



**Toronto Public Library  
Workers Union  
Local 4948**

Affiliated with  
CUPE and the  
Toronto & York Region  
Labour Council

**Maureen O'Reilly**  
President

**Brendan Haley**  
Vice-President

**Viveca Gretton**  
Recording Secretary

**Carmela Corrado**  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Brian Raymer**  
Toronto Reference Library

**Brandon Haynes**  
North York Central Library

**Jenna Liu**  
North Region

**Karen Smith**  
South Region

**John Puusa**  
East Region

**Karen DeSimone**  
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Via Regular Mail

April 18, 2017

Ron Carinci  
Chair, Toronto Public Library Board  
Toronto Public Library  
789 Yonge Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4W 2G8

Dear Mr. Carinci:

**RE: SWANSEA AND TODMORDEN OPEN FACILITY PILOT PROJECT**

Recently in the news, the senior management of the Toronto Public Library compared the open facility pilot project proposed for Swansea and Todmorden to a 24/7 fitness centre. May we remind you, we are a public library.

Over the last several rounds of collective bargaining, senior management and the Library Board committed to a comprehensive library service in the event of the extension of hours. (See Letter of Agreement Number 4: Re: Extended branch open hours). This letter forms part of the current collective agreement which you ratified less than a year ago.

It is our view that you are now reneging on that commitment.

You have the highest level of precarious workers in the City of Toronto. (See: City of Toronto Council Briefing Book, p. 6) One of your defenses in going forward with the pilot project is that no staff will be laid off or have their hours affected. You are diminishing the opportunities for future library workers, especially our youngest workers. This pilot project is also characterized by deprofessionalization and deskilling. Library workers are an integral part of the library service. This pilot will result in a major erosion of morale amongst the 80 classifications of trained professionals who deliver the library service now.

In light of the fact that TPL still does not have a "People Plan" almost twenty (20) years since its inception, the impact of the pilot upon staffing levels cannot be measured or quantified.

To the best of our knowledge, no one at the city is asking for this technology to be put in place. You are proposing it. You say that it is "just a pilot project". Once the city sees the potential of this to cut costs, the pressure to expand it will be enormous. Ireland started off with a pilot



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project and within a year, twenty three “staffless libraries” are now operational. (See: CUPE brief: Staffless and Open Libraries, March 2017)

TPLWU Local 4948 views the pilot project as another attempt to privatize the library service. More money will now flow to non-Canadian companies to purchase the hardware and software to implement the pilot project.

During the 2017 budget process, you did not receive your full ask for your capital budget request and your “State of Good Repair” (SOGR) was characterized by the city as in crisis. Yet, senior management has found money for this pilot project.

During the 2017 budget process, you did not receive full funding for the extension of WIFI hotspot lending which formed a key component of your Poverty Reduction Strategy. Yet, senior management has found money for this pilot project.

In addition to the reduction in service quality, the loss of library jobs and attempts to privatize the library, there are great concerns around the safety of our patrons and the vandalism of library property.

In a recent poll that TPLWU Local 4948 commissioned, (see attached: MAINSTREET Poll: Torontonians throw the book at staffless libraries) Our public said that they would not send their children or parents to a library without library staff.

This pilot will entrench a two tier library service and divide the city further along equity lines. Often, children are banned from using this type of facility for health and safety reasons.

Torontonians love their libraries and they love their library staff. We ask you to join us in advocating for reinvestment in Toronto Public Library instead of finding ways to diminish the library service. Toronto Public Library is the busiest public library in North America, and often, the world. Let us be leaders and not followers. The cost of implementing the pilot will far surpass the dollar amounts of the hardware purchased or the handful of uses this pilot will get.

Yours sincerely,

Maureen O'Reilly  
President, TPLWU Local 4948

cc. TPLWU Executive Board

**Letter of Agreement Number 4****Re: Extended branch open hours**

The parties agree that funding received for late night library service hours past 8:30 p.m. and for expanded Sunday open hours will result in amendments to Article 19 based on the following terms and conditions:

