



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Open Hours Implementation Plan – Update (2024)

Date: September 18, 2023

To: Toronto Public Library Board

From: City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an updated Open Hours Implementation Plan for the Toronto Public Library Board's approval, which will support the Board's request to include an Open Hours enhancement as part of its 2024 budget submission. The report also seeks the Board's endorsement of the proposed multi-phased implementation approach to achieve the Library's Open Hour Vision. Costing of the 4-phased implementation plan is also included.

The intent of the Open Hours Implementation Plan is to provide a standardized approach to increasing open hours across the library, with the goal of achieving the Board's Open Hours Vision. It drives strategic outcomes such as greater digital inclusion opportunities through increased access to the internet, Wi-Fi and computers; increased early childhood literacy programming; and reduced barriers to access for equity-deserving groups, including seniors and youth. It improves access to welcoming public spaces, washrooms, study spaces, Youth Hubs, programming, staff expertise and other branch library services. With 100 locations distributed across the city and integrated into its neighbourhoods,

library branches function as community hubs. They are popular, well-used public spaces, meeting the needs of residents within their immediate communities.

Increasing open hours responds to post-pandemic patterns of work, study, education and leisure in Toronto and helps to advance and increase the impact of key City of Toronto strategies, including the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy and Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020. A key finding from public consultations done as part of Toronto Public Library's Strategic Planning process, as well as ongoing customer surveys, indicates that easy, convenient and local access to library services, at the customer's point of need, is very important to Torontonians.

Hours are allocated to branches based on the following principles, noting that Toronto Public Library (TPL) applies an equity lens to all of its service development and delivery frameworks.

- TPL's 19 largest and busiest branches offering the most services have the highest number of hours. These branches are spread out across the city to provide geographic equity and most provide service to Neighbourhood Improvement Area (NIA) communities;
- With an equity lens applied to the remaining 81 branches, additional hours are added in the communities that need them most. Therefore, branches serving NIA communities receive more hours, and branches that do not serve NIA communities receive fewer additional hours;
- Busyness is also factored into the number of hours allocated, with busier branches receiving more hours.

Since the Board first approved the Open Hours Implementation Plan in 2006, 85% of TPL's full Open Hours Vision has been achieved, with 32,531 total annual hours of service added. Over 40%, or 13,812, of these additional hours increased service at 21 branches that serve NIAs. Provision of Sunday service has more than doubled, increasing from 27 to 59 branches.

Implementation of the phases proposed in this report will add an additional 27,922 hours of service annually. This will bring TPL's total annual hours of

service to 316,852, achieving 93% of its Open Hours Vision, increasing service hours at 17 branches serving NIAs.

In preparation for the 2024 operating budget submission, this updated Open Hours Implementation Plan has been divided into four phases. Phases 1, 2 and 3 are spread over three years, from 2024 to 2026. This includes expanded Monday to Saturday hours, more branches offering Sunday service, and increased Sunday hours. Phase 4 comprises the addition of late night service and 8-hour Sundays at our largest, busiest locations. Costing for Phases 1 to 3 is provided in this report and will be included in the funding request. Costing for Phase 4 has not been included, and will not be part of the funding request, as there is currently no provision for these hours of work within the Collective Agreement.

The updated costing for the first three phases is \$10.967 million. This represents a 5% increase to TPL's 2023 operating budget while representing a 10% increase to current hours of operation – more than doubling the return on the investment by enabling the Library to leverage and maximize the full capacity of its resources and existing infrastructure. Pending Board approval of this report, the updated plan, including details of the costing and implementation, will be presented at the October 30, 2023 Board Meeting as part of the 2024 Operating Budget Submission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. approve the updated Open Hours Implementation Plan; and
2. endorse the phased approach to implementation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The updated costing for the updated Open Hours Implementation Plan is \$10.967 million in 2024 dollars and is comprised of the following:

Phase 1: \$2.450 million (\$5.375 million annualized) starting in 2024;

Phase 2: \$1.675 million (\$4.112 million annualized) starting in 2025;

Phase 3: \$0.494 million (\$1.481 million annualized) starting in 2026; and

Phase 4: funding request to be determined as there is currently no provision for these hours of work within the Collective Agreement.

The \$10.967 million estimate to implement Phase 1, 2 and 3 of the updated Open Hours Implementation Plan will result in 27,922 more hours of service annually. This represents a 5% increase to TPL's 2023 operating budget while representing a 10% increase to current hours of operation – more than doubling the return on the investment by enabling the Library to leverage and maximize the full capacity of its resources and existing infrastructure. The investment in the Open Hours Implementation Plan is a cost efficient way to meet increasing demand, to deliver greater service levels to residents and communities across the city, and to help the City of Toronto achieve many of its strategic objectives.

