

## **Core Service Review Update: Results of Public Consultation for Library Services**

<b>Date:</b>	July 26, 2011
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Public Library Board
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian

### **SUMMARY**

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This report provides an update on the Library's participation in the City of Toronto's Core Service Review, as well as the results of the City and Library consultation related to the review. This information provides background and context for the Board's consideration of the report: *Core Service Review – City Manager's Report*.

City consultation results show that Toronto Public Library services are an important priority for residents:

- Public libraries ranked in the top quartile or 8<sup>th</sup> of 35 services as necessary for the City;
- Public libraries ranked 4<sup>th</sup> of 35 services that the City should provide.

Toronto Public Library survey results reinforce the priority residents place on library service:

- 97% identified the public library as necessary for the city to be liveable and prosperous;
- 86% (average of four services) identified maintaining the quality of library services as more important than lowering the cost:
  1. 96% Collections;
  2. 88% Library branches for study, community use and access to computers;
  3. 82% Information and research services;
  4. 78% Programs supporting reading, learning and literacy programs.

Toronto Public Library service levels are in the mid-range of large Canadian cities and in the top range of American cities on a per capita basis. This comparative analysis of service levels for public libraries serving large Canadian and American cities is included as an attachment to this report for the Board's reference.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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Results of the Core Service Review will impact the 2012 operating budget and beyond.

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

## **DECISION HISTORY**

The Toronto Public Library Board received an update on the City's Core Service Review and directed staff to conduct a library-specific consultation at its June 2011 meeting; *2012 Service Review Program and Budget Update*.

## **COMMENTS**

The results of the Library's Core Service Review by consultant, KPMG are included in a separate report.

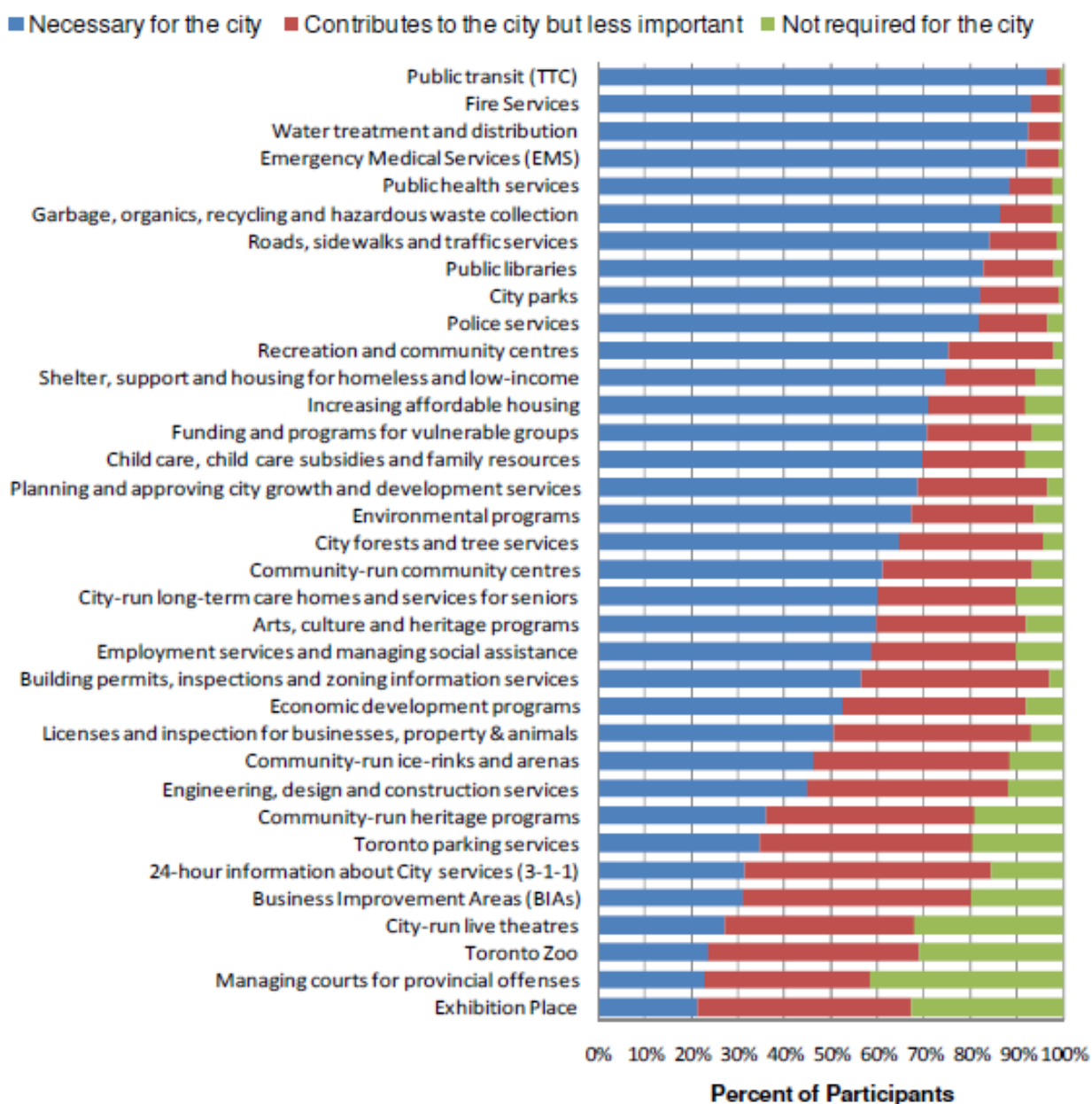
As approved by the Board, as a first priority, the Library promoted participation in the City's consultation, including the survey and public meetings. As the City's consultation concluded the Library conducted a survey of library users using a format similar to the City's.

