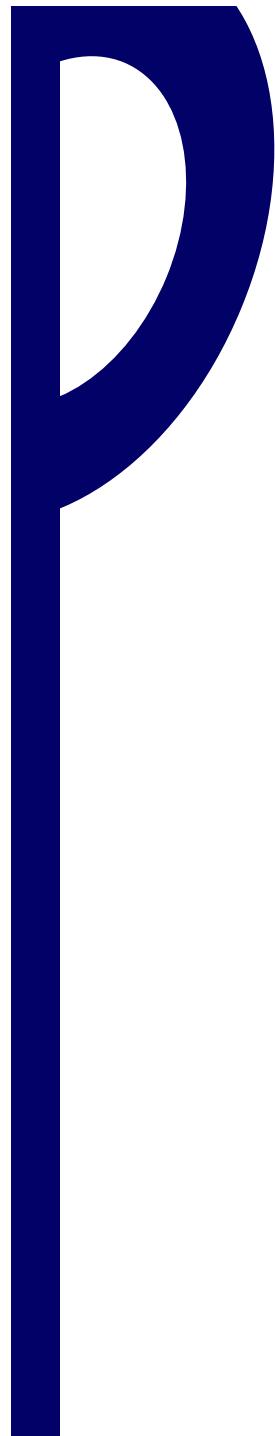


**Toronto Public Library**  
**2008 Budget Consultation Results**  
October 15, 2007



## Purpose

- To present the results from the Toronto Public Library 2008 budget public consultation that took place during September and October 2007.

# Context

- To help the City of Toronto address its 2008 budget shortfall, Toronto Public Library implemented cost containment measures for 2007, including Sunday closures at 16 branches.
- The Library Board approved public consultation on the 2008 operating budget and potential service reductions at its July 25, 2007 meeting.

# Overview of Public Consultation Process

## 1. Public Meetings

- Public meetings were held at four different library locations across the City with interpretation services available at each meeting:
  - Toronto Reference Library – September 26th
  - Malvern Branch – September 27th
  - North York Central Library – October 2nd
  - Albion Branch – October 4th
- Stakeholders and the public were notified of the meetings with flyers posted in branches, by email and through our website.

# Overview of Public Consultation Process

## 2. Survey

- A survey was conducted for 3 weeks (September 17<sup>th</sup> to October 5<sup>th</sup>)
- The survey was available in 10 different languages:
  - English
  - French
  - Chinese (Simplified & Traditional)
  - Tamil
  - Punjabi
  - Hindi
  - Urdu
  - Russian
  - Somali

## 3. General Comment Form

- A link from the library website to a feedback form was available for the public to complete.

