



To: Toronto Public Library Board – June 19, 2006

From: City Librarian

Subject: **Branch Open Hours Vision – Implementation Plan**

Purpose:

To report to the Toronto Public Library Board on an implementation plan, including public consultation, for branch open hours, and to obtain Board approval for implementation of the first phase of the plan in 2006 and 2007.

Funding Implications and Impact Statement:

The first phase of open hours enhancements recommended for implementation encompasses standard hour changes that will be implemented in 2006 and 2007 within existing operating budget and staff resources at no additional cost.

The total annual cost of the subsequent phases of open hour enhancements discussed in this report is approximately \$16.2 million, based on 2006 costs, and will be subject to further review and future Board approval.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the Toronto Public Library Board adopt, in principle, the implementation plan for branch open hours;
- (2) staff proceed with the implementation of Phase 1 in 2006 and 2007 subject to the outcome of local consultation;
- (3) a consultation plan and detailed implementation plan be developed for the subsequent phases;
- (4) staff report back to the Board early in 2007 on the results of public consultation and Phase 1 implementation.

Background:

In 2005, the Library Board requested a report concerning branch open hours across the City. Despite several initiatives undertaken since amalgamation to improve hours, a number of issues related to branch open hours were identified including continued unequal distribution of open hours across the City and inconsistent and confusing schedules. It was concluded that the current branch open hours are not fully meeting the needs, expectations and desires of Torontonians, especially at-risk communities, children, youth and knowledge economy workers. Further, it was realized that the Library is not fully utilizing its asset base or maximizing on the investment in buildings and resources for the benefit of the entire community.

Community consultation and an environmental scan supported the need to address this important component of library service in Toronto. The public considers the quality of collections and range of open hours as critical determinants to quality library service. All public consultation done in recent years by Toronto Public Library (TPL) supports expanded open hours, particularly longer evening and Sunday hours, especially for youth and students and low income neighbourhoods where travelling to distant locations is a problem.

In addition, there is a growing trend across the country to expand open hours. Colleges and universities are expanding open hours as more students demand 24/7 service from library buildings, not just library electronic resources. The News and New Releases Section at the new Grande Bibliotheque in Montreal is open from 10 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week with an enthusiastic response from customers. In the GTA, cities are extending public library open hours as well. Stores such as Chapters and Indigo also have extensive open hours that are popular and well used.

Accordingly, a vision for branch open hours was developed to address this situation and was presented to the Board. At its January 2006 meeting, the Board adopted the vision for branch open hours detailed in the report, "The Best Thing a Library Can Be is Open". Staff was directed to report on an implementation plan at the June 2006 Board meeting. The charts summarizing the vision and associated maps are included as Attachments 4-A – 4-D.

The methodology for allocating hours to the various branches is outlined in Attachment 4-E. The Board also requested information concerning the use at individual libraries across the City. The 2005 performance measures for all branches are included as Attachment 4-F.

Comments:

The vision for branch open hours seeks to improve access to library services by rationalizing and increasing branch open hours across the City. Priorities reflect the pillars of the strategic plan including improving library services in at-risk neighbourhoods and for newcomers and youth and improving geographic access across the City. A phased implementation strategy has been developed to enable the Library to reach the full vision over time.

Phase 1 – Standard hours changes:

As a first step, work was initiated to determine what changes could be made to increase hours at no additional cost. This phase affects Monday to Saturday hours only; it does not include Sunday or late night service. Attachment 1 is provided for ease of reference with the Monday to Saturday standard hours and schedules only (i.e., without Sundays or late night hours). Attachments 2 and 3 detail what is possible to achieve in this phase at the various branches across the City.

Phase 1 implementation provides increased access to library branches across the City with an additional 155.5 hours of service each week, including 60.5 in priority neighbourhoods. This achieves a 10.5 percent completion of the full vision. Fifty-two branches have increased hours. Nine branches have minor reductions totalling 12.5 hours per week in moving to standard schedules, including increasing from five to six day service and providing morning service. With a more mature level of amalgamation including common job descriptions and staff scheduling provisions, a number of improvements and efficiencies are achievable allowing for:

- Toronto Reference Library open hours increase with the introduction of an earlier open time and the standard close time of 8:30 p.m. (from 54 to 60 hours per week);
- introduction of Monday service at Malvern;
- introduction of 40 hour service at City Hall branch;
- upgrading of some branches to 50.5 hours, including Dawes Road, Thorncliffe, Leaside, Port Union, Maryvale, Alderwood, College/Shaw, Annette Street and Jones;
- service increases from 5 to 6 days in neighbourhood branches in East York and York, and four Scarborough branches;
- morning hours are introduced in a number of South Region branches (Annette Street, College Shaw, Dufferin/St. Clair, Spadina, St. Lawrence, Jones and Gerrard/Ashdale);
- some South Region neighbourhood branches close Friday evening and open earlier in the morning, Monday to Friday.