1. Permanent late night positions will be created and posted in accordance with Article 16.01. Funding for late night hours shall be used to create new full-time and part-time jobs.
2. All hours beyond 8:30 p.m. shall be voluntary. Positions for these late night hours shall be posted in accordance with Article 16 and are not subject to the regular shift selection process (Article 19.06). With regard to hours of work issues for these positions, seniority shall apply. The late night positions are Monday to Friday only.
3. Some full-time positions will be created by combining new funding with existing part-time positions.
4. Full-time and part-time (including part-time Page) employees who work any hours after 8:30 p.m. between Monday and Friday inclusive, shall be paid a premium of \$1.50 per hour. It is understood that shift premiums shall not be pyramided with overtime pay.
5. Open hours shall not extend beyond 10:00 p.m. Monday to Friday at District libraries and Research and Reference libraries. Sunday hours shall be within the bands of 12:00 p.m. (noon) to 5:00 p.m.
6. The Board will ensure that management staff will be available to be contacted during late-night service.
7. Suitable measures, including security guards, will be put in place to ensure the safety of all employees working beyond 8:30 p.m.
8. Full-time custodians in the bargaining unit may be introduced into locations with late-night hours.
9. There shall be staffing to provide reference and circulation services for all late night locations.
10. Expansion of Sunday service will be in accordance with Article 20.08 and at current rate of time and a half.
11. Any concerns arising from late night service may be discussed at Labour-Management Committee.

## Staffless and Open Libraries

March 2017

Library services have increasingly been a victim of budget cuts and a target for companies that seek to monetize their services in various ways. There is a history to trying to monetize these valued public spaces. Examples include discussion on advertising or sponsorship for commercial companies in branches or including advertising on patrons' borrowing receipts. There has also been attempts to privatize library services outright, with companies like LSSI<sup>1</sup> entering the U.S. market and running entire library systems, including managing staff.

Staffless or 'open' libraries are branches that are either operated remotely through card access and machines or branches that have regular staffing but allow special access outside regular hours (before opening, after closing or both). In either case, companies have developed both computer software systems and furniture, display, sorting and check-out furniture to service patrons.

There is recognition of this development in Ontario. Currently in Toronto, there is a proposal to open small staffless branches. Staffless or open libraries have also been noted in trade literature. In Ontario, the Southern Ontario Library Service noted the concept in their 2011 Environmental Scan for Ontario Public Libraries<sup>2</sup>, stating the following:

*Where community needs fit the service model, some libraries are investing in automated kiosks to provide access to library collections. Ottawa Public Library<sup>50</sup> has installed a kiosk to increase library reach in smaller communities, and Toronto Public Library will be installing one at Toronto's Union Station as a way to serve commuters. At a kiosk, library users can access books in the same way they might buy candy from a machine, and sometimes also pick up holds which they've ordered online. Elsewhere, 'staffless' libraries are made possible by restricting entrance by borrower card, with staff visiting regularly to restock and maintain the collection<sup>51</sup>. As part of the Ontario government's \$15 million investment in public libraries, nine public access points (called 'kiosks') have been installed in remote, northern communities, providing access to provincially funded e-resources, interlibrary loans and virtual reference<sup>52</sup>.*

The following is an introductory and cursory scan of jurisdictions that have started using staffless or open library systems, the resistance to them and some of the companies providing the service.

### **Denmark:**

Initial searches reveal that the origins of staffless or open libraries come from the Danes. Denmark has 180 open libraries (out of 450) and more are expected. The first one opened over a decade ago (2004) in Jutland with the Silkeborg branch. One of the drivers of the initiative was service to small remote locations that would have been difficult to staff. Like the Irish example below, this was done through public ministerial-level funding. The off-hour model was used at Silkeborg through radio frequency identification (RFID) and patrons could access the branch outside business hours.<sup>3</sup> Denmark is not the only Scandinavian country that is looking at this model; others in the region have also looked at implementing the concept.

### **United States:**

The U.S. has seen a spectrum of library service delivery models over decades; these can involve the private sector. In late 2016, American Libraries Magazine profiled a staffless library in Gwinnett County, Georgia, that was done in partnership with company Bibliotheca using their system Open+. In 2015, the company approached the County and pitched their open-library technology; the library is the first in North America to use the technology. The system is not new though and appears to be similar to those set up in other jurisdictions – automatic entry/exit, self-service kiosks, automatic lighting, computer stations, etc. Staffing costs were also noted as a spending pressure in the County, while at the same time there was a desire to expand branch access. This is a common pretext to moving to a different operating system – doing more with less. The pilot began at the County's Lawrenceville branch in the summer of last year. This pilot shared another characteristic of other jurisdictions, which is the branch was age-restricted to patrons aged 18 and over. There was also a one-time fee of \$5 for the pass, which gave patrons access from 8 to 10 a.m. for all the systems branches.<sup>4</sup>

