

**2008 - 2011 Strategic Plan: Summary of Achievements**

<b>Date:</b>	April 30, 2012
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Public Library Board
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian

**SUMMARY**

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The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of achievements resulting from the implementation of *Our Shared Stories: Writing the Future of Toronto's Library*, Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan 2008 - 2011. The Toronto Public Library Board is currently developing the next strategic plan. Achievements related to the 2008 - 2011 plan will inform the environmental scan and provide context for the new plan. Reporting on achievements related to the strategic plan supports public engagement and accountability with residents and stakeholders.

The 2008 - 2011 strategic plan provided a framework for developing annual operating and capital budgets, departmental and branch work plans, fundraising priorities, partnerships and grant applications. Progress was made on addressing many of the plan's goals. Significant achievements include: the further development of literacy programs for preschool children, youth and adults; improved access to virtual services through a new website and the expansion of wireless service to all branches; new cultural programs, including the Keep Toronto Reading Festival with programs across the City; and the launch of the Bram and Bluma Appel Salon at the Toronto Reference Library. Attendance at Ready for Reading programs for pre-schoolers increased by 13.5%; at youth programs, attendance increased by 50.9% and at seniors' programs, attendance increased by 71.3%. Total library usage increased 14.4% from 2008-2011 reflecting the plan's goal of increasing participation in library services and programs among residents of all ages and backgrounds.

Potential areas for continued focus in the Library Board's new strategic plan include:

- excellence in customer service;
- further development of the Library's role in promoting literacy and the joy of reading for all ages;
- expanded access to more online self-service features and to e-content;
- improved access to technology in branches;
- a continued focus on increasing efficiency of all operations.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no financial impacts resulting from this report beyond what has already been approved in the current year's operating budget.

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

## **DECISION HISTORY**

The Library Board approved *Our Shared Stories: Writing the Future of Toronto's Library Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan 2008 - 2011* at its October 20, 2008 meeting. Each year, a work plan was developed to advance the themes and goals. Achievements were reported annually to the Board.

## **COMMENTS**

The Library's 2008 - 2011 strategic plan was informed by an extensive environmental scan, including an analysis of Toronto's demographics and consultation with stakeholders, residents and staff. Work plans were used as a framework for developing operating and capital budgets, fundraising priorities as well as partnerships and grant applications.

A high-level summary of four-year achievements and potential future directions related to the plan is included in Attachment One and summarized below by theme and goal. Areas for continued focus are also outlined.

## **OVERVIEW**

From 2008 - 2011, overall library usage increased as services and programs were aligned with strategic plan themes and goals to address Toronto's changing demographics and user needs. The City of Toronto's designated 13 priority neighbourhoods are located in suburban communities. Through partnering with Neighbourhood Action Teams, emphasis was placed on developing strategies to support equitable access to service in priority neighbourhoods and across the City. Statistics refer to the period from 2008 to 2011, unless stated.

### **A. FOCUS: ENGAGING TORONTO'S DIVERSE COMMUNITIES - IN THE CITY AND IN ITS NEIGHBOURHOODS**

This focus addressed the Library's role in supporting local communities and City-building with libraries as visible, accessible community hubs. It also included audience-specific goals for distinct age groups: preschool children, youth and older adults.

## **Goal One: Encourage participation in City Life**

*The Library connects residents to communities through participation in City-wide and local celebrations, and offers programs and events about Toronto's history, culture and democratic life*

The Library partnered in many cultural celebrations and events with a strong role in promoting local history through unique collections and publications, including *St. Clair West in Pictures* and *The Most Attractive Resort in Town*, Heritage Toronto plaques on buildings, local history displays and participation in local history walks.

Residents engaged in discussions on City issues through public meetings, events and consultations held in Library branches. The annual June Callwood Lecture focused on social justice issues for example, in 2008 the lecture was *Justice Denied: the Wrongfully Convicted in Canada* and featured James Lockyer, a lawyer and founding director of the Association in Defence of the Wrongly Convicted. The Library partnered in *Civics 101* a program for residents to learn about municipal governance with the library providing resource materials from its collections. A complementary user education program, *Your City on the Web* focused on access to municipal information online. To increase the accessibility of services, the Library conducted consultations on the implementation of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. In 2011, the Library consulted on the Core Service Review and the operating budget. Each year, there were consultations on branch capital projects.

### **Key Results:**

- There were 6,119 programs offered through partnerships with community groups and agencies; an increase of 7%
- A variety of programs on City issues, heritage and civic engagement

Future developments could include a continued focus on developing the Library's role as community hub in partnership with other City services and increased access to local history resources through digitization of the Library's unique holdings and the use of digital and social media tools to create local history projects.