The updated costing of \$10.967 million for the updated Open Hours Implementation Plan will be included in TPL's 2024 Operating Budget Submission as a service enhancement request.

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

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Opening up our Public Space is a key priority of TPL's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, *Vital to Toronto – Building Success, Resilience and Well-Being for our City*. The Library aims to create and animate accessible, inclusive spaces that are flexible and sustainable to inspire Torontonians to be and grow together. Increasing branch open hours in neighbourhoods across the city is one example of how this will be achieved. Improving branch infrastructure and technology to efficiently offer extensive open hours is embedded in TPL's Service Delivery Model, Digital Strategy and Facilities Master Plan.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Open Hours Implementation Plan will have a positive impact on all equity deserving groups. The plan standardizes and increases open hours across the system in order to improve access to library services, while prioritizing access to areas of the city serving equity-deserving residents. Since 2006, TPL has increased annual hours of service by 13,812 at 21 branches that serve Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs). 17 branches serving NIAs will receive additional hours as part of the next phases of implementation.

The investment in TPL's budget through the Open Hours Implementation Plan will help advance key City strategies, including Toronto Newcomer Strategy, Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy, Toronto Seniors Strategy 2.0, Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020, Toronto Youth Equity Strategy, SafeTO, the Reconciliation Action Plan, Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, Gender Equity Strategy, as well as TPL's Strategic Plan.

DECISION HISTORY

At its June 6, 2005 meeting, the Board [requested](#) a report concerning branch open hours across the city.

The Library's vision for Open Hours was developed and detailed in a report ["The Best Thing a Library Can Be is Open"](#), which was adopted by the Board at its January 16, 2006 meeting.

The [implementation plan for the Open Hours vision](#) was approved by the Board at its June 19, 2006 meeting.

At the Budget Committee meeting on December 18, 2017, the Budget Committee requested a briefing note on:

BU39.1 #21. Operating funds necessary to fully implement Toronto Public Library's "Open Hours Plan" phased in over a 4-year period from 2019 to 2022.

An interim briefing note was provided to the Budget Committee on January 9, 2018, which indicated that 32% of the Open Hours Implementation Plan had been accomplished by the end of 2017. The briefing note also indicated that the Open Hours Implementation Plan would be reviewed and updated, in order to consider additional factors influencing its implementation, such as new technologies, population growth, evolving library trends, customer priorities, and improved access to metrics.

At its meeting on June 18, 2018, the Board approved the [Open Hours Plan – 2018 Review](#) board report, which included updated costing for the plan and directed TPL staff to include the revised plan in TPL's 2019 operating budget submission.

At its meeting on August 16, 2018, the Board approved the [Open Hours Plan 2018 - Implementation](#) board report and presentation that detailed a phased implementation plan for the Open Hours Plan to be included in TPL's 2019 operating budget submission. Board members also requested additional information:

1. The total cost of the investment made in Neighbourhood Improvement Area (NIA) branches versus non-NIA branches.
2. The total number of staff that would be added to the staff complement as a result of the full implementation of the Open Hours Plan, including total full time equivalents (FTE), as well as a breakdown of full-time and part-time positions.

At its meeting on February 24, 2020, the Board adopted TPL's [2020 Operating Budget](#) that included funding for additional open hours for TPL branches that support a youth hub. In 2022 and 2023, hours expanded at two locations following capital projects.

At its meeting on December 5, 2022, the Board considered a revised 2023 operating budget hours enhancement as requested by the Board at its October 25, 2022 meeting. The Board decided to defer the Open Hours enhancement request included in the 2023 operating budget submission to 2024 as recorded in the [Minutes](#).

