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To: Toronto Public Library Board – May 10, 2004

From: City Librarian

Subject: **Annual Performance Measures 2003, Five-Year Trends, and Strategic Plan Key Achievements and Impacts 2000 – 2003**

Purpose:

To provide the Toronto Public Library Board with an overview of the 2003 annual performance measures, five-year trends, and key achievements and impacts from the 2000 - 2003 Strategic Plan.

Funding Implications and Impact Statement:

Not applicable.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board receive the report on *Annual Performance Measures 2003, Five-Year Trends, and Strategic Plan Key Achievements and Impacts 2000 – 2003* for information.

Comments

In comparison to other American cities of comparable size, Toronto Public Library continues to exhibit strong performance with the highest circulation and visits of any other public library system in 2002 (the latest year that comparative data is available) despite having the fifth highest population. There are no Canadian public library systems serving a similar population base.

How Toronto Public Library Compares

Ranking (Population)	Library Systems /Population Served	Total Circulation	Ranking (Circulation)	Total Visits	Ranking (Visits)
5	Toronto Public Library 2,481,494	29,224,857	1	18,181,092	1
1	Los Angeles Public Library 3,694,820	13,090,726	5	12,312,418	4
2	County of Los Angeles Public Library 3,491,500	15,800,870	3	12,253,600	5
3	New York Public Library 3,313,573	15,097,886	4	13,210,875	3
4	Chicago Public Library 2,896,016	7,296,588	7	N/A	N/A
6	Brooklyn Public Library 2,465,326	11,451,756	6	8,623,829	6
7	Queens Borough Public Library 2,229,379	16,803,725	2	16,320,753	2
8	Houston Public Library 1,953,631	6,085,583	8	4,773,461	7
Canadian Comparison	Calgary Public Library 904,987	12,387,225		5,275,530	
	Ottawa Public Library 790,000	7,601,022		5,245,136	
	Vancouver Public Library 577,772	9,200,161		6,050,649	

Comparative Data is for 2002 taken from "Public Library Data Survey 2003"

2003 Performance Measures for Toronto Public Library

Activities	2003	2002	% change
Circulation	28,667,470	29,224,857	-1.9
Visits	16,595,318	18,181,092	-8.7
In-Library Use	9,580,377	10,412,149	-8.0
Information Requests	7,332,747	8,378,467	-12.5
Holds Filled	3,675,696	3,427,356	7.2
Holds Placed	5,049,941	4,727,734	6.8
Database Searches	9,987,771	2,947,128	238.9
Virtual Visits	17,065,293	13,609,751	25.4

Toronto Public Library continued to introduce service enhancements in 2003 including:

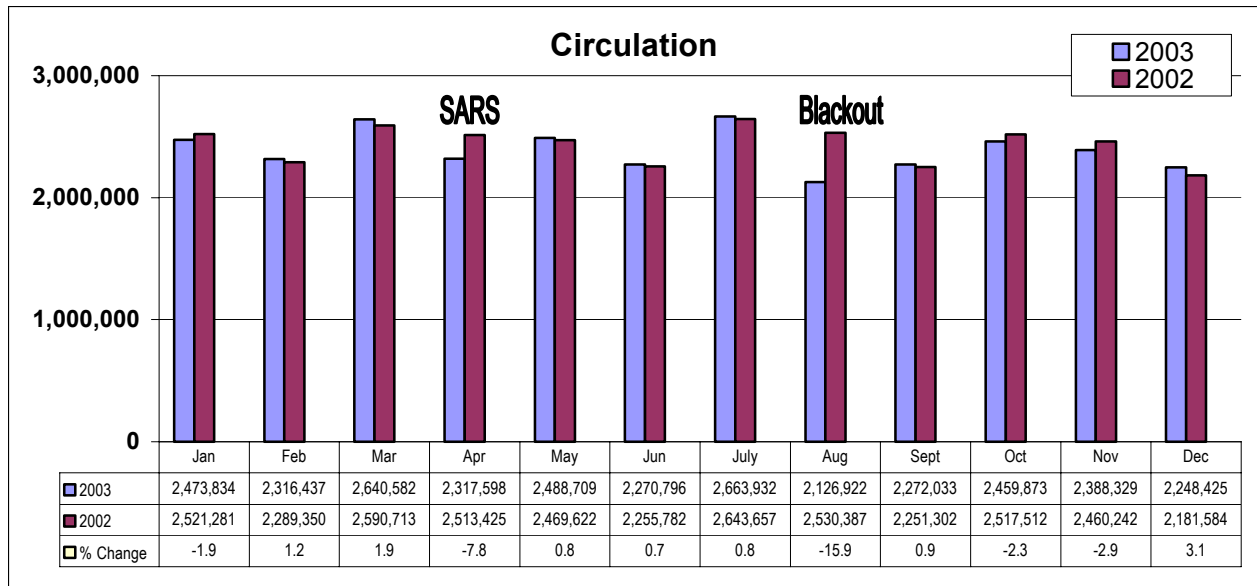
- the reconstruction of Maria A. Shchuka District Branch, the continued revitalization of Toronto Reference Library, and the relocation of Bayview Neighbourhood Branch;
- a new Le@rning Centre at Maria A. Shchuka Library for hands on computer instruction;
- new multipurpose library cards for coinless copying;
- the All-In-One-Search tool which allows users to search for items in licensed databases (including magazines, newspapers and encyclopedias) and the Virtual Reference Library (Internet sites) with one search;
- 11 new licensed databases accessible in library and from home, school or work;
- Reserve-A-Computer on-line booking system for library computers;
- introduction of a new Internet gateway, Ontario History Quest, designed to support the history and social studies curriculum for students and teachers Grade 7, 8, 10 and 12, by providing on-line access to primary source material in partnership with the Archives Ontario and City of Toronto; and
- numerous author readings, speakers' series, exhibits.