## **Goal Two: Promote greater participation in Library services and programs**

*The Library is accessed and used by residents of all ages, backgrounds and abilities*

Use of branch-based and online services increased in most measures. Collections address the needs and interests of a broad range of Torontonians. Social media and online tools promoted the Library to new audiences.

**Key Results:**

- Overall library usage including electronic and non-electronic uses increased from 86,163,191 in 2008 to 98,839,345 in 2011 an increase of 14.7%<sup>1</sup>
- Overall program attendance increased 107% and programs delivered in partnership with community groups and agencies increased 7%
- Expanded open hours at 21 locations resulting from efficiencies gained through the installation of self service check out
- Built relevant and popular collections in a broad range of formats, including graphic novels, e-books and e-audio reading with browsing collections to support literacy, lifelong learning and the joy of reading with a 11.6% increase in circulation over four years

Future developments could include broader access and availability of e-content delivery online and in Library branches to reflect growing demand. New metrics could be developed to track a broader range of Library uses.

**Goal Three: Support Toronto's children in developing early reading skills**

*The Library contributes to children's future success by developing pre-reading skills and a lifelong interest in reading*

The Library expanded the Ready for Reading program with a strong branch-based presence.

**Key Results:**

- Established the Library as leader in fostering a love of reading and early literacy skills through the expansion of the *Ready for Reading*, a program which teaches five essential pre-reading skills to pre-school children, parents and caregivers as a foundation for future success. Ready for Reading includes both collections and programs to foster a love of reading in young children; programs are offered in library branches and in community locations
  - Overall attendance at Ready for Reading Programs, including children, parents and caregivers grew 13.5% since 2009, the first full year of implementation
- KidsStops, play-based early literacy centres, were installed at four renovated branches
- Delivered Kindergarten Outreach to young families through welcome packages delivered to all Toronto kindergarten classes
- Attendance at TD Summer Reading Club programs increased 11.9%

Future development could include stronger online presence for Ready for Reading and adjusting program schedules and outreach to improve accessibility for parents and

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<sup>1</sup> Overall library usage includes: circulation, in library use, visits, reference questions, program attendance, workstation use, wireless usage, virtual visits, licensed database searches, downloaded eTitles circulation and electronic reference requests

preschoolers, including those in all-day kindergarten as well as strategies to encourage reading among school-age children, especially boys.

### **Goal Four: Support youth in their academic achievement as a foundation for success**

*The Library supports youth in formal education by supporting literacy and access to information*

The Library reached many youth through the High School Outreach Campaign and *Word Out!* the youth summer reading club, was established.

#### **Key Results:**

- Supported Toronto's youth in building information literacy skills through the High School Outreach Campaign delivered through the Toronto District and Toronto Catholic District School Boards with emphasis on reaching all schools in the City's thirteen priority neighbourhoods in each year of the plan
- Reached 93,241 youth through the High School Outreach Campaign promoting online resources
- Homework Clubs were expanded to 11 locations across the City; for example newcomer hubs at Sanderson, Centennial and Albert Campbell had 13,771 visits by youth in 2011

Future developments could include an enhanced national or provincial profile and participation in *Word Out!* through partnerships and further strategies to support digital literacy and reading as a foundation for academic success. The Library developed homework clubs through partnerships with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, universities and community agencies. A sustainable model could be developed to support homework clubs in areas of high demand.

### **Goal Five: Engage our youth in ways that are meaningful to them with emphasis on leadership skills and lifelong learning**

*The Library is responsive to the needs of youth and provides volunteer opportunities to support future success*

The Library engaged youth in planning services through Youth Advisory Groups at 38 branches and as volunteers in reading support programs for children.

#### **Key Results:**

- There are now 40 Youth Advisory Groups across the City
- The number of programs offered for youth increased 37.5% and attendance at youth programs increased 51% between 2008 and 2011
- The number of youth volunteers increased by 34.0% from 2,103 to 2,818 between 2008 and 2011

Future developments could include the expansion of youth volunteer opportunities, including supporting older adults in improving online literacy skills.

### **Goal Six: Enhance older adults' quality of life and access to lifelong learning**

*The Library will develop services and program of relevance to older adults, a large and growing demographic group in the City*

The Library increased staff supports for the development of seniors' services and developed programs in partnership for seniors including Grey Matters. As Toronto's population ages, services for seniors will become increasingly important.

#### **Key Results:**

- Increased the number of programs for adults by 73.8% with a corresponding increase in attendance of 107.0% from 2008-2011
- Established a Senior Service Specialist and service committee with a focus on older adults; built community based partnerships
- Piloted the Joint Internet Mentoring (JIM) Program, an intergenerational program at Richview and expanded to other locations. Funding was received from the New Horizons for Seniors Program
- Conducted public focus groups on services to seniors and consultation on alternate format collections to improve accessibility and inform collection development

Future developments will include new initiatives to ensure compliance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and related regulations, and could include strategies to address unmet demand for information literacy courses and lifelong learning programs delivered with community partners. Services and programs could continue to address the growth in the older adult population.

