

**Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019: Draft Priorities and Outcomes Results  
of Public Consultation to Date**

<b>Date:</b>	October 7, 2015
<b>To:</b>	Strategic Planning Steering Committee
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian

**SUMMARY**

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The purpose of this report is to update the Strategic Planning Steering Committee on the results of public consultations for Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019 and identify the ways in which these results have been incorporated into the draft priorities and outcomes for the strategic plan. With consultation still underway, it is important to note that this is an interim report. Recommended priorities will be finalized and presented at the next Strategic Planning Steering Committee meeting for consideration.

Using the draft priorities and consultation plan approved by the Board in June 2015, the Library consulted with stakeholders, residents, community groups and staff. To date, over 1,400 people have participated in the process.

Overall, the results of consultation confirmed the direction of the draft priorities presented to the Library Board in June and highlighted the central and unique role the Library plays in the life of the city, in building community and creating equity of access for all.

As a result of input from the Library Board and consultation, the priorities have been consolidated, and focused on the results residents and stakeholders would like to see, described in language that resonates with them. Draft outcome measures have been added.

The five draft priority areas for 2016 - 2019 are:

1. Improving Access, Increasing Awareness;
2. Advancing Digital Literacy and Inclusion;
3. Expanding Learning Opportunities, Building Skills and Capacity;
4. Creating Community Connections through Cultural Experiences;
5. Transforming Service Delivery.

Next steps in the consultation process include a survey of residents by an external polling firm and continued engagement with stakeholders and private and public partners.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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**The City Librarian recommends that the Strategic Planning Steering Committee recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:**

1. receives the results of public and stakeholder consultation to date as summarized in the report and in Attachment 1;
2. provides direction on the draft priorities and outcomes for the Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019 as included in Attachment 2;
3. directs staff to prepare a final draft of the strategic plan with a communications plan, implementation plan, outcomes, KPIs and 2016 targets, for endorsement by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and approval by the Library Board in December 2015.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

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The costs of creating the strategic plan have been provided for in the 2015 operating budget. These costs are up to \$45,000 and include a user/non-user survey, focus groups and other consultation with users and non-users, meeting and focus group facilitation, and online and print communications.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

## DECISION HISTORY

At its June 22, 2015 meeting, the Library Board approved the report *Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019: Draft Priorities and Consultation Plan*, and directed staff:

- *to implement the Consultation Plan and report to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee in late September on the results of the public consultation and how the results will be incorporated into the strategic plan; and*
- *to report back to the next Strategic Planning Committee on the measurement of outcomes with respect to the Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019, including KPI's, targets and the creation of a Board reporting tool, i.e. a scorecard, dashboard.*

<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2015/jun22/13a-spssc-strategic-plan-2016-2019-draft-priorities-and-consultation-plan.pdf>

## COMMENTS

This report provides an update on the results of public and stakeholder consultation on Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019 and the ways in which these results have

been incorporated into the draft priorities and outcomes for the strategic plan. The report provides a summary of the consultation and input to date and outcomes and outlines the next steps to complete the plan. With consultation still underway, it is important to note that this is an interim report. Recommended priorities will be finalized and presented at the next Strategic Planning Steering Committee meeting for consideration.

### **Draft Priorities and Outcomes (Attachment 2):**

At its June 22, 2015 meeting, the Library Board approved three overarching themes and twelve priorities as a framework for consultation for the strategic plan. Results of consultation reinforced these themes and priorities. As a result of input from the Library Board, residents, stakeholders and staff about the service changes they would like to see, the following changes were made:

- the three themes and 12 priorities were focused and prioritized into five broad priority statements;
- the language was revised to be outcome-focused and resonate with residents and stakeholders; and,
- sample strategies, outcomes, and sample indicators were added to describe the priority.

Draft priorities and outcomes are included in Attachment 2. The five draft priority areas for 2016 - 2019 are:

1. Improving Access, Increasing Awareness;
2. Advancing Digital Literacy and Inclusion;
3. Expanding Learning Opportunities, Building Skills and Capacity;
4. Creating Community Connections through Cultural Experiences;
5. Transforming Service Delivery.

The fifth priority positions the Library to deliver services how, when and where customers want them.

### **Results of Public Consultation to Date:**

To date, over 1,400 residents, stakeholders, and community partners have been involved in strategic plan consultation along with over 200 staff members and Union representatives as summarized in Attachment 1. The chart includes initiatives completed, those in progress and upcoming events.

