

Security Guard Services

Date:	July 28, 2014
To:	Budget Committee
From:	Acting City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to a Toronto Public Library Board Budget Committee request for information about security guard services at Toronto Public Library (TPL): the relationship between reported incidents and security guard deployment; the feasibility of migrating to a roving patrol model complemented with a fixed presence in select branches; and the feasibility of increasing the Streets to Homes Outreach Worker program to deal with patrons in distress.

A number of factors are taken into account when determining the deployment of security guards and as a result there isn't a direct relationship between the number of incidents and the deployment of security guards. The incident reports are one factor in the determination; other factors include the number of visits, physical layout of the branch, reports from the security guard firm and input from public service staff.

Library staff assessed the feasibility of a roving patrol model and based on that assessment, affirm that the current model with a scheduled guard presence in branches is a more effective model that provides a visible, proactive and preventative presence in the branch, maintaining a safe and welcoming environment.

The annual review is underway, to assess the need for security guards, branch-by-branch, to consider the number of hours at each branch and to re-assess the use of mobile guards. The results of the review and the potential cost savings will be incorporated into the Library's operating budget submission for 2015. Savings of approximately \$100,000 are anticipated for 2015 as a result of this year's review.

In addition, the report describes the Toronto Public Health pilot project at Toronto Reference Library to assist library customers that have mental health/addiction problems. Streets to Homes also participated in the pilot project. Streets to Homes outreach workers also respond to calls from branch staff at any locations in their catchment area.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts resulting from this report beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget. Savings of approximately \$100,000 are anticipated for the final year of the contract and will be incorporated into the 2015 operating budget submission.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its April 17, 2014 meeting, the Budget Committee adopted a number of motions regarding the *2015 Operating Budget Outlook*, including the following:

“requests staff to report back on the way in which security guard services are deployed at TPL, including:

- a) relationship between reported incidents at branches (by severity) and security guard deployment;*
- b) feasibility of migrating to a “roving patrol” model complemented with a fixed presence in select branches;*
- c) feasibility of increasing the Streets to Homes Outreach Worker program to deal with patrons in distress.”*

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Library provides a safe and welcoming environment for Toronto residents and staff. This is achieved within an urban setting, a diverse population and public spaces open to all. The Library has 99 public buildings with 18.5 million people using its facilities every year.

The Library has put policies, procedures, training and security services and systems in place at the Library to promote a safe and welcoming environment. The policies with supporting training and procedures include: Rules of Conduct, Security Video Surveillance, Occupational Health and Safety, Human Rights and Harassment, Workplace Violence Prevention and Response.

Library staff has the responsibility to analyze the events in our environment, how they impinge upon the safety and security of public and staff, and maintain the security of TPL buildings and property. With this information, staff develops appropriate security standards and responses. The use of contracted security guard services is one component of the Library's security program.

All security guard service is provided through a contracted service. The security guard contract provides for scheduled guard service at 31 branches and two mobile patrol cars. The guard schedule is based on need and does not cover all open hours for most branches with guards. Guard service complements the staff role, providing security guard presence in

situations where the volume of patron usage, problems with disruptive or violent behavior, vandalism and theft have created concerns for public and staff safety. Providing security for the public and staff is important to maintaining a safe and welcoming environment.

COMMENTS

Role of the security guard

Security guard services are deployed when staff have determined that security guards are needed to supplement the work of staff in implementing the Board's policies and procedures in maintaining a safe and welcoming environment. The security guards are a pro-active and visible presence in the branch. Branches report that the security guards become known to the local children and act as someone they can approach if they need help. Most branches are busy with individuals and groups competing for use of the spaces and equipment, which can lead to conflict. The security guards de-escalate disruptive and potentially violent situations. Their presence is a deterrent; designed to prevent incidents and provide assurance to library users that their safety is important to the Library. The security guards rove around the buildings, acting as additional eyes and ears of library staff, freeing the staff to focus on delivering library service. As such, the low number of reported incidents is seen as an indicator of the effectiveness of the deployment of security guards in the branches.

