlined in the report; and*
3. *recommend the draft priority areas and outcomes to the Toronto Public Library Board for approval, and ask the Board to direct staff to prepare a draft of the Strategic Plan with strategic objectives and key actions.*

Carried

SPSC Adjournment

24-029 *Moved by* Anne Maggisano

That the Strategic Planning Steering Committee:

1. *adjourns the October 08, 2024 meeting.*

Carried

The meeting ended at 4:26 p.m.

Signed:_____