## ***City Consultation Results***

The document *Core Service Review Public Consultation Summary* summarizes the City's results. <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2011/pw/bgrd/backgroundfile-39507.pdf> Residents placed high priority on Toronto Public Library's services as highly necessary to the City (8<sup>th</sup> of 35 services). City Summary Chart 2 is below.

Chart 2

## Priorities for 35 Service Areas



## ***Library Survey Results***

The Library's survey used the City's format for in-depth questions on a specific service. To extend participation in the consultation, the survey was available online, in print in Library branches, and in translated and accessible versions.

Both the City and Library results show the high priority residents place on the full range of library services. (See Attachment One for further information about the Library Consultation.)

### **Overview:**

- Over 3,700 have been received to date of which 3,325 surveys were analyzed as of the date of this report;
- 97.4% identified Toronto Public Library as necessary for the City to be liveable and prosperous (Question 1);
- 97.4% used the library (Question 2).

Library results show the important priority users give to the full range of library services; that maintaining the quality of library service is more important than lowering the cost; and, the strong support for the City to provide library service.

Questions 3-5 asked participants to comment on five areas of library service. Results for the four direct public library services (collections; library branches for study, community use and access to computers; programs supporting reading, literacy and learning; information and research services) were analyzed. Volunteer opportunities for youth and adults support the delivery of other library services with most volunteers participating in reading and literacy tutoring programs; these opportunities, however, are not direct library services.

- Collections ranked as the most important to the City with other services receiving relatively equal ranking (Question 3)
  1. **Collections for borrowing(79%)**
  2. **Program supporting reading, literacy and learning (40%)**
  3. **Library branches for study, community use and access to computers (37%)**
  4. **Information and research services (32%)**
  5. **Volunteer opportunities for youth and adults (21%)**
- **86%** (average of four services) identified maintaining the quality of library services as more important than lowering the cost (Question 4)
  - **96% Collections for borrowing**
  - **88% Library branches for study, community use and access to computers**
  - **83% Information and research services**
  - **78% Programs supporting literacy, reading and learning**
  - **64% Volunteer opportunities for youth and adults**

- **80%** (average of four services) identified that the City should provide the service (Question 5)
  - **84% Collections**
  - **80% Library branches for study, community use and access to computers**
  - **81% Programs supporting literacy, reading and learning**
  - **75% Information and research services**
  - 65% Volunteer opportunities for youth and adults

In Question 6, respondents were asked to rank the most important services for the Library to maintain with three choices only: conveniently located branches ranked first (46%), followed by up-to-date collections (36%) and a range of open hours (18%). Given that collections were a consistent priority in the previous questions, and the relatively equal priority given to other services, including branches, programs and information services, survey results indicate that maintaining a full range of library services is required to meet users needs.

When asked how library service should compare with that of other cities, results reflected the themes, highlighted in open-ended responses, that public libraries are a unique strength of Toronto.

- Do you think the Library should deliver services that are (Question 7)
  1. Better than all other cities 33%
  2. Toronto should not compare itself with other cities 33%
  3. Better than most other cities 23%
  4. In line with other cities 11%