Relationship of Reported Incidents and Deployment of Security Guards

In 2013, 1,615 incidents involving the public were documented by library staff. Of those, 920 were incidents related to violent, abusive, threatening or disruptive behaviour and 257 were related to theft or vandalism. Trained onsite security guards help defuse or de-escalate many potentially violent and disruptive situations through early intervention, which are not documented. A table of Incident Reports, by location and type of incident, with branches with security guards identified is included as Attachment 1.

Those branches with higher numbers of incidents related to violent, abusive, threatening or disruptive behaviour and incidents related to theft or vandalism are reviewed by library staff and, if all other methods of controlling the situation have not achieved results, then a decision is made to deploy security guards. Some branches, with lower numbers of incidents, have documented reports from branch heads and managers regarding the nature of the incidents and on-going situations that warrant the deployment of security guards, such as after-school crowds, intoxicated behaviour, drug dealing. In those situations the presence of a security guard frees staff to focus on providing library service. In some instances there is a decision to deploy a security guard presence to address a specific problem or to change behaviour patterns in a branch. Often these changes are temporary or seasonal and only in effect until the situation has been turned around. The current security guard budget is structured to allow for such temporary deployments.

The deployment of security guards is reviewed on an annual basis, and the incident reports, reports from the security guard firm, input from branch heads and managers, the number of visits and the physical layout of the branch are all taken into account when determining the deployment of security guards. This year's review is currently underway.

Current security guard service model

The current security guard service model is based primarily on guards scheduled in branches, supplemented by two mobile security guards.

In-Branch Security Guards

There are 31 locations with scheduled service. The schedule for guard service varies, and most often is only for part of the branch open hours, according to branch specific requirements. There is a four-hour minimum for scheduled guard service. The requirements for guard service are reviewed annually and as needed for specific situations. The scheduled guard service may be supplemented by temporary requirements for extra hours due to branch specific problems or special events. The Library is only billed for the actual guard service provided.

Mobile Patrol Guards

Mobile patrol car guards supervise and support the onsite guards, and are available to public service staff at any library location should an emergency situation require their support. The mobile patrol guards follow a patrol route whereby they check those branches without scheduled guard service. The mobile guards act as supervisors to the in-branch security guards and provide training to newly assigned guards. The mobile guards also act as backup replacement for an unexpected absence of an in-branch guard.

Budget for Current Model

Budget for scheduled service	\$1,503,270
Budget for two mobile patrol guards	\$150,270
Budget for ad hoc services	\$10,000
Total budget for 2014	\$1,663,540

The 2014 budget for security guard service provides for 1,278.2 hours per week of in-branch security guard coverage, compared to 5,420.75 open hours per week. The budget for security guard service is equivalent to 1.2% of the TPL staff salary budget.

Feasibility of roving patrol model

The Library has explored the feasibility of migrating to a roving patrol model complemented with a fixed presence in select branches. The roving patrol guards would be the primary way of delivering guard service to the branches.

In order to achieve adequate coverage with acceptable response time (e.g. 10-15 minutes) the Library would need to significantly increase the number of mobile guards; one model could be based on a mobile security guard per each of the 17 district libraries. The mobile guards would perform spot checks on branches in their assigned group of branches and respond to calls for emergency assistance from branches in their group. The Library's current budget cost for mobile guards is \$75,000 per guard per year. The costs of such a roving patrol model could be accommodated within the current budget and would replace the existing scheduled in-branch guard service with the exception of the Reference Library which would retain in-branch scheduled guards.