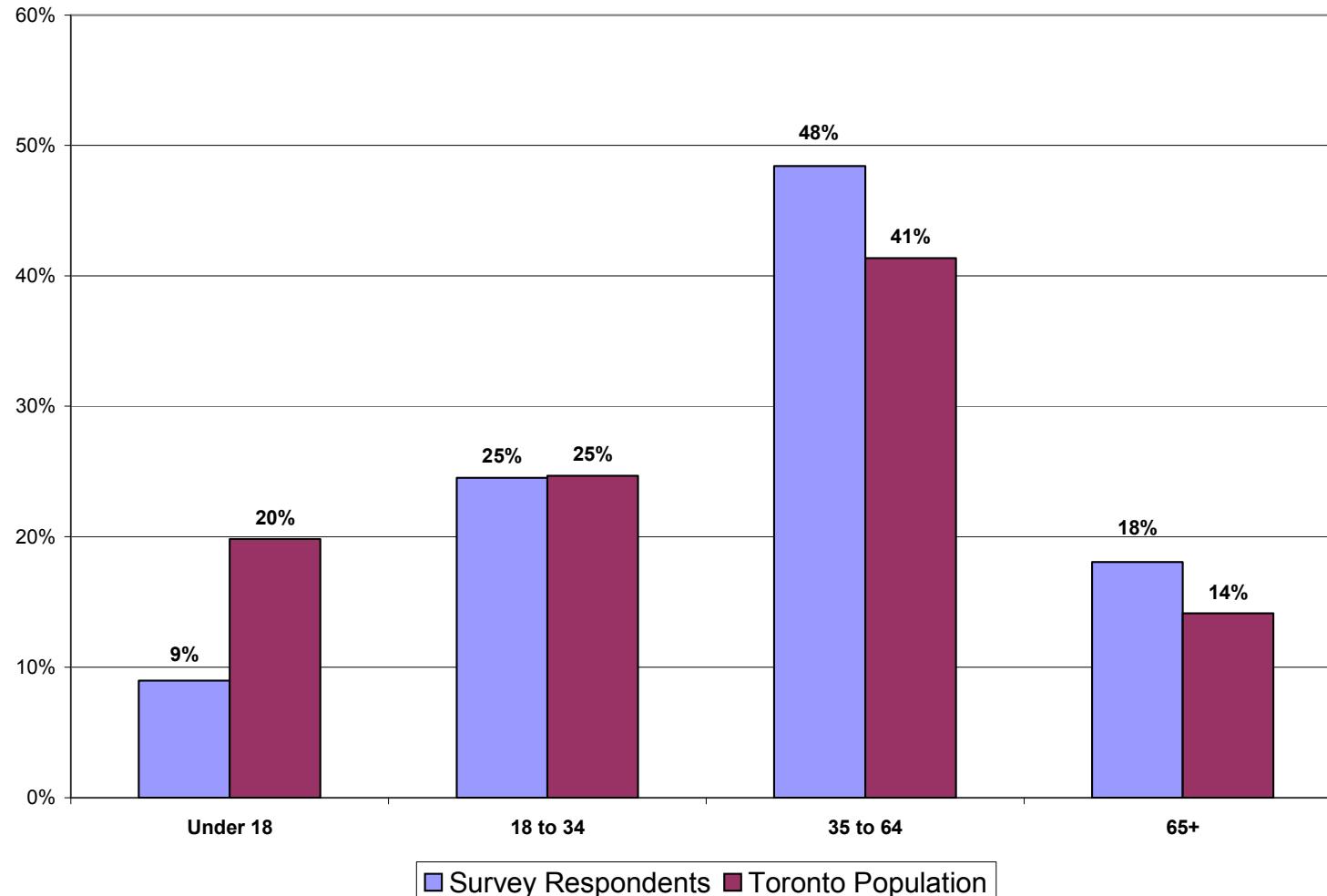
## Who Responded

- Results are based on 1,100 surveys received:
  - 81% print copy
  - 19% website
- Highest number of respondents are located in the catchment areas of:
  - North York Central Library and Bayview Branch
  - Riverdale, Queen/Saulter and Jones Branches
- Received representation from all age groups
- Approximately 70 people attended public meetings