### **England:**

Severe government underfunding of local services has led to crises in community services across England. One of the outcomes of this has been for Local Authorities (municipal governments) to look at cuts and one of the targets has been libraries. Local Authorities have made the decision to move to volunteer-run branches, open branches and even closures. Alan Wylie, a library worker and activist with Voices for the Library, highlighted the action over Barnet's staffless library. In that community library workers' jobs were under threat and the Local Authority wanted to move to a volunteer-run open library, which would also operate under an age restriction of 16 years of age.<sup>5</sup> Another example that underscores the cost control motivation for developing open libraries can be found in North Somerset. In the winter of 2016, the Local Authority disclosed that staff reduction and sharing of buildings in their library system would result in an estimated savings of £250,000 for five branches.<sup>6</sup> These are several examples of the pressure on library systems in the U.K. which has led to the push for staffless transformation.

### **Ireland:**

Along with those in Scandinavia and the U.K., communities in Ireland have been looking to implement open library systems. Ireland also appears to be home to some of the most inspirational resistance as well as some of the strongest challenges with the new systems. For example, in January of this year 111 memberships were suspended in County Offaly. These membership suspensions came after it was found patrons were breaking the terms of service for their library cards. The matter also only came to light following a successful access to information request by an activist group – Staff Our Libraries Community Group. Many of the issues appear to deal with branch access issues; for example, the admission of unauthorized people into the branch. The Staff Our Libraries Group also indicated that this information was suppressed when discussing the open library pilot report, which indicated no incident.<sup>7</sup>

Open libraries are being sold as a method to keep libraries open in the face of fiscal pressures. Irish Minister of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government Simon Coveney said, “There will be no closure of library branches as a result of the Open Library service.” He went on to add, “Similarly, there will be no reduction in staffing levels or staffed hours as a result of the service, either in the short or long term.” Comments like these seem to be aimed at patrons as an inoculation to less service and programming being offered in an open library.

The library workers union IMPACT have pushed back against library system restructuring (closures, restructuring and staffless systems). For example, workers have gone so far as to threaten job action over one decision to move ahead with staffless libraries. Following a pilot program that was deemed a success, staffless libraries are scheduled to open this year in 23 branches<sup>8</sup>. The Irish Times published a map and costs, available [here](#), of each of the branches.

There are examples of local councils taking a stand as well. Dublin Council, the largest city in Ireland, rejected staffless libraries for their city saying it would instead support workers and their union.<sup>9</sup>

### **Push-back**

There is resistance to the implementation of staffless libraries and other restructuring. Community groups and unions alike have banded together to demand that libraries remain community resources that require investment. The following examples are from the U.K. and Ireland, where there has been a move for significant restructuring of library services.

### **Voices for the Library:**

A coalition of groups, including UNISON (the public service union), formed to focus on libraries' services issues in the U.K. Although the coalition's [manifesto](#) is silent on open libraries, it takes a stand on public ownership, staffing, accessibility and other key tenets for which CUPE members advocate. The group's [website](#) seeks to foster a place to celebrate libraries and its staff, as well as to share patron's positive stories.<sup>10</sup>

## **UNISON:**

The large U.K. and Irish union representing public service workers has advocated for public library services – even publishing a campaign pack for members and advocates. UNISON represents about 27,000 library workers in the U.K. UNISON highlighted similar concerns as the Voices for the Library group, but is focused more on issues like privatization and non-profit and volunteer groups operating branches. UNISON also defined the problem noting that as many as 500 branches were at threat.<sup>11</sup>

## **IMPACT:**

An example of this push-back is found in the Irish union IMPACT. Below are some of the highlights from their multi-year campaign which has focused on service and job loss:

- March 2014: when the first open libraries were piloted in three locations, the union responded by calling members together for action and instructing them not to cooperate with the plans for rollout.<sup>12</sup>
- July 2016: in response to a plan that would have seen library services amalgamated in 12 counties, IMPACT threatened job action. In response, the government halted plans and agreed with the union's demand to staff vacant positions across various systems.<sup>13</sup>
- October 2016: one of the drivers of open libraries is downward pressure on funding. IMPACT and its partners were able to secure service levels and stop a branch closure in Sligo County, where the local government authority was seeking a dramatic 42% staffing reduction.<sup>14</sup>
- December 2016: the union's members overwhelmingly approved job action if necessary in response to the 23-branch expansion of staffless libraries. They union's leadership also asked any members with responsibility in the expansion not to perform those duties. "IMPACT national secretary Peter Nolan said there were also fears about health and safety protections for library users and workers. 'This is the thin end of a wedge that will lead to job losses and poorer library services. Local authorities already treat libraries as a Cinderella service and, if this goes ahead, nobody seriously believes they will resist the temptation to save more cash by replacing staffed libraries with the much more limited range of services available on a staffless basis.'"<sup>15</sup>