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Increased branch hours are a cost-efficient way to increase access to library services that achieve important economic, social and health outcomes for Toronto residents. Increasing open hours responds to the changing patterns of work, study, education and leisure in Toronto. It supports outcomes such as:

- Supporting residents as Toronto continues to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Major trends in post-pandemic use include increased demand for study/work space; support with technology; Internet access, wireless and printing services; support for children's reading and COVID learning loss; and budget-friendly recreation. More hours expand access to all of these services.
- Removing barriers for residents who experience the time pressures of a busy urban life; and supporting community safety and quality of life, especially for equity-deserving groups and people experiencing isolation, including seniors and youth. The prioritization of NIA communities in the Open Hours Implementation Plan also ensures that these neighbourhoods will see particular benefit from this implementation;
- Providing a safe and engaging out-of-school destination for children and youth, where they can socialize, study and learn. The Open Hours Implementation Plan increases the number of branches that are open on school days (including all NIA branches), positively impacting children and youth who are seeking a safe and engaging destination outside of school hours. Longer hours support Youth Hubs where almost 60% of participants report having discovered a new interest or learned about new opportunities to be involved in their communities.
- Enabling the Library to provide more programming to children and families, supporting early childhood literacy.
- Contributing to economic and workforce development by meeting the information needs of remote workers, job seekers, small business owners and entrepreneurs, and addressing the growing demand for space and access to technology, the internet/wireless and computers, supporting digital literacy and digital inclusion.
- Benefits all Torontonians by providing expanded opportunities to enjoy the city's and their community's cultural and literary life. Sunday hours in

particular are family friendly and in high demand everywhere. They also serve people whose work keeps them from visiting the library during other days of the week. Library use, including visits, increases whenever Sunday service is added.

COMMENTS

The Open Hours Vision

TPL's Open Hours Vision addresses the need for improved and equitable access to branch service across the city and sets out the framework and targets for its achievement. It identifies standardized bands of open hours, which are set for Monday to Saturday service, as well as Sunday service. These specific bands optimize hours of operation, staffing and scheduling efficiencies, and support consistent customer experience across the city. Bands of Sunday hours are included separately, as Sunday service is operationalized differently, according to provisions in the Collective Agreement.

Table 1 below shows all of the bands of hours, the schedule of hours associated with them, and the number of branches that will be in each band when the Open Hours Vision is fully implemented.

Table 1: Open Hours Vision

Bands of Weekly Hours	Schedule of Hours	Vision # of branches
Monday – Saturday Service		
83 hours 6 days with five late nights until midnight	Monday – Friday: 9am – midnight; Saturday: 9am – 5pm	19
65.5 hours 6 days with 5 nights	Monday – Friday: 9am – 8:30pm Saturday: 9am – 5pm	23
62 hours 6 days with 4 nights	Monday – Thursday: 9am – 8:30pm Friday: 9am – 5pm Saturday: 9am – 5pm	26
50.5 hours 6 days with 3 nights	Monday: 10am – 8:30pm Tuesday and Thursday: 12:30pm – 8:30pm Wednesday and Friday: 10am – 6pm	20
40 hours 5 days with 2 nights	Tuesday and Thursday: 12:30pm – 8:30pm Wednesday and Friday: 10am – 6pm Saturday: 9am – 5pm	10
Sunday Service		
Seasonal (Sept – June)	Noon – 5pm	40
Year round (Jan – Dec)	Noon – 8pm	27

Implementation Methodology

Hours are allocated to branches based on the following principles, noting that TPL applies an equity lens to all of its service development and delivery frameworks.

- TPL's 19 largest and busiest branches offering the most services have the highest number of hours. These branches are spread out across the city to provide geographic equity and most provide service to Neighbourhood Improvement Area (NIA) communities;

- With an equity lens applied to the remaining 81 branches, additional hours are added in the communities that need them most. Therefore, branches serving NIA communities receive more hours, and branches that do not serve NIA communities receive fewer additional hours;
- Busyness is also factored into the number of hours allocated, with busier branches receiving more hours.

Progress to Date

Since the Board first approved the Open Hours Implementation Plan in 2006, 85% of TPL's full Open Hours Vision has been achieved, with 32,531 total annual hours of service added. Over 40%, or 13,812, of these additional hours increased service at 21 branches that serve NIAs. Provision of Sunday service has more than doubled, increasing from 27 to 59 branches.

Implementation of the phases proposed in this report will add an additional 27,922 hours of service annually. This will bring TPL's total annual hours of service to 316,852, achieving 93% of its Open Hours Vision, increasing service hours at 17 branches serving NIAs.

Progress on the Open Hours Vision has been achieved through a number of strategies and initiatives, including the implementation of operational and technological efficiencies, increased funding to support the Library's and the City's strategic objectives, and the addition of new branches:

- Between 2007 and 2015, the Board approved expanded open hours (Monday to Saturday) at 30 branches, which were enabled by implementing efficiencies including the introduction of self check-out, RFID technology and revised scheduling practices;
- During this period, the Board also approved the opening of two new branches, which were opened in 2014 (Fort York) and 2015 (Scarborough Civic Centre);
- The Board also approved the addition of Sunday service hours to 32 branches between 2016 and 2020, supported by the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy funding;

- Additional Monday to Saturday hours were implemented at eight branches offering Youth Hub service in 2020;
- In 2020 and 2023, hours expanded at two locations following completed capital projects.