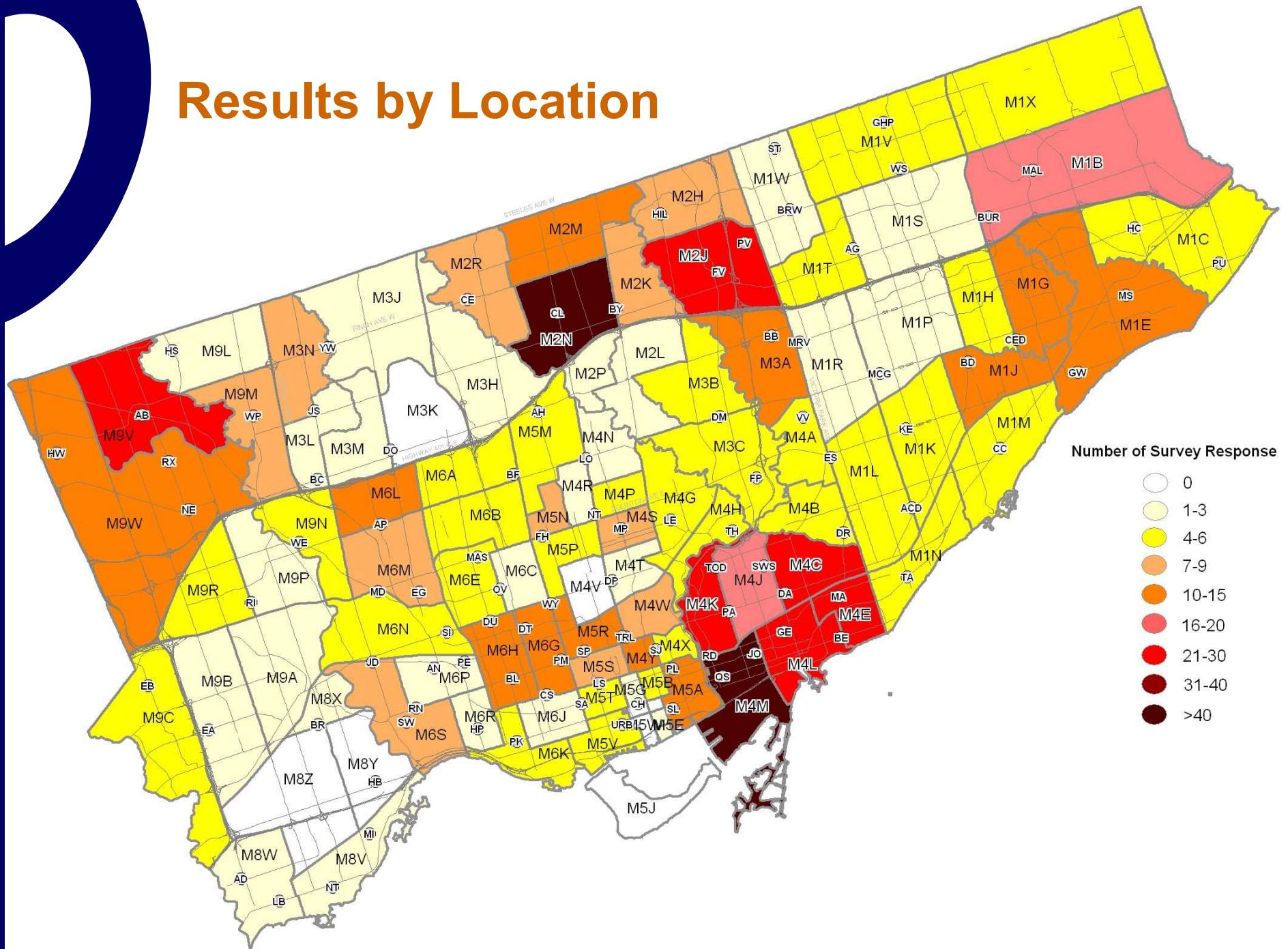
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## Results by Age

### Age of Survey Respondents



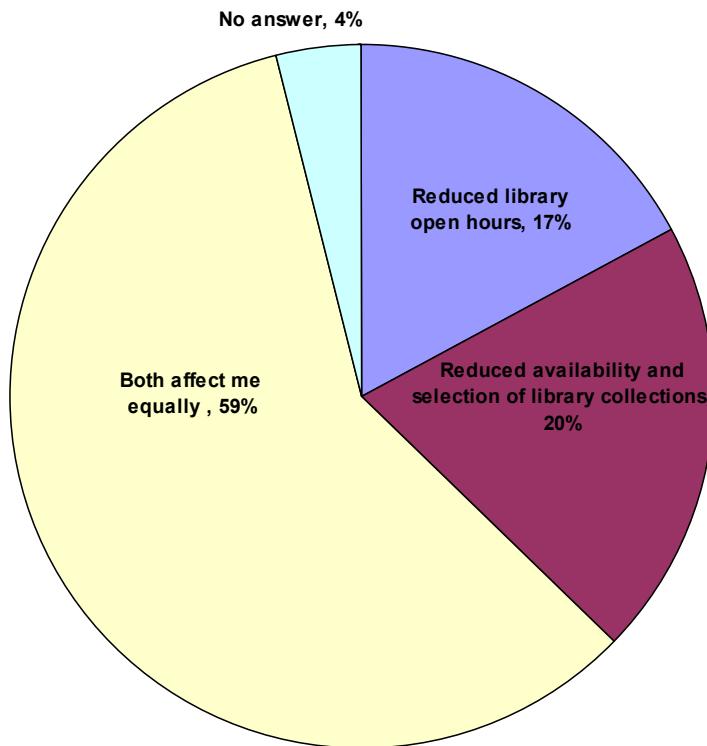
# Results by Location



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## What we Learned

- Majority of people felt that they would be impacted equally by cuts to collections or hours
- After that, there was a slight preference for maintaining collections over hours





## What we Learned

### Importance to Community

- Safe public space in the City
- Destination for newcomers
- A place which fosters knowledge and learning
- A place which encourages creativity
- A community gathering place
- Important part of a democratic society

“My library is full every time I go in there. I think of the library as a safe place in our neighbourhood.”