In addition, Toronto Public Library's innovative partnerships with many private and public agencies increased awareness of targeted library services. Initiatives included:

- Treehouse TV segments marketing Library services to children;
- promotion of Library events in the Toronto Star's *Brand New Planet* a weekly newspaper written for the 9-14 age group available in Library branches;
- Kiwanis Community Storytime Program providing outreach in low income neighbourhoods; and
- continuation of the Kindergarten Registration Campaign.

The year 2003, however, was a very difficult year for Toronto. The SARS outbreaks and the power blackout in August impacted all businesses and organizations in the City. As a direct result, all of the Library's performance measures linked to branch visits experienced decreases. These include circulation, Library visits, information requests and in-library use of materials. In contrast, electronics services increased, as these services are accessible outside the Library. Complete details for each branch are included in Attachment 1: *Summary Statistics January-December 2003* and details of electronic services activity are included in Attachment 2: *Summary Statistics – Electronic Services January-December 2003*.

The chart below compares monthly circulation in 2002 and 2003. In April, circulation fell by 7.8 percent as a result of the SARS outbreak and by 15.9 percent in August because of the five-day closure for the blackout. These two months account for the entire decline in circulation in 2003. Circulation actually increased, although modestly, in six of twelve months. As 2003 was such an atypical year, it is more meaningful to look at five-year trends in activity levels.



Five-Year Trends

Overall, Toronto Public Library has experienced an upward trend in use in the past five years reflecting the strong demand for library services by Toronto residents. Overall activity (as defined by combining circulation, in-library use, information requests and virtual visits) increased by 1.7 percent between 2002 and 2003 despite it being an atypical year. However, within that growth, patterns of use are gradually changing. The most pronounced trend has been increased usage of electronic services. In the future, some service areas are expected to continue to have high growth (all performance measures related to electronic services), other areas will show stable or moderate growth (circulation, holds placed, programs and visits), while some service areas will have declining usage (in-person information requests and in-library use of materials).

By examining activity levels for the past five years (1999-2003) including the months in 2003 not impacted by SARS or the blackout, it is possible to project activity trends.

Services Experiencing High Growth

Virtual Visits:

The number of virtual visits has increased by almost ten fold in the last five years (1,365 percent). This increase reflects a fundamental shift to seeking information through the Internet, which is expected to continue. The Library has responded to the importance of the Internet as an information source by offering more services electronically. Electronic services can be accessed in the Library or from home, school or work. Enhancements include a new version of the on-line catalogue, subject gateways and digital collections in the Virtual Reference Library and an increased number of licensed databases. The Library has promoted these services and as a result expanded the user base. With the introduction of *RAMP* - the on-line gateway for teens and the redesign of the Virtual Reference Library in 2004, and the continuing popularity of the online catalogue, it is anticipated that the number of virtual visits will continue to grow.

Services Experiencing Moderate or Stable Growth

Circulation and Holds:

Over the past five years, circulation increased 13.6 percent. 2003 is the only year when circulation declined. This is directly related to SARS and the five-day closure during the power blackout in August. Had this not occurred, it is anticipated that circulation would have increased modestly. Although 2003 was an anomaly, the rate of growth in circulation is slowing down and appears to be leveling off.

Over the past five years, holds (material requested by users) increased by 132 percent. The introduction of an integrated on-line catalogue provided customers with access to a database of over 10.5 million items and the capability to place holds from home, school or work. This popular service experienced very high growth in the first four years after it was introduced placing considerable pressure on staff resources. In 2003, the rate of growth slowed to a more manageable 6.8 percent. It is anticipated that the service will experience this level of increase over the next few years.