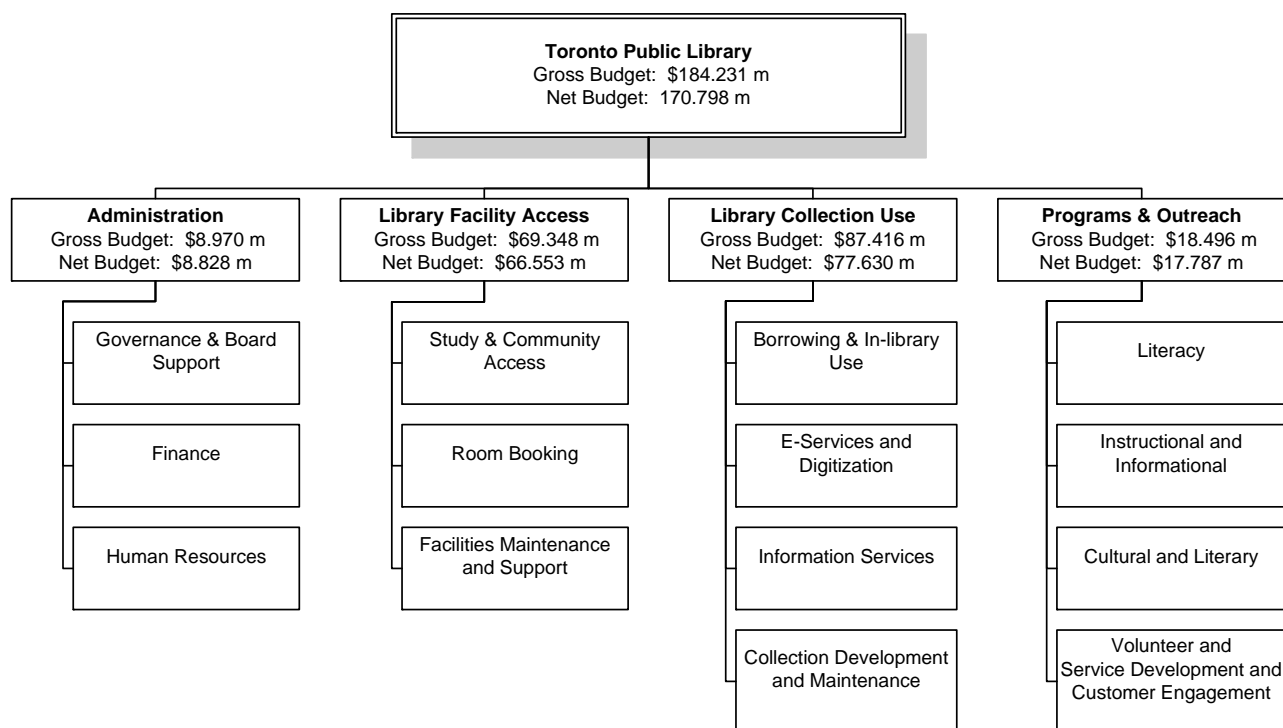
Finally, the survey asked if there was anything else that the Library Board should consider when making decisions about the library; 57% (1,745) answered the question with detailed responses; the vast majority of comments were highly positive citing the value of the library to Toronto and the quality of services and programs. Samples of the comments can be found in Attachment 1.

Results of the survey, as well as analysis of library usage trends and ongoing customer feedback will be an input to the Service Review and future library planning.

## ***Update on the Service Review***

The Core Service Review examines library services as defined by the Library's Program Map and Type Profile. The Program Map grouped library services into four areas with the proportional allocation of the Library's budget: Administration; Library Facility Access; Library Collection Use and Programs and Outreach. Each service area included an overview and a list of key services or activities, key standards and benchmark information.

## Program Map



The Library's Type Profile expands the Program Map and includes service standards and the current service level for each activity within the service area. Service standards reflect the Library's strategic directions, usage of the service and a detailed analysis of the services and usage of comparator libraries.

### Jurisdictional Examples

To support the City's Service Review, an analysis of the services and usage of Toronto Public Library in the context of international, national, and provincial comparators was completed. Service descriptions, standards, guidelines, benchmarking and performances measures for public libraries were reviewed.

Comparator libraries were considered to be Canadian libraries serving populations of over 500,000 and American urban library systems serving a population base of over 2 million. The analysis of comparator libraries (or jurisdictional examples) is appended for information. (Attachment Two)

### The Canadian Context

The Toronto Reference Library's history and role, physical size, breadth and depth of collections and range of services make it unique in Canada and in most North American cities; therefore Toronto Public Library's comparative results are impacted by the size and scope of the Reference Library.

With collections that date back to the 1830's, the Toronto Reference Library provides access to important historical books and documents covering the history of Toronto, Ontario and Canada. The Toronto Reference Library's roots as "the people's university" began in 1830 with the establishment of the Toronto Mechanics Institute. In 1967, the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board was established to supplement the services of the city and borough libraries, incorporating the reference library and special collections of TPL's central St. George and College Street library as the foundation. The service moved to its present location at 789 Yonge Street in 1977. The Toronto Reference Library predates the establishment of the national library of Canada in 1953 by over 100 years. There is no comparative Canadian public library with a similar background and role. Toronto's ranking is in the lower range for measures, including square-foot per capita and items added per capita, when Toronto Reference Library is removed.

Toronto Public Library services and usage per capita rank in the mid-range when compared to the eight other Canadian libraries serving a population of over 500,000.

### **North American Context**

When compared to the six American libraries serving a population base of over 2 million, Toronto Public Library services and usage rank in the top range in both total services offered and usage.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment One: Library Consultation on the City's Core Service Review  
Attachment Two: Toronto Public Library: Library Jurisdictional Examples