## **B. FOCUS: ADDRESSING THE GROWING INCOME GAP**

This focus addressed increasing income polarization in Toronto, from the Library's service focus to provide access to literacy and lifelong learning, and accessible recreation and cultural experiences.

### **Goal One: Address the needs of vulnerable individuals and neighbourhoods, working in partnerships with others**

*Library branches provide access to information and resources to support residents in improving their life circumstances*

#### **Key Results:**

- Supported the resilience of Toronto communities and residents in the economic downturn through access to collections, online resources, study and meeting spaces, and internet access

- Participated in Neighbourhood Action Teams in the 13 priority neighbourhoods to increase access to services in local communities
- Expanded services for newcomers through the Library Settlement Partnership funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and through additional collections, which support skills upgrading and job search and support for small businesses
- Working in partnership with the City of Toronto and Toronto Business Development Centre, the Library established the Business Inc. series to provide support to small business owners

Future developments could address continued support for financial literacy and for those engaged in literacy and skills upgrading.

## **Goal Two: Focus on supporting literacy and educational goals for adults**

*The Library supports residents, including newcomers, in gaining literacy skills and accessing information to support lifelong learning, skills upgrading and employment*

### **Key Results:**

- Supported adults in gaining literacy skills through the Adult Literacy Program- from 2008 to 2011 there was a 42.2% increase in the number of adult learners participating in the program
- Provincial funding for the Adult Literacy Program increased 100% from 2008-2011 through additional core and one time project funding

## **C. FOCUS: EXPANDING ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL - OUR LIVES IN DIGITAL TIMES**

This focus addressed the increased importance of providing access to online information and in-branch technology.

### **Goal One: Create an outstanding virtual reference library**

*The Library provides self service access to full range of Library services online 24/7 including ebooks and digitized materials*

The Library successfully launched a new website integrating the catalogue of library materials, program and branch information in a single search. Self service features, including managing your account and placing holds were improved.

Online card registration, program registration and fines payment (planned for 2012) were not achieved. An online fines program is planned for 2012.

### **Key Results:**

- Virtual visits increased by 13.6% over four years
- Circulation of e-content increased 550.6%

Future development could include additional online self service features and apps for mobile users.

## **Goal Two: Ensure access to technology for all**

*The Library provides access to bandwidth, computers and technology to address the digital divide and the increasing importance of electronic information in all aspects of City life.*

The Library made substantive progress in improving access to bandwidth and wireless in Library branches. In 2008, the Library Board approved participation in the City agreement for a high-speed fiber network. The fiber network will link all branches to the Library's computing centre at 1GB bandwidth (10 to 100 times more than current bandwidth at no additional operating cost) and provide greater capacity for public Internet access and audio, video and e-content downloading. Implementation began in 2010, with completion expected in 2013.

After an initial pilot in 2007, the Library began to implement wireless internet access in 2008, with the assistance of federal CIC grants for 13 branches. In 2009, the Library received provincial grant funding that was used to cover the one-time costs for wifi implementation in all remaining branches. Demand for wireless internet access has increased dramatically, especially with the widespread use of smartphones and tablets by library users.

### **Key Results:**

- Wireless service was expanded to all Library branches with a large increase in usage
- Collaborative, wired spaces for youth were established including: the Studio at Northern District; the Pro-Tech Media Lab at Kennedy Eglinton and the S.P.O.T. at Malvern opening in 2012

Future development could address the growing demand for technology, including wireless internet service, in-branch e-readers, computers and notebooks, bandwidth, and introduction of a kiosk service or download stations to provide access to virtual content in branches.

## **Goal Three: Build virtual content**

*Library collections and services are available 24/7 through a virtual branch*

The Library increased promotion of collections and digitized materials through social media channels (Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, blogs). As well, the Digital Archive was launched. Library programs of broad interest are now made available digitally.



**Key Results:**

- The availability of econtent was increased through digitization of library collections, the purchase of econtent and new services available on the website including videos of Bram and Bluma Appel Salon programs:
  - The number of eitles including books, audio and video increased 104.1% to 28,837
- Social media was used effectively to create awareness of Library services and programs with a significant increase in usage for example, a newcomer blog provides information on settlement services available in the Library and the community

Future development could include improved customer access to special collections through digitization, and collaborative content creation, and the development of a sustainable model to support online exhibits and displays.

**D. FOCUS: SUPPORTING CREATIVITY AND CULTURE**

This focus addressed the Library's role in providing access to culture as venues for cultural events and by promoting books and reading.