Major activities and initiatives to date include:

- an online and in-branch survey;
- stakeholder roundtables with representatives from community agencies and organizations from across the city;
- a consultation website featuring research themes and information about consultation events;
- user and non-user “Branch Champion” focus groups;
- staff meetings and focus groups.

To understand residents’ needs and priorities for library service, in addition to input at strategic plan consultations, staff also carefully reviewed the results of consultation on City

initiatives, including *TO Prosperity* (the City of Toronto's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy), *Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020*, ongoing feedback from library users and the results of public consultation conducted for the plan.

**Overarching comments from public consultation:**

Residents recognize Toronto Public Library's contribution to the quality of life in Toronto and are concerned about:

- poverty and income inequality;
- job insecurity and youth employment;
- the successful settlement and integration of newcomers;
- Toronto's role in a complex, global society;
- population density, overcrowding and the lack of public space within the city;
- lack of quality public infrastructure and its accessibility;
- the aging population; the quality of life the city offers to older and vulnerable residents;
- the stressful, busy urban environment and the impact on families;
- support for those living with mental health issues and challenges;
- social isolation, lack of connection and community.

**Residents place high value on library services, however the service could be enhanced through:**

- more awareness of service offerings;
- more personalized service options across traditional and new service channels;
- easier and more convenient access for branch and virtual users;
- programs and resources equitably available across branches and communities;
- increased consistency, reliability and quality in some service areas;
- innovative uses of technology to expand access and efficiency.

**PRIORITY #1: Improving Access, Increasing Awareness**

**We will increase awareness, improve convenience and remove barriers to use so that Torontonians have easy access to the library services they need and want, when, where, and how they want them.**

**Responds to:**

- lack of awareness of the range of service options at TPL that are relevant and of value to residents;
- fast pace of busy urban life where time is a premium;
- demand for barrier-free, personalized recommendations and service options;
- levels of poverty among Toronto's residents and communities; the impact of fines and fees;
- changing patterns of work, study and school requiring longer service hours and new service models.

**Consultation comments:**

- “To have a ‘history’ option in my account, in order to be able to re-borrow books or other material I loved and don't remember the exact title. Also to have a ‘to read/to borrow’ option for material I am thinking of using in the future.”
- “Publicize your services better. Many people don't know about them. Especially the online services and resources available.”
- “Advertise your services all over the neighbourhood so everyone is more aware of what a valuable service the Library provides.”
- “I don't think a lot of people know where the library in my community is unless they're actively looking for it. More promotion of the locations if it's tucked away.
- “Five cent fines for overdue children's books would help families; e.g. TTC is free for kids under 12 years’ old.”
- “Late fees can be a real problem for seniors and those in chronically poor health. They are afraid to borrow books because they are not sure they will be able to return them on time, so they don't bother. Perhaps fees could be waived in some cases?”
- “Longer, more standardized hours including Sundays.”
- “Be open for more/longer hours to allow all groups - schoolchildren, working adults, retirees, caregivers and babies etc. to make full use of the library.”
- “Increase the accessibility of library space for community meetings.”

**PRIORITY #2: Advancing Digital Literacy and Inclusion**

**We will serve as Toronto’s public access point for technology, digital services and expertise. We actively promote and enable digital inclusion through access, training and networks supporting Torontonians in full participation in our digital future.**

**Responds to:**

- users’ expectations for access to new and emerging technology and training;
- access to technology is an essential requirement of daily life;
- growing trend to e-government and delivering services online requiring all residents to have access;
- importance of technology and digital skills to succeed in the global knowledge economy;
- role of new technology in competitiveness and efficiency;
- cost of bandwidth and access in Toronto.

**Consultation comments:**

- “Exploring new avenues of service is great (e.g. 3D printing, self-publishing, multi-media equipment). You don't have to provide the services at every branch, but knowing that at some major branch I can get access to these things is empowering.”
- “Maintain your budget to keep public computers and printers in good repair.”
- “Provide more access to free computer and Internet use.”
- “Laptops for patrons to borrow in-library is a good idea as are e-readers for temporary loan periods.”

- “To re-imagine - and fund - a space where ‘community hub’ and ‘technology’ intersect in a way that supports community interaction and supports the way people live now with technology.”

