

1. Overview and Vision

The Budget Advocacy Strategy for the Toronto Public Library's 2009 operating budget submission will communicate to key decision makers, stakeholders and residents the critical importance and increasing demand for library service in the City of Toronto, with a particular emphasis on the value of library services during times of economic uncertainty.

Library service is important to everyone, and especially those at risk. Maintaining current levels of service, and expanding Sunday hours, responds to intense public demand, is efficient, and will achieve increased access to established City infrastructure (branches) in neighbourhoods across the City.

2. Approach

The Library Board Budget Advocacy will be rolled out in escalating phases as the Library and the City work through the budget review and approval process.

Phase 1: Communication to Budget Committee and Media Campaign
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<i>Timing: November 17 to 24</i>

Communication sent by the Board Chair to Shelley Carroll and Budget Committee members with information about the Library Board's 2009 Operating Budget Request and the benefits of advancing the Library's Open Hour Plan. Followed up with meetings between Library Board members and Budget Committee members to walk through details of the Library's operating budget requirements.

Execution of a media campaign to generate coverage which highlights the benefits and value that the Library delivers to the people of Toronto every day, and emphasizes the increased demand for library services during times of economic uncertainty.

Phase 2: Communication to Councillors**Timing: November 24 to December 5**

Communication sent by the Board Chair to City Councillors with information about the Library Board's 2009 Operating Budget Request. Followed up with meetings between Library Board members and councillors to walk through details of the Library's budget needs, and to provide profiles of the branches in their wards, based on the different budget proposals, and the potential impacts and benefits to them.*

**Note:* Depending on the outcome of consultations with the Budget Committee, the communications and follow up with the councillors will either be advocating for our budget request, or to save our libraries from untenable service cuts.

Phase 3: Engage library stakeholders at the grassroots levels**Timing: December 9 onward**

Communications to library stakeholders, including: partners and friends of the Library, city-wide organizations and local community-based groups, including all those who participated in the strategic plan consultations, and high profile library users/friends, encouraging them to advocate on behalf of the library.

Timelines/Tactics

November 12	Meeting with City staff to review Operating Budget	
Nov 17 to Nov 24	Phase 1	Communications sent and meetings between Budget Committee members and Board members set up Board Spokesperson Identified Strat Plan launched and media campaign begun
November 21	Informal operating budget review with Councillors Heaps and Rae	
November 24	Library Board Meeting	
Nov 24 to Dec 5	Phase 2	Communications to and meetings with councillors
December 1, 2	City Council Meets	
December 9	City Staff and Budget Committee Final Operating Budget Review	
December 10	City Council approves Capital Budget	
Wk of Dec. 9	Phase 3	Email communications sent to library stakeholders Information posted on website and in branches
February 10	Public Introduction of Operating Budget	
February 17, 18	Operating Budget Hearings with City Councillors and Public	

3. Key Messages

- Toronto Public Library is well loved and well used and is in high demand by residents of Toronto, especially those most at risk.
- Demand for library service has increased over the last ten years, and in September, we've seen a steady increase in circulation and workstation use of 7%.
- It is critical that Toronto Public Library maintain existing service levels so that we can continue to support the economic, education and recreation needs of Torontonians, especially job seekers, students, seniors, newcomers, families with children and those most at risk.
- An investment in increased Sunday hours is also important.
 - It's in high demand: Expanded Sunday hours is the most requested service enhancement we regularly receive, and we expect an average usage of over 26,000 each Sunday with these expanded hours.
 - More Sunday hours in more branches will extend access to important information resources and safe, welcoming public space for students, seniors, job seekers and families with children.
 - The expansion of Sunday hours is the first major service enhancement offered by the Library in ten years.
 - Expanded Sunday hours offers increased employment opportunities, especially for youth.
- Toronto Public Library needs the support of decision makers, stakeholders and residents to maintain and enhance library service.

4. Background Information

- The 2009 budget request includes:
 - A request of 5.3% to maintain current service levels.
 - A request for \$2.8 million (1.8%) to expand Sunday service.
- More Sunday hours in more branches includes:
 - 24 new branches would offer Sunday service, bringing the total number of branches in the city with Sunday service to 51 (over 50% of our branches).
 - The addition of summer Sunday service in 19 of our locations would mean year-round Sunday service at our 19 largest branches (district and R&R). The addition of hours to all branches, to bring them to full afternoon of service.
- Toronto Public Library understands the needs of residents; The Library's Strategic Plan 2008-2011: *Our Shared Stories Toronto: Writing the Future of Toronto's Library* was developed through extensive consultation with

stakeholders, residents and library staff members. The plan is a comprehensive strategy to provide access to branches, collections and technology to meet the changing needs of residents of Toronto.

5. Audiences

External

- Key decision makers including Executive Committee, Budget Committee and City Councillors.
- Library stakeholders including partners, city wide organizations and local community based groups (500+ organizations).
- Media.
- Residents.
- Library users.

Internal

- Library staff- management, front line, and support departments.
- Union.