## **Companies:**

Even a cursory search reveals a number of companies across the world that offer an array of services for staffless libraries. The offerings range from items such as access RFID gates to full service systems. The following is a brief overview of some of the market players:

**Bibliotheca:** as the apparent industry leader, this company provides a full range of products from central back-end systems, to hardware and security for library systems.

The company was formed in 2011 out of an amalgamation of the following companies: Bibliotheca from Switzerland, Intellident from the U.K. and Integrated Technology Group. Early in 2012, Trion AG joined the company and in 2015, 3M's library company was acquired. This created a company which can offer a number of services, all with global reach. They boast offices on several continents, distributors in 70 countries, and thousands of libraries as clients. Based in New York, Chicago and Frankfurt, the company's principle owners are listed as OEP Capital Advisors LP.<sup>16</sup>

**D-Tech:** located in the U.K. and started in 2002, they are a private technology firm that got its start in library services. The company operates in the U.K. and has recently looked to enter the U.S. market and counts a New Zealand installation through a local distributor. They have a full range of products that includes staffing stations, people counters, furnishings, automated return and sorting, and self-service reservations and lending products.<sup>17</sup>

**Axiell:** headquartered in Sweden, they claim to have over 4,000 clients in various libraries around the world, including academic locations. The company services various institutions, such as museums and archives, but has a division focused on library services. The company has offices in Canada, although their library division operates only in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Ireland and the U.K. Axiell offers a variety of technology platforms for library management, as well as data management and consultant services. They are a partner of Bibliotheca for hardware.<sup>18</sup>

**Circulation Technology:** as a reminder that staffless libraries are not limited to European or U.S. markets, an initial search located a company serving Asian markets. Circulation Technology offers a variety of open library and technology products for schools and libraries. Operating out of Singapore, they are in Chinese, Taiwanese and other South Asian markets. The company offers vending machines, RFID technologies and even furniture installation and set-up.<sup>19</sup>

There are other companies that are focused solely on the technology or back-end systems of libraries. As this 'sector' develops, we could see an expansion of services offered by these companies. One of the outcomes of public policies that devolve control and constrict spending on libraries and staffing is the creation of marketplaces that companies like the above fill.

## **Conclusions:**

In this initial review, there are positive reports from patrons about their experiences with staffless libraries. However, it is difficult to read these without knowing the main drivers behind this new open-library trend. It is clear that the motivation of funders/governments was to reduce costs of library systems under their care. This most often took the form of limiting service access, whether it be through staffing or open hours. In the case of robust programs that have been rolled out, it is a combination of both of these. Notwithstanding the patron

experience, this is an effort to reduce the cost of library services. The outcomes are not completely clear yet, but there is documentation of unwanted patron behaviour in some branches. There must also be an accounting of the full extent of what has been lost on the programming and personal services side. Although conclusions cannot yet be made, this initial review raises serious questions about the trade-offs being made for these open branches. As IMPACT National Secretary Peter Nolan has said:

*"These proposals will short-change communities. There'll be no school visits, no storytelling, no help to find what you want, no security presence, and none of the hundreds of educational and artistic events that libraries provide throughout the year. Everyone will lose out, especially the elderly, students and people from disadvantaged communities and backgrounds. Meanwhile, management's own data from the initial three pilots clearly demonstrates that the vast majority of us prefer to visit our local library during core hours when expert staff are there to help."*<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lsslibraries.com/home>

<sup>2</sup> Southern Ontario Library Service. *Environmental Scan for Ontario Public Libraries*. 2011

<sup>3</sup> <http://slq.nu/?article=volume-46-no-3-2013-5>

<sup>4</sup> <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2016/11/01/biblioteca-gcpl-self-service-experiment> and <http://www.gwinnettpl.org/gwinnett-county-public-library-to-begin-self-service-access-with-launch-of-open>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/public-leaders-network/2016/oct/04/public-libraries-not-obsolete-cuts-closures-protest>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-somerset-38219337>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> thejournal.ie. Librarians say roll out of 23 staffless libraries is 'the beginning of the end' for them. Nov 16th 2016. <http://www.thejournal.ie/librarians-staffless-library-beginning-of-the-end-3083733-Nov2016>

