

Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015: Proposed Vision, Mission, Values, Priority Areas and Goals

Date:	November 29, 2012
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	Strategic Planning Steering Committee

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the vision, mission, values, priority areas and 15 goals for Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015 to the Board for approval. The report also provides a summary of the results of public consultation. The results of the consultation have been incorporated into the final version of the strategic plan.

Generally, the results of consultation confirmed the direction of the vision, draft priority areas and goals that were approved by the Board on June 25, 2012 as a framework for public consultation. The consultation sessions were well attended, and over 2,000 residents and stakeholders participated through an online survey, roundtables and focus groups. The draft vision elicited a lively discussion. Residents voiced that the concept of equity of access needed to be included along with the Library's role in building community connections. These concepts have been reinforced in the proposed vision, mission, and values.

The plan's four priority areas focusing on: reading, lifelong learning, supporting innovators, entrepreneurs and creators, and delivering excellent and efficient service, were strongly endorsed. Recommended changes to address consultation feedback include adding a goal to address the Library's role in providing access to Toronto's culture. Final steps in the consultation process include a survey of Toronto residents, which is underway and the development of the public version of the Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Strategic Plan Steering Committee recommends that the Board:

1. approves the proposed vision, mission and values, as a replacement for the current mission, vision and values and;
2. approves the proposed priority areas and goals for the Library's Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015 as outlined in the report and included in Attachment 1.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The costs associated with the creation of the strategic plan are incorporated in the 2012 operating budget.

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

DECISION HISTORY

The Board approved the report *Strategic Planning Steering Committee: Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015: Consultation Plan* at its January 2012 meeting.

<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2012/jan30/14.pdf>

The Board approved the report *Strategic Planning Steering Committee: Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015: Draft Priority Areas* as a framework for public consultation at its June 2012 meeting .

<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2012/jun25/21b.pdf>

The Steering Committee received the report *Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015: Results of Public Consultation* at its October 3, 2012 meeting.

<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2012/oct03/07.pdf>

The Steering Committee approved the report *Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015: Proposed Vision, Mission, Values, Priority Areas and Goals* at its November 13, 2012 meeting.

<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/about-the-library/board/meetings/2012-nov-13.jsp>

COMMENTS

Overview

The Strategic Plan will guide the development and delivery of library service over the next four years. It will provide a framework for the development of capital and operating budgets and annual work plans at the system, branch, and department level.

It aligns and supports other city strategies, including the Middle Childhood Strategy, the Seniors Strategy and the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020. It is the result of extensive processes that included an environmental scan, the development of draft priority areas and goals, engagement and consultation with residents, the Mayor and City Councillors, as well as community partners, city and Library staff.

Key milestones in the process have included a review by the Steering Committee and approval by the Library Board of:

- the process for creating the strategic plan;
- the consultation and communication strategy;
- draft priority areas, service levels and service options.

Results of Public Consultation to Date

Using the consultation strategy approved by the Board, public consultation was conducted with stakeholders, including community agencies, city departments, school boards, residents and Library staff. Emphasis was placed on reaching both current Library users and non users. A list of consultation events is included in Attachment 2. Approximately 2,000 residents have participated in the process to date.

Key tactics included:

- a web presence;
- distribution of the priority areas and goals to City Council members;
- online and in branch survey;
- stakeholder roundtables with representatives from city departments, community agencies, school boards and historical societies;
- public focus groups and discussions at community and Library events;
- discussions and presentations at staff meetings, and staff focus groups;
- a web and social media presence with blogs and twitter chat;
- targeted focus groups with a seniors' group and another one with community partners on the topic of boys and reading; and
- review of the preliminary consultation results on the City's Seniors' Strategy.

Proposed Vision, Mission, Values, Priority Areas and Goals, and Key Performance Indicators

Proposed changes to the vision, mission, values, priority areas and goals are outlined in Attachment 1. The attachment provides a 'red line' version showing the differences between the draft priority areas and goals approved as a framework for public consultation with the recommended final priority areas and goals. Key performance indicators have been added to the priority areas and goals to indicate how success will be measured in response to strategic activities undertaken by the Library to advance the plan.

Vision, Mission and Values:

Summary of consultation:

The draft vision generated a lively and animated discussion with strong agreement from residents on the commitment to excellent and responsive service. The Library's core strength, promoting equity of access, needs to be reinforced with the idea that there are new possibilities to extend access in the digital age. People responded well to the ideas of making individuals and communities successful and resilient, but thought that the role of the Library in building communities and neighbourhoods needed to be recognized. The word 'smarter' did not resonate with many; people preferred the ideas that the Library makes Torontonians more informed, knowledgeable and able to understand and connect with the world around them.