The circulation of multilingual materials has increased by 43 percent in the past four years (five-year trends are not available). The percentage of overall circulation that multilingual materials represent has increased from 11 percent to 14 percent. It is anticipated both these trends will continue; multilingual circulation will increase and represent a growing proportion of overall circulation. Usage levels reflect the changing demographics of Toronto.

Programs:

Overall attendance at Library programs has increased by 7.2 percent over the past five years. Children represent 85 percent of overall attendance, adults 11 percent and teens 4 percent. The last strategic plan focused on increasing reading support programs for children. There has been a 68 percent increase in attendance in these programs from 2000 - 2003 as a result of this focus.

Visits:

As a five-year trend, visits to the Library have increased by only 1 percent, however this figure is misleading. Between 1999 and 2002 visits increased by 11 percent. The impact of SARS and the five-day closure eliminated the gain experienced in the first four years. Had it been a more typical year, it is anticipated that visits, like circulation, would have remained at 2002 levels or experienced modest growth.

Services Experiencing Static or Declining Usage

In-Library Use of Material:

In-library use of material (print and audio visual) has declined by 17.2 percent over the past five years, as many reference materials are now available in electronic format. Although 2003 was the single largest decline in five years, 2003 exaggerated an existing trend.

Information Requests:

The number of in person information requests has declined by 13.6 percent over the past five years. This decline is attributable to a number of factors including an increase in the amount of information available electronically, access to the combined catalogue, giving users the capability to place holds from home, and increased emphasis on user education initiatives enabling users to become more self sufficient. It is anticipated that this trend will continue as more resources are devoted to user education.

Strategic Plan Key Achievements 2000 - 2003

The year 2003 is the final year of Toronto Public Library's current strategic plan *Creating the Future: Treasuring the Past*, the first for the amalgamated Library system. The plan was developed through extensive consultation with the public and Library staff. It introduced a vision, mission and service values for the organization. Initiatives were organized under each of the plan's four broad pillars: supporting children and youth, developing collections and services, enhancing the branch network in recognition of the Library's role as community cornerstone and building electronic services. The plan was accompanied by a detailed three-year work plan.

Accomplishments of the plan have been presented to the Library Board annually with the performance measures, as there are strong linkages between the two. As 2003 was the final year of the plan, a three-year summary is included in *Attachment 3: Strategic Plan Key Achievements and Impacts 2000 - 2003*. Major accomplishments are listed below under each of the pillars of the plan.

Begin with Children and Youth

In response to an increased number of children in the city, the rate of child poverty and public input, the first pillar of the strategic plan focused on building and promoting services to children. A primary goal was the promotion of reading to children. 185,000 TD Summer Reading Club packages were made available to Toronto's children and over 30,000 kindergarten children were encouraged to register for a Library card. As a result, the number of children registering for a Library card increased by 13 percent and circulation of children's materials increased 11 percent.

A second goal was to support children in learning to read. The number of locations offering reading support programs including Leading to Reading (school year and summer) and Homework Clubs doubled. Over 8,500 children received intensive one-on-one support in enhancing their reading skills. An indirect benefit was the considerable expansion in volunteer and summer employment opportunities for youth offered by the Library.

A third goal was to extend outreach to targeted groups of children. English Can Be Fun, a program offering support in learning English to newcomer children was expanded from 12 to 23 locations reaching over 1,974 children. Children in families receiving social assistance were reached through the Toronto Social Services Kids@Computers Scholarship Program which provide children with a new computer. The Library's role is to provide an introduction to the electronic services offered by the Library. Over 4,000 children benefited from the program over three years.

Although services to children received primary emphasis, youth were reached through the high school outreach campaign promoting use of the Library's on-line services to students in Grade 11. Over 33,000 students and 3,500 teachers participated in the program contributing to a boost in virtual visits by 210 percent in the years the program ran. A second focus was increasing youth involvement in planning Library services. Youth Advisory Groups were expanded across the City.

The Best in Collections and Services

Expanding collections was a key message resulting from public consultation on the strategic plan. The Library Board was successful in increasing the Library's collections budget by 12 percent from \$13.5 million in 2000 to \$15 million in 2003. To provide better access to new and popular materials, browsing collections of materials were introduced. Large collections are available at five locations and smaller collections at twenty-five locations. Material in the collections is not used to fill holds.

Improving access to Library collections was another key issue emerging from public consultation on the strategic plan. To address this issue a substantial capital investment was made in the Library's on-line catalogue. The content of the catalogue was improved through the removal of over 500,000 duplicate records and an enhanced user interface was introduced. Both initiatives make it easier for users to find material and place holds.

Access to multilingual materials was improved through the introduction of large resource collections in locations in close proximity to communities who use them and smaller deposit collections (regularly refreshed from materials in resource collections) in satellite locations to extend geographic access.

