



To: Toronto Public Library Board – December 9, 2002

From: City Librarian

Subject: **French Language Services and Collections Plan**

Purpose:

To inform the Toronto Public Library Board of the plans to improve French language collections and services at Toronto Public Library.

Funding Implications and Impact Statement:

Library collections and services are funded through the operating budget. There are no additional financial implications to this report.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board receive the *French Language Services and Collections Plan* report for information.

Background:

Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan 2000-2003 identified the need to expand city-wide access to French language collections and services. The result of this strategic plan initiative is the *French Language Services and Collections Plan* completed in November 2002 (see Report Summary – Attachment 1).

Public and staff were consulted through interviews, user surveys, and meetings. The public consultation process included interviews with community agencies and resources such as the Comité français de la ville de Toronto, Canadian Parents for French, Le Théâtre français de Toronto, Alliance française as well as the Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Catholic District School Board and the French School Board.

Recently, staff met with two representatives of the Comité français de la ville de Toronto to discuss concerns about French language collections and services at Toronto Public Library.

Comments:

The French language has special significance in Canada as one of our official languages. This status has fostered in many parents a desire to have their children learn French through courses or by sending their children to French immersion or French language schools. There are approximately 21,000 students enrolled in French immersion and French language schools across Toronto.

There is a diverse population of French speakers living in Toronto. In addition to those who were born in Canada, there are recent immigrants from countries where French is the official language and from others where French is spoken, but not the official language. The 1996 census indicates that there are approximately 55,000 Toronto residents who have knowledge of French. In 2000, immigration statistics for recent arrivals in Toronto indicate that approximately 1500 people who speak French settled in Toronto.

The current status of TPL's French language collections and activity levels are as follows:

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|---------------------------|-----------|
| • Current Collection Size | 157,455 |
| • 2001 Circulation | 249,980 |
| • 2002 Budget | \$183,705 |

In an effort to gather as much information as possible about the needs of this diverse community, a consultation process was launched in December 2001 with a presentation to the Comité français de la ville de Toronto. Consultations continued into Spring 2002. Responses from the consultation process, collections data, activity levels, demographic and linguistic data, and school statistics were analyzed with a recommended plan of action developed throughout Summer-Fall 2002.

The result is a comprehensive report that provides a framework to improve French language services and collections at Toronto Public Library (see Report Summary – Attachment 1.) The recommendations in the plan are categorized into four areas: Resources, Collections, Services and Outreach, Marketing and Communication.

Highlights of the plan include:

- assigning responsibility for coordinating French services to a bilingual librarian at TPL;
- creating ten large French collections strategically located across Toronto to ensure access to collections with depth and currency;
- maintaining a number of small collections of French children's materials up to grade 8. Locations to be established based on community need including proximity to schools offering French programs;
- promoting French collections and services through programming, partnerships with French community agencies and schools, and developing relationships with the French media;
- translating publicity, including a summary of the French Language Services and Collections Plan;

- publishing a guide to French collections and services at TPL;
- developing a French language component of the TPL web site to identify and promote collection locations, upcoming events and programs, and links to electronic resources.

Conclusion:

As part of TPL's Strategic Plan, a comprehensive plan has been developed to improve city-wide access to French language collections and services. Staff are proceeding to implement the plan. A summary of the plan will be translated into French and distributed for comment to external contacts who participated in the consultation process. Staff will continue to work with agencies and members of the community as part of our effort to promote our collections and services and remain responsive to the communities we serve.

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List of Attachments:

Attachment 1: French Language Services and Collections Plan – Summary Report