Other ideas:

- highlighting the Library's role in providing inspiration and fostering the joy of reading and learning as integral to an enriched quality of life – older adults expressed the idea that the Library makes the City liveable and age-friendly;
- the concept of “best in the world” needs to be defined, measured and linked to the idea of continuous improvement of library services in the Toronto context;
- concrete measures of achievement of the vision would document the Library's role in the City and promote accountability.

Strategies to address feedback:

- revising the vision, mission and values to address ideas that residents identified as most important, including the Library's role in promoting equity of access, diversity and inclusion, and in connecting and building the capacity of communities and neighbourhoods; and replacing the word “smarter” with the idea of making residents more knowledgeable and informed;
- include measures to track achievement of the vision, increase public accountability, support benchmarking and to highlight the value of library services to Toronto.

Priority Areas:

GROW A CITY OF READERS: Foster literacy and a love of reading as a first priority; support readers of all ages in improving print literacy skills and in discovering great stories and books

1. Build the Library's digital and e-collections, and co-created content to expand the digital frontier and advocate for equal access to all digital content for public libraries.
2. Champion the joy of reading and connect readers, authors and creators.
3. Support readers in building print literacy skills as an essential foundation for future achievement, especially for children at critical stages in their development.

Summary of consultation:

There was strong agreement that promoting the joy of reading is a core priority for the Library. Maintaining the quality, range and depth of library collections was perceived as being fundamental and was considered the most important library service. Residents endorsed the goal of expanding access to e-books through an improved interface, a broader range of titles, and increased support for new users online and in Library branches. Providing a variety of e-content was identified as a way of engaging youth, especially boys, in reading by building on their digital skills and interests. The benefits of accessible digital content, including reading material, and video streaming of library programs were considered to be important strategies to promote lifelong engagement by seniors. E-book's accessibility features, including remote access and flexible font size and e-audio books were cited as having advantages for seniors; however, it was acknowledged that seniors may require support in accessing and using the content. Literacy programs that support a love of reading and literature and build print literacy

skills were also thought to be of high importance, particularly programs for children and youth.

Other ideas:

- improving access to collections for mobile users through the website; providing more online opportunities for user engagement with the opportunity to post review and comments. Youth, for example, may be motivated to read by peer reviews;
- working in collaboration with the school boards as an effective and efficient method of promoting reading;
- building on the Library's success in offering high-quality literary programs with increased promotion through email and social media;
- understanding the impact of fines on children's materials as a barrier to usage.

Strategies to address feedback:

- strengthen the priority area by adding a message about supporting readers of all ages in improving print literacy skills and in discovering great stories and books;
- maintaining access to traditional formats in response to user demand and usage while actively building e-book collections;
- improving interactive features of the Library's website with access for mobile users;
- monitoring the impact of fines on access for children;
- expanding access and engagement in literary programs through email promotion, video streaming programs and social media.

DEVELOP A CITY OF LEARNERS: Support lifelong learning as fundamental to economic prosperity, social cohesion, and civic engagement

4. Provide easy access to the world's knowledge through collections in a range of formats, including information about Toronto's economy, history, communities and culture.
5. Enable self-directed learning and skills development to support Torontonians through all life's stages and journeys, including transitions from home to school, school to work, work to second careers, and retirement – supporting a better quality of life.
6. Help learners of all ages to build information and digital literacy skills to access and use technology and information successfully.

Summary of consultation:

There was strong agreement that offering access to community-based learning opportunities met a wide variety of community and residents' needs. Access to research materials for school, work and independent study, staff expertise, informational programs and study space across the City were described as the Library's key contributions to lifelong learning. Expanding access to research and special collections across the City was thought to be important.

Access to learning programs in Library branches removes barriers, provides a bridge and a support to more structured learning programs and formal enrollment. Structured after-school programs are an opportunity to build life and literacy skills with access to mentors, technology and resources not available at home. For youth, learning opportunities that teach specific skills or which provide experiences through volunteer opportunities help support youth in making educational or career choices through achievable steps. Programs offered in series, in partnership with cultural institutions, colleges or universities engage adults in communities of interest and contribute to a stronger quality of life. The Library's role as a safe space to read, study and learn was emphasized by many.

Other ideas included:

- linking special collections to the school curriculum to provide enriched learning opportunities in partnership with the school boards;
- using video streaming and social media to extend access to programs;
- digitizing archival and special collections as an effective way to expand awareness and usage of the collections.