“Being a newcomer myself, the public library system was the place where I learned to tailor my resume, what companies are hiring, provided me with access to computers to search for jobs, send resumes and print material...that was the place where I learned about the community.”

“Education is power. The Toronto Public Library is rich with information from which we all learn. Without it, crime, poverty, and unemployment will rise.”

“The library is a very important service in our community. It is a service that is used by many in our city, from the most vulnerable to the most wealthy.”

“Libraries are a vital part of a civilized city. Reading should be encouraged. It enriches one's life and also provides information”

# What we Learned

## Importance to Individuals

- **Extensive collections** offering a large variety of books and materials to borrow in many different languages for different nationalities
- Ability to **reserve a book** from any of our 99 branches and to pick it up at any location
- **Evening and weekend hours** are important for allowing working people and students access to the Library
- Access to **computer workstations and high speed internet**, recognizing that not everyone can afford to have a personal computer and internet at home
- Friendly and helpful **Library staff**
- Free **youth programs** like the Teen Drawing Club, Teen Reading Club, Teen Writing Club, arts and crafts, special performances, concerts, etc.
- **Special collections** at Toronto Reference Library and North York Central used by genealogists. Many travel to Toronto specifically for these resources

# What we Learned

## Impact of Reductions

- Affect Toronto's poorer neighbourhoods and people who cannot afford to buy materials the most
- Affect the choice of books and materials available
- Reduce programs and services for newcomers, children, youth, and seniors
- Impact academic success for students

“Not everyone can go and buy books-this will impact lower income families.”

“One less spot for children to grow”

“Negative impact on newcomers, families with young children and seniors. The most vulnerable members of society.”

“As a university student I am required to study a great deal, the library is my sanctuary for study – without it my academic success and future are jeopardized.”

# What we Learned

## Sunday Service

- **Students** need to be able to come to the library to study on Sundays
- **Busy working families** often do not have the time to come to the Library during the week and value Sunday service
- Value the ability to go to the **Toronto Reference Library** on Sundays
- Enjoy having a **place in the community** to read

“I am a student and work full time. Sundays are my only days to study”

“I may not be able to come to the library because I usually come on Sunday and other extended hours”

“I think it is absurd that the Toronto Reference Library closes its doors on Sundays – as it is the ultimate resource in this city.

“Public libraries used to be open on Sundays. The fact that they are closed now makes a big difference to me. I sit down in the mall food court to read”

## What we Learned

### Other suggestions the library should consider:

- Protect evening and weekend hours
- Protect services to higher needs communities if reductions become necessary
- Accepting book, CD, and DVD donations from Torontonians
- Look for other sources of revenue:
  - Increase fines
  - Seek funding from other levels of government
  - Charge user fees

## Selected Comments

- “The library is a centre for all ages, cultures, disabilities and orientations. It is a place to find ourselves in other people’s stories and experiences. It ignites art, culture and community. It is the definition of inclusion.”
- “I really love the libraries and the great variety Toronto offers, they have been a great help for me to do research for school (especially since I went to OCAD, a small art school with a small library, I really needed the Toronto libraries and reference library to get through my courses). Libraries have inspired me to find my direction and career path in life! I really hope young people growing up today can have the same opportunities!”
- “We have one of the best public library systems in the world. Let’s keep it that way. Let’s not downgrade ourselves to mediocrity. When you have something that is outstanding, you take care of it, you don’t dismantle it. We CAN afford it. In the long term this is one of the key things that makes a community work – especially if you can do it on Sundays!”
- “My library is full every time I go in there. I think of the library as a safe place in our neighbourhood. I’ve been looking forward to the day I can send my kids to the library independently. We need our libraries open!”
- “The library is a very important service in our community. It is a service that is used by many in our city, from the most vulnerable to the most wealthy. It is extremely important that the library continue to receive the funding it requires in order to continue its important work. As a taxpayer, I would be willing to have my property taxes increased rather than to have library services reduced.”

# Conclusions

- If service reductions are required, the majority of people felt that they would be impacted equally by cuts to collections or hours.
- Overwhelmingly, people told us how much they value the Toronto Public Library and that service reductions would impact the City, neighbourhoods and individuals, especially the City's most vulnerable citizens.