



TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY | THE LONG VIEW ■



STRATEGIC PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION | BIG IDEA WORKBOOK ■

## A STORY

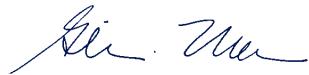
In November 2003, Toronto Public Library invited teens to speak at a public forum on youth services, held at the newly rebuilt Maria A. Shchuka Branch.

The public forum was a great success. Teens came from all over the neighbourhood. They told us they really liked the branch renovation. They asked for more youth-led programs and more computers. They asked for space where they could gather and talk without disturbing other library patrons, explaining that they work better in social situations. They told us that they want more current CDs and DVDs with music and movies they like. They also made suggestions about how to protect our collections from theft or damage.

It was an open exchange — the kind we hope to have often and with everyone in Toronto. With adults, newcomers to the city, families in need. With people who want to give to the library, and people with the resources to make that desire a reality.

## NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Have your say. Help us develop our strategic plan for 2004 – 2006. Tell us what you like about the Toronto Public Library, what you don't like about it, and what ideas you have for making sure the library in Toronto remains relevant and responsive. Please use this workbook to *tell us what you think*.



Gillian Mason, Chair  
Toronto Public Library Board

Visit our website for more information, to see what others have to say, and to add more thoughts to the discussion:  
[www.tpl.toronto.on.ca](http://www.tpl.toronto.on.ca)

## THE ANSWER: THE LIBRARY

Toronto has a lot going for it. We are fortunate to have a wonderfully vibrant, culturally diverse city with a tremendous range of things to see and do:

- We have an author festival with an international reputation and the power to draw important writers from all over the globe.
- We have a film festival that rivals Cannes.
- We have fabulous music and theatre, both mainstream and fringe. We have renowned poets, novelists, musicians, actors, comedians and other cultural icons in our city every day.
- We have world-class sports teams.
- We have great bookstores and art galleries.
- We have access to information through local newspapers, magazines, cable and satellite television stations and Internet websites.
- We have a thriving public library system.



## THE QUESTION: WHICH OF THE ABOVE IS FREE?

The straight answer to this question: the library system. But there's more to it. By providing access to information, culture and public space, the library contributes to Toronto's civic health and wealth in a unique way.

The library connects citizens to information they need and want. The library brings culture and entertainment to the community. The library supports the formal education system, and the informal pursuit of knowledge.

## THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE

At the library, the information is free. The newspapers are free. The magazines are free. The Internet is free. The best-selling fiction is free. The CDs and DVDs are free. The film festivals are free. The author readings are free. The art exhibits are free. The cultural events are free.

**Universal access to information is the cornerstone of a democratic society: it's a strong equalizing force, it fosters participation and inclusiveness.**

Toronto Public Library links citizens to information from Internet service providers and newspaper and magazine shops and makes it available for free in 98 library living rooms across the city, at 1,300 free high-speed Internet computers.

Toronto Public Library brings entertainment from book and CD shops, video stores and movie theatres and places it in the hands of the city's citizens for free.

## WHY IS FREE, UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION SO IMPORTANT?

It's the cornerstone of a democratic society: it's a strong equalizing force, it fosters participation and inclusiveness.

It provides opportunities for citizens and communities to engage and participate in their city and their neighbourhoods.

Photo place holder

*"Libraries are a national treasure. They connect people to their communities, inspire imagination, foster culture and support the love of learning."*



## OUR RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Staff has worked hard over the last few years to expand children's services, increase electronic resources, improve and broaden our book and magazine collections and to develop services, collections and programs for newcomers. Their professionalism and commitment to excellent service has resulted in some real successes:

- 30 special collections, Best Bets, were established in branches to make popular reading material available quickly.
- 6,500 children get their self-confidence boosted with the help of volunteer tutors working in expanded library reading and homework help programs.
- 3.4 million holds per year are delivered to patrons at their local branches, a 57 per cent increase over two years.
- 40 per cent more multilingual material finds its way to the people of Toronto who most need it via a new system of circulating materials through the communities where they are most called for.
- 1,330 free Internet and email computers are available to Torontonians through branches across the city and thousands of carefully selected online magazines, encyclopedias and books are made available on the Internet.

HAVE YOUR SAY!

## WHAT NOW?

We are committed to defending our core principle of universal access to high quality library service. We will continue to maintain our services to children. We will continue to broaden and increase our collections. However in the current fiscal reality we must prioritize.

We'd like to spend the next three years focusing on a few priorities where we can make a difference.

Help us choose the right priorities. What informs where we go is influenced by you. It is also influenced by the context of the city we live and work in.

Help us decide which priorities will make the biggest difference to the citizens of this city, and we will reflect your point of view in the new strategic plan.