<sup>9</sup> thejournal.ie. *Staffless libraries: 111 people had membership withdrawn in pilot libraries, one over drunkenness.* Jan 1st 2017. <http://www.thejournal.ie/staffless-libraries-membership-withdrawn-3093866-Jan2017>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.voicesforthelibrary.org.uk/about>

<sup>11</sup> <http://web.archive.org/web/20121031092259/http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19990.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.impact.ie/staffless-libraries-plan-opposed>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.impact.ie/industrial-action-threat-recedes-as-councils-effectively-abandon-library-amalgamation-plans>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.impact.ie/impact-breakthrough-for-sligo-library-services>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.impact.ie/library-workers-withdraw-cooperation-from-staffless-services>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.biblioteca.com/3/index.php/en-uk>

<sup>17</sup> <http://d-techinternational.com>

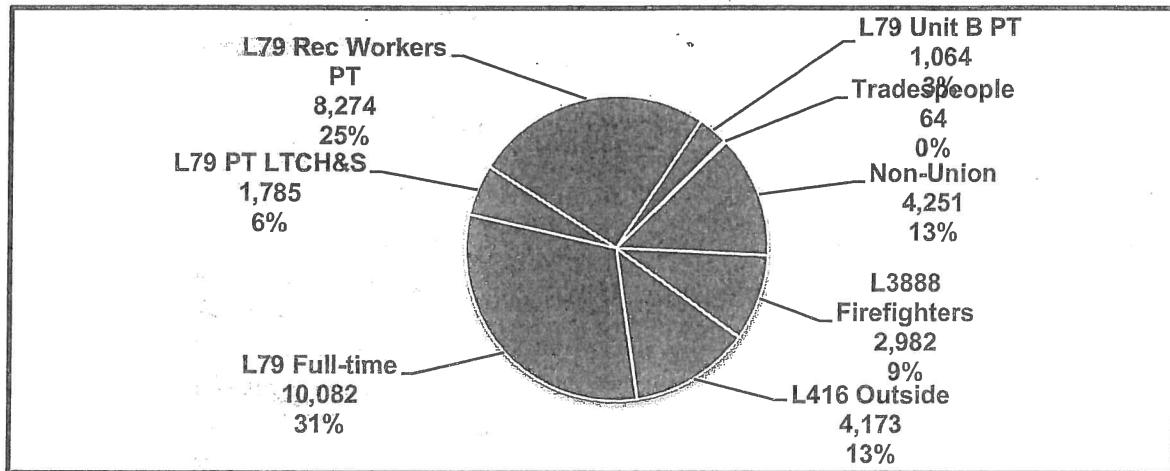
<sup>18</sup> <http://www.axiell.co.uk>

<sup>19</sup> <http://circulationtechnology.com/Circulation-Technology--Home-to-library-automation-and-library-interiors-design.php>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.impact.ie/library-workers-withdraw-cooperation-from-staffless-services>

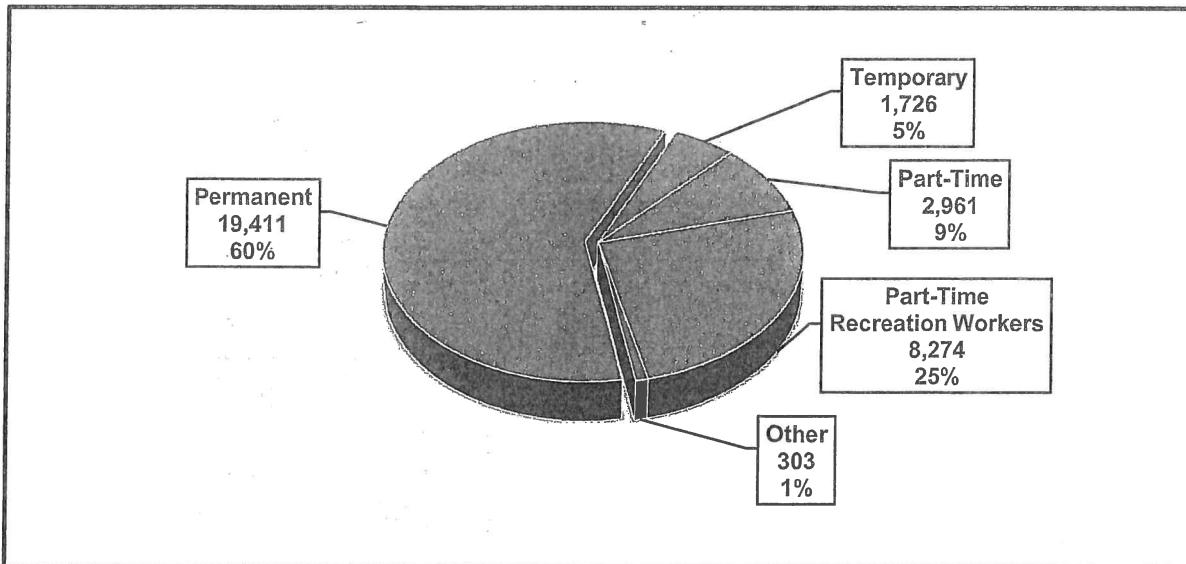
### Chart 2: Workforce Breakdown by Affiliation (2013)