Phasing of the Implementation Plan

A phased implementation to complete the Open Hours Implementation Plan is being proposed. Phasing allows the cost to be spread over multiple budget years. It facilitates implementation by distributing hiring and onboarding work over time and it allows for the opportunity for changes to the Collective Agreement to adjust hours of work to accommodate 8-hour Sundays and late night service.

Costs and timelines have been established for Phases 1 through 3. Phase 4 costs and timelines are yet to be determined. The addition of 8-hour Sundays and late night service will be considered as a part of a future budget request for expansion and completion of the Open Hours Implementation Plan.

The following table shows the number of branches offering service in each band of hours in the full vision, what is currently being offered, and in each of the four phases.

Table 2 – Phased Implementation of Open Hours Vision

Bands of Weekly Hours	Full Vision # of Branches	Current # of Branches	Phase 1 2024	Phase 2 2025	Phase 3 2026	Phase 4 TBD Full Vision Achieved
Monday – Saturday Service						
83 hours 6 days with five late nights until midnight	19	0	0	0	0	19
65.5 hours 6 days with 5 nights	23	33	33	33	42	23
62 hours 6 days with 4 nights	26	20	20	29	26	26
50.5 hours 6 days with 3 nights	20	13	35	26	20	20
40 hours 5 days with 2 nights	10	32	10	10	10	10
Sunday Service						
Seasonal (Sept – June) 3.5 hours	0	40	45	0	0	0
5 hours	40	0	0	45	45	40
Year round (Jan – Dec) 3.5 hours	0	19	22	0	0	0
5 hours	0	0	0	22	22	0
8 hours	27	0	0	0	0	27

In Phase 1 (2024)

- 22 branches (half serving NIAs) move from 40 hours to 50.5 hours per week, adding one additional day and one additional evening of service to these branches, and achieving the Open Hours Vision for 40 hour branches by reducing this number to 10.

- 13 branches gain additional Sunday hours, with 8 of them gaining Sunday service for the first time. Five branches gain seasonal Sunday service and eight branches gain year round Sunday service.

In Phase 2 (2025)

- Nine branches move from 50.5 hours to 62 hours per week, adding one additional evening of service to these branches
- All 67 branches (31 serving NIAs) offering seasonal and full year service increase to five hours of service on Sundays

In Phase 3 (2026)

- Nine branches (eight serving NIAs) move to 65.5 hours per week, adding one additional evening of service to these branches.

Summary of Progress to Date per Phase

Table 3 provides a summary of the progress that Board has made, by phase, towards its Open Hours Vision. The chart details progress made by total numbers of hours added annually, cumulative annual hours achieved, and percentage of Vision achieved.

Table 3 – Progress to Vision per Phase

	Phase 1 2024	Phase 2 2025	Phase 3 2026	Phase 4 TBD Full Vision Achieved
Total # hours added (annual)	13,272	9,424.5	5,226	24,432
Cumulative annual hours (current 288,929.5)	302,201.5	311,626	316,852	341,284
% of Vision Achieved	88%	91%	93%	100%

Costing details of the proposed phasing can be found in Attachment 1.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Vickery Bowles
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Open Hours Implementation Plan – Update (2024) Costing

Attachment 1 - Open Hours Implementation Plan - Update (2024) costing

	Implementation	2024		2025		2026		2027		TOTAL	
		Cost (in \$M)	FTEs	Cost (in \$M)	FTEs	Cost (in \$M)	FTEs	Cost (in \$M)	FTEs	Cost (in \$M)	FTEs
Phase 1											
50.5 hours - 6 days with 3 nights at 22 branches (11 in NIAs)	July 2024	\$ 1.974	44.9	\$ 1.974						\$ 3.949	44.9
Full Sunday expansion - 3.5 hrs Sundays at 13 branches (3 in NIAs)	September 2024	\$ 0.475	7.0	\$ 0.951						\$ 1.426	7.0
		\$ 2.450	51.9	\$ 2.925	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ 5.375	51.9
Phase 2											
62 hours - 6 days with 4 nights at 9 branches	July 2025	\$ 0.914	20.6	\$ 0.914						\$ 1.828	20.6
Full Sunday expansion - 5.0 hrs Sundays at 67 branches (31 in NIAs)	September 2025	\$ 0.761		\$ 1.522						\$ 2.284	-
		\$ -	-	\$ 1.675	20.6	\$ 2.436	-	\$ -	-	\$ 4.112	20.6
Phase 3											
65.5 hours - 6 days with 5 nights at 9 branches (8 in NIAs)	September 2026	\$ 0.494	17.3	\$ 0.987						\$ 1.481	17.3
Phase 4											
8 hour Sundays and late night service to midnight	To be determined										
TOTAL		\$ 2.450	51.9	\$ 4.600	20.6	\$ 2.930	17.3	\$ 0.987	-	\$ 10.967	89.8
Annual Hours Increase		13,272.0		9,424.5		5,226.0					