## TORONTO TODAY

- Is on the threshold of a cultural renaissance that will reinvigorate the city's economic and social life.
- Has more youth as a proportion of the population than it did ten years ago.
- Is the most diverse city in the world, with 50 per cent of the population born abroad, and eight in ten new immigrants arriving without speaking either English or French as their mother tongue.
- Has seen its poor get poorer over the last ten years.

This is Toronto in 2004. It's a world the library can bring solutions to through our collections, programs, services and public spaces. Free, universal access to the library helps contribute to the civic health and the civic wealth.

Help us decide which priorities will make the biggest difference to the citizens of this city, and we will reflect your point of view in the new strategic plan.

## THE WORLDS OF TORONTO

Based on our research and feedback from the public so far, we have identified four priorities, along with some concrete examples of what we might try to accomplish within each area.

### A WORLD OF BOOKS AND CULTURE

**Context:** *Toronto is on the threshold of a cultural renaissance that will reinvigorate the city's economic and social life.*

**Goal:** *To broaden Torontonians' access to the city's cultural life:*

- Enhance our fiction collection.
- Promote reading in innovative ways – (e.g. online, virtual book clubs, world literature, lecture series, etc.).
- Forge partnerships with Toronto's literary community to give voice and profile to our rich literary culture.
- Promote use of library space for art, literary and cultural activities.
- Improve access to rare and historical collections.

### HOW ELSE CAN WE BROADEN ACCESS TO CULTURE?




---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

To add more thoughts to the discussion and to see what others have to say, visit our website at [www.tpl.toronto.on.ca](http://www.tpl.toronto.on.ca).

HAVE YOUR SAY!

## THE WORLD OF YOUTH

**Context:** Toronto youth, who form a significantly greater proportion of the population than they did ten years ago, face new challenges to their future.

**Goal:** Increase the number of youth who are regular users of the library:

- Provide library spaces, designed in consultation with youth, as safe places to read, use a computer or study.
- Enhance online gateway for teens, in recognition that online is where teens are.
- Help youth develop leadership skills and bridge the transition from school to employment by providing high quality volunteer experiences throughout the city.
- Encourage a love of reading and books among youth, especially young men, through responsive programming and collections.
- Help young people succeed in school through high school outreach, homework clubs and training in online research.
- Work with youth to develop the programs & services they want.

## HOW ELSE CAN WE ENCOURAGE YOUTH TO USE THE LIBRARY?



---

---

---

---

---

---

To add more thoughts to the discussion and to see what others have to say, visit our website at [www.tpl.toronto.on.ca](http://www.tpl.toronto.on.ca).

## A WINDOW ON THE WORLD

**Context:** 50 per cent of Torontonians are born abroad, and eight in ten new immigrants arrive without speaking either English or French as their mother tongue.

**Goal:** *Influence the successful adaptation of newcomers to Toronto:*

- Build collections so that they reflect the diverse and everchanging needs of our communities.
- Expand ESL collections and improve access to job-related information that newcomers need to integrate successfully.
- Provide meeting space to celebrate the richness and diversity of Toronto's neighbourhoods.
- Improve outreach to newcomers.
- Create new partnerships with stakeholders.

## HOW ELSE CAN WE ASSIST NEWCOMERS?



To add more thoughts to the discussion and to see what others have to say, visit our website at [www.torontopubliclibrary.ca](http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca).

## A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY

**Context:** Toronto's poor are getting poorer and the gap between high and low income neighbourhoods is increasing

**Goal:** Make a Toronto Public Library card the passport to opportunity:

- Develop innovative reading support and literacy programs in low income neighbourhoods.
- Improve free access to computers, software and training.
- Increase access to free space for community-based initiatives and programs to build community capacity.
- Meet with local communities to identify and address specific needs.

# HAVE YOUR SAY!

## HOW ELSE CAN OPPORTUNITIES BE CREATED AT THE LIBRARY?



To add more thoughts to the discussion and to see what others have to say, visit our website at [www.tpl.toronto.on.ca](http://www.tpl.toronto.on.ca).

## SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

We will be hosting discussions with a variety of community groups about our new plan. Roundtable discussions will be held at three locations in the city. Public meetings will be held in April.

Our new strategic plan will be published in the spring of 2004 and will take into account what you have told us.

Give us your ideas, comments and concerns. We are determined to develop a dynamic strategic plan, one that can accommodate your continually evolving needs in our continually evolving city.

## WHAT OTHER PRIORITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO IDENTIFY?



Thank you for taking the time to tell us what you think.  
Please leave your completed workbook with any of our staff.

# HAVE YOUR SAY!



[www.tpl.toronto.on.ca](http://www.tpl.toronto.on.ca)

Cover: Satellite image copyright AIR-SAT Image Maps. The data was acquired by LANDSAT 7 IN 1999. [www.airsatimagemaps.com](http://www.airsatimagemaps.com)