Strategies to address feedback:

- increasing access to technology in meeting rooms and reconfiguring space to address different types of use, including the need for study space;
- expanding partnerships with cultural and educational institutions to provide learning opportunities for residents with linkages with the Library collections;
- developing, sharing and tracking outcome measures to ensure programs achieve outcomes;
- expanding access to reference and research materials across the City through digitization and other strategies.

CATALYZE AND CONNECT A CITY OF INNOVATORS, ENTREPRENEURS AND CREATORS: Position Torontonians to succeed in a global knowledge economy

7. Incorporate new and emerging technologies into our virtual library services, and make them available anywhere/anytime.
8. Animate Library branches with inspired architecture and design, wired work spaces and audience-focused zones that accommodate collaborative work, co-creation and independent study.
9. Promote and provide pathways to Toronto's culture through resources, services and programming.

Summary of consultation:

The strongest recurring theme was that the Library's role in promoting accessible culture was missing from this theme and that culture and cultural-related industries are critical to support a global knowledge economy and to enhance quality of life for Torontonians.

A second idea that was discussed is that the digital divide is still with us; for many the library is their only access to technology; others look to the library as a place to enhance their technology skills in a supportive environment. Access to computers, software and technology to support access to information and content-creation was perceived to be a critical issue. In small branches it was thought that there are not enough computers and that computer software is not regularly updated.

As the traditional workplace and work hours erode and change, libraries have an important role to fill in providing workspace. Workers want flexible workspace, and young adults want access to wired, technology-enabled space in non-traditional open hours to engage with others.

Other ideas included:

- offering space for young entrepreneurs and creators to engage and share ideas;
- engaging with the digital media sector; for example, industries and educational programs to expand opportunities for youth.

Strategies to address feedback:

- introduce language in the priority area that includes the concepts of creativity and culture;
- reviewing the allocation and use of computers, wireless and other technology in Library branches to promote access to information and to support content creation;
- understanding the patterns of use in Library branches by hour of the day and demographic group will inform future service delivery, including an increase in the range of open hours and programs;
- access to technology in meeting rooms and reconfiguring space to address different types of use, including the need for silent study;
- expanding partnerships to include institutions aligned with innovation, creativity and entrepreneurial activities;
- developing, sharing and tracking outcome measures to ensure programs achieve shared outcomes.

**DELIVER EXCELLENT LIBRARY SERVICE TO TORONTONIANS
EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY: Provide responsive services and promote a shared sense of ownership and responsibility for the efficient use of public funds and resources with staff, service partners and the public through effective stewardship and a culture of continuous improvement**

10. Support the Toronto Public Library Foundation, in achieving ambitious fundraising goals to enhance service.
11. Partner to support service delivery and to improve services while keeping costs down.
12. Diversify revenue streams to support sustainable library services.

13. Equip staff with technology, skills and training to support users, to innovate and evolve services, and to deliver those services how, when and where Torontonians need them.
14. Understand community needs for access to Library branches, valued community infrastructure, and integrate new models for hours and service.
15. Adopt accepted benchmarks, targets and performance measures to support continuous improvements to service excellence and operational efficiency.

Summary of consultation:

A clear message from consultation was that residents' value existing services and maintaining service quality is important. Partnerships with the Toronto Public Library Foundation and community groups were recognized as important strategies to improve service when they align and support the Library's mission, vision, values, and priority areas.

Staff members recognize the importance of customer service, technology and community connections as ways to extend access to library service, but want more training in these areas. A continued focus on efficiency and effectiveness will allow the Library to maintain or improve service levels with the use of technology. Open hours including access to facilities beyond traditional hours were recognized as a critical strategy to improve access to a wide range of library services.

Strategies to address feedback:

- working with the Toronto Public Library Foundation to develop fundraising priorities and support fundraising activities;
- aligning and building partnerships to address shared outcomes;
- understanding the patterns of use in Library branches by hour of the day and demographic group will inform future service delivery, including the range of open hours and programs;
- refocusing the staff training program to support users in accessing technology;
- developing service standards, key performance indicators and evaluative measures to support accountability;
- continue the focus on service efficiency, including the development of self-service options.

Next Steps

Next steps in the strategic plan process include: a survey of residents, users and non users by an external polling firm with a complementary survey reaching Library branch users; and developing the public version of the plan summarizing the process, environmental scan, consultation results, priority areas, goals and key performance indicators.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jane Pyper
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ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015: Vision, Mission, Values, Priority Areas and Goals
- Attachment 2: Summary of Community Consultation Activities