### **PRIORITY #3: Expanding Learning Opportunities, Building Skills and Capacity**

**We will expand self-directed and lifelong learning opportunities so that Torontonians can build new skills and literacies and can compete in the global knowledge economy. Through targeted service programs, Toronto’s children and youth are positioned for future success.**

#### **Responds to:**

- readiness to learn upon school entry is a marker for future academic success;
- income disparity in Toronto impacts learning opportunities;
- Ontario is an innovation economy where new ideas are vital to the province’s long-term success;
- new work models create new requirements for open, self-directed, collaborative, experiential and lifelong learning access for all ages, platforms and locations;
- the literacy skills required for success in the 21st century are expanding to include print literacy, numeracy, information and digital literacy, media and visual literacy and financial literacy.

#### **Consultation comments:**

- “E-learning tools/webinars to allow access to more people.”
- “Extend your offerings to things that aren't feasible for the average family household. Offer courses to learn new things...TPL can do a great many things to improve the community through better learning experiences, providing unattainable resources, offering learning centers to gain new skills.”
- “Keep and enhance programs to keep young people interested and engaged in learning, exploring and sharing good literature and fact-based written information sources.”
- “More online learning resources along the lines of those currently taught in workshops/on site (digital media, business planning, etc.).”
- “Host more programming to teach literacy skills - financial literacy, business literacy, technical literacy.”

### **PRIORITY #4: Creating Community Connections through Cultural Experiences**

**We will strengthen community connections by expanding access to a broad range of cultural experiences, locally and city-wide. Torontonians will have expanded access to cultural opportunities that foster innovation, creativity, cross-cultural understanding and an enriched quality of life.**

#### **Responds to:**

- residents’ love of reading, literary culture, and connecting with authors and other readers;

- Toronto Public Library's pre-eminent role in promoting Canada and Ontario's authors and publishers;
- maintaining and growing a vibrant cultural sector in Toronto;
- equitable access to local cultural opportunities throughout the city that reflect the rich diversity of heritage and experience in neighbourhoods across the City;
- cultural literacy is considered an essential skill for success in a diverse, global society and economy;
- increasing demand for space for cultural and creative activities for local and emerging artists;
- maintaining and growing a vibrant and successful cultural sector in Toronto and Ontario.

#### **Consultation Comments:**

- "Keep building a diverse collection -- diverse in the sense of different media, different formats, in different languages, and make it as accessible as possible."
- "Be a cultural presence in the neighbourhood. Create a welcoming place for people to meet, engage, explore, learn and experience arts and culture together as a community."
- "Make the Library part of the community by introducing classes or groups that will help members to create art. Not just painting. Teach or show members how for example to create a piece of art with mixed media."
- "The Library can organize more cultural events with focus on reading and sharing materials about different countries and cultures."
- "Increase youth + art opportunities! Create more workshops and bring more artists into libraries in an accessible, structured manner. Weekly workshops are a haven."
- "It would be nice to see libraries operating as community hubs. Providing services for everyone in the community. Much of this is already occurring in our libraries. Toronto libraries have a rich collection of resources available for everyone in our society. Ideally this needs to be expanded."

### **PRIORITY #5: Transforming Service Delivery**

**We will grow organizational capacity, increase our capacity and evolve our culture to transform our service delivery to ensure customers get library services services how, when and where our customers want or need them. Torontonians will benefit from a vibrant, revitalized, and digitally enabled, creative and efficiently managed library service.**

#### **Responds to:**

- the need for the organization to be innovative, nimble and responsive to drive achievement of shared organizational outcomes;
- the need to build organizational and staff capacity to deliver services digitally; and,
- building leadership skills at all levels in the organization.

#### **Consultation Comments:**

- "Provide a collaborative environment for staff to provide better customer service."

- “If we are trying to be innovative [for our customers], we need to innovate our internal processes and systems.”
- “In the future can there be more opportunities for feedback? Create surveys where employees can respond to questions asked.”
- “We all are TPL. Let’s work together.”

## **Next Steps**

Staff will complete the following steps to move toward approval of the strategic plan:

- complete the public consultation using the draft priorities and outcomes;
- refine the service strategies and develop outcomes and indicators;
- present the final version of the plan to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and Board in December;
- develop a communication and implementation plan;
- create a 2016 work plan to advance the priorities and outcomes with measurable targets and outcomes.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Vickery Bowles  
City Librarian

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Summary of Consultation to Date  
Attachment 2: Draft Priorities, Outcomes and Sample Strategies