There are a number of drawbacks to this model:

- Branches are busy public spaces with a large number of users and scheduled guards are a visible, proactive and preventative presence that helps defuse potential incidents. Library staff have noted that the security guards are most effective when stationed in the branch; they develop a good working relationship with staff and an understanding and rapport with the local community. In-branch security guards look out for known behavioural problems (e.g. inebriation, mental health issues), provide crowd control, patrol the building and parking lot and proactively deal with the customers before they become a disruptive presence in the library. The public have commented positively to the presence of guards.
- Roving patrol guards would be responding to incidents and even with improved response time with more mobile guards, would still be arriving after an incident had taken place, leaving branch staff to manage incidents. Our current experience with the mobile security guards bears this out and the use of mobile security guards is being re-considered.
- Most in-branch security guards are scheduled during the busiest times in the branch, from mid-afternoon to evenings. Roving patrol guards would be performing spot checks, but could not be present at more than one location at a time during those busiest periods.

Given the drawbacks to the roving patrol guard model, Library staff do not think this is a feasible model and have focussed attention on ways to achieve cost savings with the current model.

Feasibility of expanding Streets to Homes outreach worker program

The Budget Committee motion speaks to the Streets to Homes program, however to clarify, the pilot project at the Toronto Reference Library started as an initiative with Toronto Public Health and was expanded to include Streets to Homes. The Library, Toronto Public Health (TPH) and Streets to Homes (S2H) undertook a pilot project to assist library customers that have mental health/addiction problems and/or are homeless or street involved. The pilot began in June 2013 at the Toronto Reference Library. The goals of the project are to improve health outcomes of the people using the library by providing counselling and referral, help individuals find appropriate housing, to provide library staff with the skills to deal with people who have mental health problems.

Like many urban centres Toronto has a large number of people who have mental health problems. Libraries act as a safe haven for people who have mental health disorders and who are homeless because they welcome all members of the community and have few restrictions on use. The Library, Toronto Public Health and Streets to Homes agreed to the pilot project as an opportunity to reach out and provide help and support.

During the pilot, a TPH nurse is on site at Toronto Reference Library two ½ days per week. The nurse is available to observe and assess customers and to engage with them as required. The effectiveness of this project is dependent upon the relationship and trust that the nurse builds with library customers that have mental health problems. The nurse also works with TPL staff, identifying learning needs and coordinating formal and informal educational

opportunities so that more effective communication and referrals take place. While working at the library the nurse is supervised by TPH managers. The TPH nurse project has been extended until the end of 2014 and continuation of the program beyond that time is dependent upon TPH ability to fund the project. Evaluation of the pilot project is underway; initial results are favourable and there would be interest in expanding the program, again, only if funding were available.

During the pilot, S2H staff visit the Toronto Reference Library approximately three times per week, and Yorkville on a regular basis. Once S2H staff identify people that are street involved, they attempt to provide counselling concerning housing options. The S2H program is not limited to any one branch. Library staff who identify individuals that may benefit from the S2H program may contact the S2H staff through a call to 3-1-1. S2H outreach workers typically respond within three hours. The S2H program is available as needed at any branch location within the S2H catchment area.

While the TPH nurse and the S2H staff offer support to public service staff addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, they do not replace the role of staff and security guards in dealing with incidents arising from social, behavioural and emotional problems.

CONCLUSION

As described above, a model with a scheduled guard presence in branches, is considered the most effective model that provides a visible, proactive and preventative presence in the branch, maintaining a safe and welcoming environment.

The annual review is currently underway to assess the need for security guards, branch by branch, to consider the number of hours at each branch and to re-assess the use of mobile guards. Options under consideration include: eliminating the mobile guard service, reducing the number of mobile guards and reducing the coverage to afternoons and evenings and assigning the guard to a group of branches to be a more visible presence in those branches, for longer periods of time. Proposed changes for mobile guard deployment will be piloted during the last year of the current contract ending July 2015. This would allow the Library to assess the effectiveness of the change in preparation for the next competitive procurement process for security guard services. The results of the review and the potential cost savings will be incorporated into the Library's operating budget submission for 2015. Savings of approximately \$100,000 are anticipated for the final year of the contract as a result of this year's review.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Reported incidents and deployment of security guards by branch