

Library Consultation on the City's Core Service Review

Context:

- Toronto Public Library Board approved consultation activities related to the City's Service Review at its June 7, 2011 in the report, *2012 Service Review and Budget Update*: <http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2011/jun07/12.pdf>
- As a first priority, the Library promoted participation in the City consultation activities for the Service Review, including the survey and meetings on the Library's website and in Library branches
- To extend access and participation, the Library conducted a survey as the City consultation concluded
- The Library survey used a similar format to the City survey with a narrower focus, services offered by the Library; the survey is available online, in print in Library branches with translation into fifteen languages and accessible versions <http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/about-the-library/services-survey.jsp>
- The survey concludes June 30, 2011; results will be posted on the library's website

Goals of the survey:

- Questions mirror those asked by the City survey to ensure consistency and so results can be incorporated into the City's findings.
- To extend participation in the City's process to Toronto residents
- To analyze the results to incorporate in the City's findings and inform the development of future library plans

Results:

- 3,710 surveys have been submitted as of July 18, 2011 with more being received daily. 3,325 have been analyzed for this report:
 - Total Online Survey: 1,841
 - Total In branch Survey: 1,338
 - Total Multilingual Survey: 146
 - Total Surveys: 3,325

Note: Not all respondents answered the survey questions consistently and/or completely (e.g. skipped or missed partial or complete questions). Therefore, the totals for each question do not always equal the number of surveys submitted.

1. Do you think public libraries...	Library
Are necessary for our city to be liveable and prosperous?	3,225 (97.0%)
Contribute to the city, but are less important than most other services?	80 (2.4%)
Are not required for the city?	9 (0.3%)
Skipped Question	11 (0.3%)

2. Have you used or been in contact with the Toronto Public Library in the last 12 months?	Library
Yes	3,233 (97.4%)
No	69 (2.1%)
Not sure/don't know	8 (0.2%)
Skipped Question	15 (0.4%)

3. Please rank these library activities according to how important you think they are for the city.	1	2	3	4	5
Provides library collections (e.g. books, ebooks, magazines, DVD's, CD's) for borrowing	2,528 (78.7%)	239 (34.9%)	105 (23.5%)	97 (21.7%)	244 (54.7%)
Library branches that provide space for study and community use and access to computers	1,169 (36.5%)	768 (24.0%)	605 (18.9%)	446 (13.9%)	213 (6.7%)
Provides information and research services to assist residents, students, job seekers and businesses	1,026 (32.1%)	528 (16.5%)	641 (20.1%)	724 (22.7%)	275 (8.6%)
Volunteer opportunities for youth and adults	669 (21.1%)	341 (10.7%)	394 (12.4%)	347 (10.9%)	1, 426 (44.9%)
Provides library programs for children, youth and families to support reading, learning and literacy.	1,267 (39.8%)	715 (22.5%)	521 (16.4%)	398 (12.5%)	281 (8.8%)

*BOLD – Highest # of respondents

4. Please tell us whether you think it is more important to lower the cost to the Toronto Public Library or maintain the quality of each library activity.	Maintaining the quality is more important	Lowering the cost to the City is more important	Don't know which is more important
Provides library collections (e.g. books, ebooks, magazines, DVD's, CD's) for borrowing	3,046 (95.7%)	87 (2.7%)	51 (1.6%)
Library branches that provide space for study and community use and access to computers	2,764 (87.6%)	262 (8.3%)	128 (4.1%)
Provides information and research services to assist residents, students, job seekers and businesses	2,595 (82.7%)	370 (11.8%)	172 (5.5%)
Volunteer opportunities for youth and adults	1,971 (64.0%)	722 (23.4%)	387 (12.6%)
Provides library programs for children, youth and families to support reading, learning and literacy	2,879 (78.2%)	705 (19.1%)	99 (2.7%)

*BOLD – Highest # of respondents

5. Recently there has been some discussion about who should deliver City services. Public library services could be provided by the City, or contracted out. Who do you think should deliver public library activities for the City?	The City should provide this activity	The City should contract out this activity	I don't care as long as it costs the City less	I don't care as long as the quality is good	Don't know
Provides library collections (e.g. books, ebooks, magazines, DVD's, CD's) for borrowing	2,669 (84.1%)	19 (0.6%)	43 (1.4%)	376 (11.9%)	65 (2.0%)
Library branches that provide space for study and community use and access to computers	2,527 (80.0%)	78 (2.5%)	86 (2.7%)	373 (11.8%)	96 (3.0%)
Provides information and research services to assist residents, students, job seekers and businesses	2,362 (75.2%)	108 (3.4%)	133 (4.2%)	436 (13.9%)	103 (3.3%)
Volunteer opportunities for youth and adults	2,039 (65.4%)	142 (6.4%)	198 (6.4%)	517 (16.6%)	221 (7.1%)
Provides library programs for children, youth and families to support reading, learning and literacy	2,535 (80.8%)	61 (1.9%)	94 (3.0%)	370 (11.8%)	78 (2.5%)