**Goal One: Support City-wide and local cultural expression**

*Branch libraries are venues for accessible culture, literary and arts events for local artists and authors*

**Key Results:**

- The Sun Life Financial Museum + Arts Pass (MAP) was introduced providing free access to cultural venues across the City and related cultural programs offered in Library branches
- The Art Exhibits Program was expanded to provide a venue for local artists to showcase their work
- Numerous local cultural partnerships established across the City, e.g. Urban Arts, ArtStarts, the Native Canadian Centre and Culture Days in collaboration with the Neighbourhood Arts Network

**Goal Two: Build the Library's role in providing original and accessible cultural programming**

*The Library provides access to original cultural programs*

**Key Results:**

- The opening of the Bram and Bluma Appel Salon positioned the Toronto Reference Library as a major cultural destination in the City with signature programming featuring high profile Torontonians and well-known authors, including Umberto Eco, Jeffrey Eugenides, Alexander McCall Smith, Karen Kain, Ron Maclean and Randy Bachman
- The Human Library program was launched in 2010 at five branches making it one of the largest events in the world. 200 people checked out 60 human books at the

- inaugural event garnering strong media interest and positive reviews from all participants
- A number of program series were offered including Keep Toronto Reading and the Eh List programs featuring Canadian authors

Future development could include new partnerships and events to engage residents in the City's cultural life.

## **E. FOCUS: SUPPORTING A SUSTAINABLE LIBRARY**

This focus addressed the sustainability of Library resources through an efficient infrastructure, through leadership and advocacy on public library issues and through sustainability of the budget.

The Library conducted a State of Good Repair study and continued to address the backlog in outstanding capital projects. Through participation in the City's Core Service Review and Service Efficiency Studies, the Library reduced the overall cost of Library service. Self serve features were improved online and through self serve check out in Library branches.

The Toronto Public Library Foundation successfully developed and implemented the re-vitalize Toronto Reference Library Campaign, and increased funding and support for many Library programs and services. The Library continues to investigate additional revenue streams.

### **Goal One: Promote environmentally sustainable practices**

#### **Key Results:**

- Increased the efficiency and sustainability of the Library's infrastructure by leveraging Federal Infrastructure Stimulus Funding and the successful completion of re:vitalize – the Toronto Reference Library Campaign, 12 branches were renovated. Awards were received for the quality of several branch designs and were featured in various publications including American Libraries, Access OLA, Masterpieces Library Architecture and Design, Canadian Interiors and American School and University
- Established a Green Strategy Task Group to promote green office practices including reducing printing and green procurement
- Green technologies were featured in a number of branch renovations including introducing solar panels at Cedarbrae

## **Goal Two: Engage in leadership and advocacy for the essential role of the public library in the community**

### **Key Results:**

- Advocated to improve access to e-content in public libraries with Canadian Urban Libraries Council, a critical service issue for public libraries
- Supported the development of a national reading campaign
- Provided input into the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and revisions to the Copyright Act

## **Goal Three: Ensure sustainability of the budget, staff resources and infrastructure**

### **Key Results:**

- The budget process included City and Library Service Efficiency Reviews identifying efficiencies that resulted in a reduction of the operating budget in 2012 and identified additional revenue streams
- The Library participated in the Toronto Public Library Foundation's Strategic Planning process to support fundraising growth targets through to 2016
- Diversified funding for Library services through partnership with the Toronto Public Library Foundation with annual support received for collection, programs and services, and community spaces increasing by over \$400,000 from 2008 to 2011
- The Bram and Bluma Appel Salon achieved self sufficiency through revenue generation from rentals and events
- Exceeded goal of securing \$34.2 million towards revitalization of the Toronto Reference Library, with leadership from Toronto Public Library Foundation for the re:vitalize - Toronto Reference Library Campaign: \$34.6 million was secured by the end of 2011

### **Staff**

- Initiated a diversity strategy
- Supported staff through a comprehensive staff training and development program to address legislative compliance, including the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Bill 169: Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Violence and Harassment in the Workplace
- Improved staff skills in the use of technology, social media and customer service

### **Infrastructure**

- Completed a State of Good Repair (SOGR) audit in 2009 and began the process to reduce the backlog through the capital budget. SOGR upgrades include windows, roofs, HVAC systems, and landscaping. Renovation and state of good repair projects were completed to ensure that buildings reflect current and future customer and community needs and feature accessible, high-quality and flexible public space

- Self service check-out is now available at 42 branches

Future directions include continued advocacy to address the issue of public access to econtent in public libraries. Self service and efficiency will continue to be a focus with training for staff on Lean Six Sigma. The sustainability of the Library budget will be a continued focus with ongoing efforts to develop partnerships, fundraising and other revenue streams.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Jane Pyper  
City Librarian

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: 2008 - 2011 Strategic Plan Achievements