Open Hours Implementation Plan

2024 Update

Moe Hosseini-Ara, Director, Branch Operations
& Customer Experience

Toronto Public Library Board Meeting
September 18, 2023



TPL's Open Hours Implementation Plan

the best thing a library can be is open

- **Drives strategic outcomes** such as
 - greater digital inclusion
 - increased children literacy supports
 - reduced barriers to access for equity-deserving groups, including seniors and youth.
- **Responds to post-pandemic patterns of work, study, education and leisure**
- **Helps to advance and increase the impact of key City of Toronto strategies**, including
 - the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy
 - Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020





TPL's Open Hours Implementation plan methodology



Hours are allocated to branches based on the following principles:



- 19 largest, busiest branches offering the most services have most hours. These branches provide geographic equity and most serve NIAs
- For remaining 81 branches, additional hours are added in the communities that need them most
 - Branches serving NIAs receive more hours; branches not serving NIAs receive fewer additional hours
- Busyness is also a factor – busier branches receive more hours

Bands of Weekly Hours	Schedule of Hours	Vision # of branches
Monday - Saturday Service		
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TPL's Open Hours Implementation Plan

the vision

Standardized bands of hours

- optimize hours of operation, staffing, scheduling efficiencies
- support consistent customer experience

TPL's Open Hours Implementation Plan

progress to date



85% of vision achieved

32,531 total annual hours added

42% ↑
added at **21 branches**
that serve NIAs.
(13,812 hours)

provision of **Sunday service**
more than doubled

27 → **59** branches

implementation
of phases 1-3



93% of vision achieved
27,922 annual hours added

TPL's Open Hours Implementation Plan

progress to date

- 2007 - 2015**
 - **Expanded open hours** (Monday to Saturday) **at 30 branches enabled by efficiencies** (self check-out, RFID, revised scheduling practices)
 - **The opening of two new branches** – Fort York (2014), Scarborough Civic Centre (2015)
- 2016 - 2020**
 - **Addition of Sunday service hours to 32 branches**, supported by the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy funding;
 - **Additional Monday to Saturday hours at 8 branches offering Youth Hub service;**
- 2020 - 2023**
 - **Expanded hours at 2 locations** following completed capital projects.



TPL's Open Hours Implementation plan phased approach – rationale

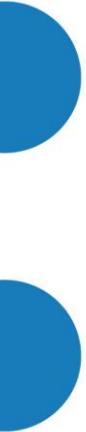
- Allows costs to be spread over multiple budget years
- Facilitates implementation by distributing hiring and onboarding work over time
- Allows for development of strategies to adapt TPL's safety & security program to late-night service
- Allows for the opportunity to negotiate changes to the Collective Agreement

TPL's Open Hours Implementation Plan phased approach

Bands of Weekly Hours	Full Vision # of Branches	Current # of Branches	Phase 1 2024	Phase 2 2025	Phase 3 2026	Phase 4 TBD Full Vision Achieved
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5 hours	0	0	0	22	22	0
8 hours	27	0	0	0	0	27

TPL's Open Hours Implementation Plan: updated costing

	Implementation Date	2024		2025		2026		2027		TOTAL	
		Cost (\$M)	FTEs	Cost (\$M)	FTEs	Cost (\$M)	FTEs	Cost (\$M)	FTEs	Cost (\$M)	FTEs
Phase 1											
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		\$ 2.450	51.9	\$ 4.600	20.6	\$ 2.930	17.3	\$ 0.987	-	\$ 10.967	89.8
Budget Increase				1.2%		2.2%		1.4%		0.4%	
Annual Hours Increase (Phase 1 to 3)				13,272.0		9,424.5		5,226.0			
Annual Hours Increase (Phase 4)										27,922.5	
											24,412.0



thank you
questions?