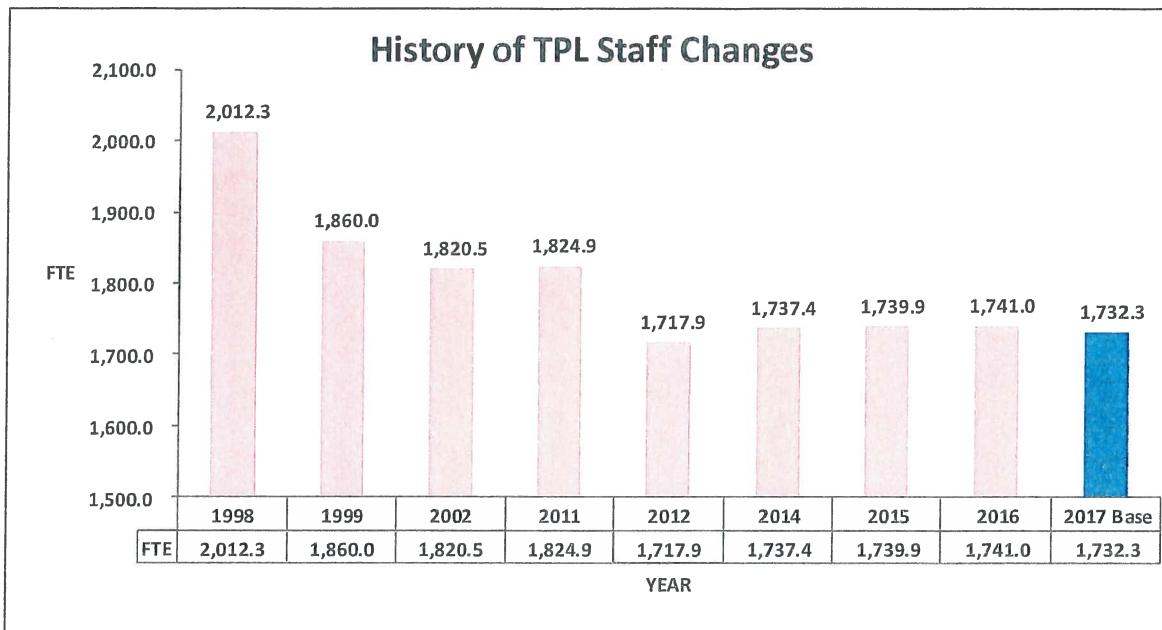
Across the Toronto Public Service, 31% of employees are full-time members of Local 79, 25% are part-time recreation worker members of Local 79, 13% are members of Local 416, 13% are non-union, and 18% fall into other groups.