In summary, at the end of Phase 1:

- all areas of the city have increases in open hours;
- 35 branches achieve standard hours vision (Monday – Saturday);
- 84 branches achieve a standard schedule;
- Letter of Understanding 17 of the Collective Agreement is implemented with Monday as the standard close day for five-day branches;
- the 40-hour band is fully implemented across the City.

The Phase 1 changes have been reviewed and discussed with the Union.

Subsequent Implementation Phases:

Implementation has been divided into ten logical segments and prioritized as follows:

Phase	Segment
1	Standard hours changes at no additional cost (Phase 1)
2	Research & Reference and District branches to 65.5 hours (Mon-Sat)
3	Late night service
4	Sunday expansion: Research & Reference and District branches
5	Sunday expansion: existing Neighbourhood branches
6	Sunday expansion: priority areas
7	Increase Neighbourhood branch hours (Mon-Sat) in busy priority areas
8	Increase Neighbourhood branch hours (Mon-Sat) in busy non-priority areas
9	Sunday expansion: busy Neighbourhood branches
10	Increase Research and Reference Special Collections and Neighbourhood branch hours (Mon-Sat) in remaining non-priority areas

The various phases and priorities are presented as a starting point for further discussion and refinement upon completion of Phase 1 changes and associated public consultation, as outlined below.

Upon completion of Phase 1, the Library will have achieved all that can be done within existing resources to improve open hours and access to branches across the City. The further proposed phases and priorities will be reviewed upon completion of Phase 1 implementation and public consultation. Plans including staffing requirements and costs will be further developed and refined. Costs for the various phases will then be included in future operating budget requests for new and enhanced services.

Public Input and Consultation:

There have been a variety of methods of public input and consultation to inform the initial stages of the hours vision. These have included both city-wide and more locally based input, and have informed the Phase 1 implementation plan.

A city-wide customer survey was conducted in 2006. Results of that survey indicated less satisfaction with library hours than with the breadth and depth of collections available for borrowing. More hours on Sunday were identified as one of the top priorities, including the desire to have more locations open on Sundays. In addition, a site-specific survey was conducted in the Fall of 2005 at the Toronto Reference Library on the preference for a small expansion of open hours.

The public consultation for the Library's current strategic plan also identified a desire for more library service hours particularly in the evening and on weekends, and more standardization of hours.

On an ongoing basis, the Library receives and responds to comments and feedback from individual users. Comments concerning library hours have been analyzed as part of the development of the open hours vision.

In addition to direct public input, use patterns were analyzed to indicate which open hours are most heavily used by the public and to assess the preferred branch opening and closing times.

It is recommended that the Library now proceed with local consultations at branches affected in Phase 1. The consultation will provide information on the broad plan as well as the specifics for the branch, and will provide the public with an opportunity to comment. This phase of consultation will include a meeting with councillors in the wards with branches potentially affected by Phase 1 changes.

Subsequent phases of the implementation will require further consultation, and it is recommended that a consultation plan be developed for subsequent phases.

Timelines:

Implementation timelines for the Phase 1 changes are planned as follows:

- some of the changes will need to proceed in association with the re-opening of Pape/Danforth over the summer;
- Toronto Reference Library changes will proceed in September 2006;
- local consultations in affected branches will occur in Summer and Fall 2006;
- the remaining changes will be implemented in January 2007 in association with the hours of work shift selection process.

Conclusion:

Since the time of amalgamation, the Library has been aware of the need to improve open hours in branches across the City. Now it is time to move ahead and begin the process of implementing improvements. The Board's Open Hours Vision is aligned with the Library's strategic initiatives and with City priorities. At this time, the Library has achieved a level of maturity in amalgamation. Common salaries and job descriptions are in place for staff.

Improvements and efficiencies will enable the Library to proceed with the initial phase of implementation and do all that is possible with current resources to provide improved access for all Torontonians. Plans to implement further phases of the Vision will be introduced after the completion of Phase 1.

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List of Attachments:

- Attachment 1: TPL Branch Open Hours – Phase 1 Standard Hours Summary Mon - Sat
- Attachment 2: Phase 1: Branches with a Change in Hours or Schedule Arranged by Tier and Hours
- Attachment 3: Phase 1: TPL Branch Open Hours Mon – Sat, 9 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. All Branches Listed by Ward
- Attachment 4-A: TPL Branch Open Hours Vision
- Attachment 4-B: Summary TPL Branch Open Hours Proposal
- Attachment 4-C: TPL Branch Locations, Proposed Hours
- Attachment 4-D: TPL Branch Locations, Proposed Sunday Branches
- Attachment 4-E: Methodology for Allocating Hours to Branches
- Attachment 4-F: TPL Summary Statistics, January – December 2005