*BOLD – Highest # of respondents

6. Please rank the following services in order of (1) most important, (2) second most important and (3) least important to maintain.	1	2	3
Conveniently located branches in local communities across the city	2,136 (46.5%)	760 (29.7%)	276 (11.9%)
Maintaining up-to-date collections	1,647 (35.8%)	1,062 (41.5%)	444 (19.2%)
Offering a range of open hours	815 (17.7%)	738 (28.8%)	1,594 (68.9%)

7. Think about the Library's services overall. Do you think that the Library should deliver services that are:	Library
Better than all other cities	1,055
Better than most other cities	721
In line with other cities	334
Toronto should not compare itself with other cities when making decisions about services	1,033
Skipped Question	183

8. Is there anything else you would like the Library Board to consider when making decisions about services in the future? Please write your answer below.	Library
Access to Facility (Branches, Hours, etc.)	154 (4.4%)
Budget (Funding Allocation, User Fees, etc.)	77 (2.2%)
Core Services (Collections, Programs, Staff Support, etc.)	484 (14.5%)
Essential Services (Libraries Vital for City, etc.)	801 (24.1%)
Suggested Improvements	455 (13.6%)
Skipped/No Answer	1,354 (40.7%)

8. Is there anything else you would like the Library Board to consider when making decisions about services in the future?

- Approximately 57% (1,745 respondents) answered the question
- Of the 1,745 comments received, the majority were positive stating the Library is vital to the City and that it provides great service
- Responses contained the following themes
 - Libraries are vital for the City 41%
 - Library provides exemplary service 24%
 - Service suggestions 23%
 - Access to Facility (Branches and Hours) 8%
 - Budget Allocation (Funding, Allocation, User Fees) 4%

SAMPLE COMMENTS BY THEME:

Libraries are vital to the City

- I have lived in a number of cities in Canada & the U.S. I brag to people that the Toronto Library system is good or better than any other city; perhaps in the world
- Libraries are the most important resource in the City
- Cannot underestimate the value of libraries in terms of literacy, accessibility, and access to materials. Should always be available regardless of income/social status of patrons as a sign of a dynamic city & civilized society.
- Libraries are a critical part of a city and a culture. The city of Toronto is not a group of services users, we are Citizens. And the Library is not a service provider, it is a public institution dedicated to the greater health and vibrancy of our community. Citizenship cannot be outsourced.
- Libraries are wonderful places to visit; they can be life savers for many people, who rally to libraries for needed programs for their children, for immigrants to find out about services and even seniors who want to learn how to use computers for the first time. Libraries are very different places then they were even a few years ago. They have learned to evolve with the times because of technology and its rapid changes, ebooks, downloaded material to your homes. Amazing.

Exemplary Library Services

- I am a student and use the Library for all my research. Without the helpful staff, I would be lost. They are always willing to help. They are great people.
- I am so proud of the TPL; it is so keenly attuned to the needs of its communities. And it's one of the last places in the city where one doesn't need to pay to enter or use the services, and this is, I think, a very important thing to remember, a thing the city needs to remember, it must provide to its citizens. Keep up the excellent work, TPL with whatever amount of financial support you receive. You are resourceful and creative sorts, and you have the support of many.
- As a Library user (several branches) I am continually astonished at how busy the libraries are and how valuable a service they are to so many people in the city.

- As a newcomer with limited income, the Library's services were vital to me, especially the inter-library loan service. During the long winter months, the ability to check out many books at a time from a branch located a walking distance from my home made my life so much easier. The library services in Toronto are excellent-please keep them that way!

Service suggestions

- Libraries should have more programs for children, youth and seniors in order to get connected to reading, learning, connecting/networking. This is the best suited meeting place for community resident(s).
- I think the addition of e-books has been a great move and should be expanded
- More hours on weekends
- More up to date DVD collections are needed

Budget

- I am definitely against contracting out Library services! It is the city's responsibility to adequately fund their public library or it is no longer a public library.
- Toronto Public Library should eliminate Sunday services as a practical cost-cutting measure and concentrate on shoring up core Monday to Saturday service.
- I think a small annual user fee (at the time of our card renewal) would be okay to help offset costs, have separate adult and child fees.

Access to Facilities

- It is very important to me that the Toronto Public Library is maintained as a civic space that promotes literacy and social inclusion.
- The Library does not have enough space for students to study and importantly, the Library should be open on Friday night.