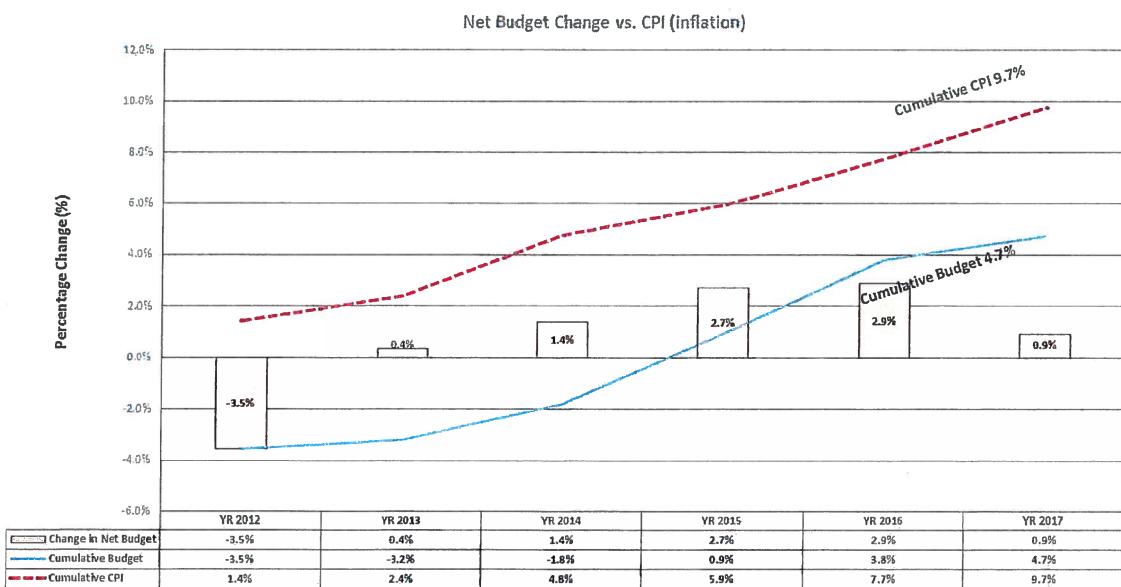
### Chart 3: Workforce Breakdown by Employee Status

60% of Toronto Public Service employees are permanent, 25% are part-time recreation workers, 9% are part time permanent, and 5% are temporary.





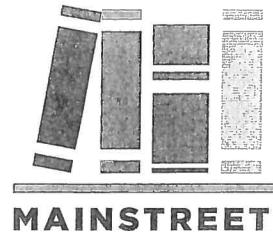
### History of TPL Budget Increases – 50% Below Inflation



As shown in the chart above, including the 2017 base budget request for a 0.9% increase, the cumulative budget increase over the last six years is 4.7%, or an average annual increase of 0.8%, which includes the cost of operating the new Fort York and Scarborough Civic Centre branches. This budget increase is less than half the rate of inflation over the same time period, as measured by the consumer price index (CPI).



Great people, great library, great city.



For immediate release  
30 March 2017

### **MAINSTREET Poll: Torontonians throw the book at staffless libraries**

Toronto -Torontonians overwhelmingly reject the idea of libraries without librarians, according to a new survey by pollster MAINSTREET Research.

The survey found that three in four respondents (73%) would not send their children or parents to a library without librarians or security staff, and more than six-in-ten (63%) would, given the chance, tell Mayor Tory to stop this idea from proceeding.

These findings emerge as the Toronto Public Library readies a pilot project to test the idea of opening two branch libraries - Swansea and Todmorden -with no on-site staff or security during early morning and late evening hours when the branches would otherwise be closed.

"A library is more than just books and bricks; it's a learning institution where important community services and programs are delivered by dedicated staff," says Maureen O'Reilly, President of the Toronto Public Library Workers Union which commissioned the survey. "I agree with the majority of people in this city - it is not possible to have good libraries without librarians."

Mainstreet found that 55% of respondents do not think it's possible to have a good library with no librarian, just 21% said it is possible, the rest were not sure.

When asked to identify their main concern with the idea, most respondents (42%) cited safety, while 16% were worried about vandalism and 12% thought theft of books and materials would be the biggest problem.

"Torontonians love our public libraries," said O'Reilly. "They are one of our city's great assets and they should be celebrated and valued with new investment, not programs such as this that will just diminish quality and services."

As awareness of the Toronto Public Library's plan for staffless libraries grows, opposition may expand and intensify. Right now, only 16% are following this issue very closely, another 21% somewhat closely, and 22% of residents are not aware of the proposal at all.

Mainstreet surveyed 2,304 adult Torontonians on March 23, 2017, using Chimera IVR technology calling through to both landlines and cell phones. A sample this size produces results that are accurate within +/- 2.02%, 19 times in 20. Regional margins of error: Etobicoke: +/- 4.38 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Scarborough: +/- 4.36 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Downtown: 3.77 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. North York: 3.93 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

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**For information or to book an interview with Maureen O'Reilly contact:**

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