A number of initiatives and events promoted reading and literary culture collections. The Library hosted five authors-in-residence; over 900 people participated by submitting manuscripts, and attending writing workshops and related events. Readers' advisory services were enhanced through the production of several booklists available on-line and in-print including *Great Reads* and *The Canadian Experience*. Staff improved their skills through attendance at a number of reader's advisory workshops and previews of forthcoming offerings by Canadian publishers and distributors.

With amalgamation, responsibility for TPL's special collection was centered in the Research and Reference branches. Many initiatives were undertaken to build and improve access to the collections. Over 100,000 pages of archival material were digitized including early Toronto city directories. Fifteen exhibits in the TD Gallery showcased the Library's holdings.

Services for newcomers were established city-wide with the extension of ESL classes in partnership with the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board. TPL entered into a key partnership with SEPT (Settlement and Education Partnership in Toronto). With funding by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the program places settlement workers from a variety of agencies in schools during the school year and in libraries and community centres in the summer. The number of branches participating almost doubled from 15 to 29 with over 5,143 newcomers receiving settlement information in many languages and an introduction to the public library.

Your Local Library: The Community Cornerstone

A key theme emerging from the consultation on the first strategic plan was the vital importance of local branches to neighbourhoods. During the life of the plan, the Library Board was successful in increasing its capital budget from \$6.4 million in 2000 to \$9.6 million in 2003, with a recognition from the City that a \$10 million annual capital budget is required to address the Library's ongoing state of good repair requirements.

As a result of the improved capital budget, 68 branches received upgrades including flooring, painting, shelving, roofing or building systems improvements. In addition three branches were reconstructed: Maria A. Shchuka, Eatonville and Leaside and two were relocated, Bayview and Black Creek. Local communities were consulted on all changes through meetings and open houses. A customer feedback form was introduced in Library branches and on the website.

The first two floors of the Toronto Reference Library were renovated to include the Toronto Star Newspaper Room, the Digital Design Studio, the Information Commons and the TD Gallery.

Bookmobile service was expanded into the East and West, with an increase in stops from 24 to 32.

The Virtual Library

The greatest growth in services and usage occurred in TPL's virtual services, which includes the provision of computers and high speed Internet access in Library branches, access to electronic information through licensed databases and free computer instruction.

The number of computers available for public use was increased substantially at all branches. With the Y2K rollout, a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and funding from Industry Canada's Urban Community Access Program, standardized computer equipment was introduced. The Toronto Reference Library introduced the Digital Design Studio and the Information Commons. Five computer classrooms were added as part of branch renovations to extend access citywide. Overall the number of public access computers increased from 1,117 in 2000 to 1,824 in 2003, a 63 percent increase; of those, 1,325 offered Internet access in 2003.

The Virtual Reference Library offers access to subject portals, which guides users to the best sites on the Internet. Several gateways were added including *Ontario History Quest*, *Canadian Theatre Record*, *SmallBizXpress*, *Historicity: Toronto Then and Now* and *NewsConnect*. Usage of these gateways has grown significantly and the Library has received numerous awards for them.

The number of licensed databases increased from 40 to 78 with standard offerings at the Research and Reference, district and neighbourhood libraries.

Access to the Library's electronic services was substantially enhanced with the introduction of the All-in-One-Search which allows users to search licensed databases (magazines, newspapers, and encyclopedias) and the Virtual Reference Library with one search, and our virtual reference service, that provides live on-line help from librarians.

To support the Library's strategic directions

Over the past four years the Toronto Public Library Foundation and Friends groups have raised \$6.6 million dollars through donations, sponsorships and grants. Much of this funding directly supported initiatives in the strategic plan including targeted programs and services for children and seniors and special collections and electronic services. The number of volunteer hours contributed by residents of Toronto directed toward these initiatives has increased substantially. The newly amalgamated Library system has built its profile in the city through media, marketing campaigns and participation in literary events.

In 2003, TPL helped the SARS recovery effort through the retention of the ALA/CLA Conference, which attracted 17,500 attendees and injected \$30 million into Toronto's economy.

Conclusion:

Performance measures and key achievements from the Strategic Plan in 2003 illustrate that Toronto Public Library continues to be one of the largest and busiest public library systems in the world and, despite setbacks in 2003, it is anticipated that this trend will continue.

The Library's first strategic plan *Creating the Future: Treasuring the Past* significantly advanced services in priority areas identified in the strategic plan and resulted in a positive impact on many of the Library's key performance and usage measures.

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List of Attachments:

Attachment 1: Summary Statistics, January – December 2003
Attachment 2: Summary Statistics – Electronic Services, January – December 2003
Attachment 3: Strategic Plan Key Achievements and Impacts 2000-2003