

**Strategic Plan 2008 - 2011: Public Document,
Communication Strategy and 2009 Work Plan**

Date:	October 20, 2008
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the strategic plan public document for information and request approval for the two related documents, a communication strategy and 2009 work plan.

Development of the strategic plan was overseen by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee using a planning process and consultation strategy approved by the Board. Draft themes identified through an environmental scan were approved by the Board in March 2008 as a framework for consultation. Over 2000 residents, stakeholders and staff had input into these themes. Themes, goals and strategies shaped by the results of this consultation were approved by the Board in June 2008 and then used to create the strategic plan public document presented for information. The themes of the strategic plan are:

- Engaging Diverse Communities- in the City and its Neighbourhoods;
- Addressing the Growing Income Gap;
- Expanding Access to Technology and Online Services – Our Lives in Digital Times;
- Supporting Creativity and Culture- Participation and Access at the City and Neighbourhood Level; and
- Supporting a Sustainable Library.

The communications strategy outlines how the plan will be shared with the broader library community including residents, stakeholders, councillors and Library staff. The 2009 work plan outlines specific strategies that will be undertaken in 2009 to advance strategic plan themes and goals. An annual report on achievements related to the 2009 work plan will ensure ongoing accountability to the Library Board.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. Receives for information the strategic plan public document (Attachment One);
2. Approves the communication strategy for the strategic plan (Attachment Two) and directs staff to implement the plan;
3. Approves the 2009 work plan for the strategic plan (Attachment Three) and directs staff to report on achievements early in 2010.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's operating budget. Where appropriate, strategies in the 2009 work plan have been included in the Library's 2009 capital and operating budget submissions.

DECISION HISTORY

The Library Board has approved a number of milestones related to the strategic planning process. In May 2007, the Board approved the strategic planning process and terms of reference for the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and appointed members. At its June 2007 meeting, the Board approved a consultation strategy. The plan was created using this approved structure. In March 2008, draft themes were approved as a framework for consultation. In June 2008, the Board approved themes, goals and strategies that were shaped through this consultation.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The goal of the strategic planning process is to produce a plan which is a dynamic response to city issues and which provides a framework to develop and enhance services and facilities over the next four years. The Library's new strategic plan fulfills this goal by outlining priorities developed through in-depth research on city trends and issues and extensive consultation with residents, stakeholders, councillors, and Library staff. Successful communication of the strategic plan will result in an understanding of Library priorities, and its role in enhancing the economic, social and cultural life of the city. Successful communication of the strategic plan will support the achievement of key objectives.

COMMENTS

The Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee of the Library Board met throughout the process to provide leadership and direction and updates to the Library Board.

At its May 2007 meeting, the Board approved a four-phase process to create a strategic plan. Although the timelines were extended by the Board's adoption of cost containment measures, the strategy was implemented as approved.

Phase One of the process included completing an environmental scan. Results of the scan were shared with the Strategic Planning Steering Committee at two all days sessions where potential strategic plan themes were identified. These draft themes were approved by the Board in March as a framework for consultation.

Phase Two included completing consultation with over 2,000 residents, stakeholders, community groups using a consultation strategy approved by the Board. Results of the consultation were reviewed with the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Themes, goals and strategies were approved by the Board in June 2008.

Phase Three included developing a public document of the plan, a communication strategy for the plan and a 2009 work plan. These documents were shared with the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. This report concludes Phase Three.

Phase Four is the implementation of the strategic plan. Implementation includes communicating the plan to the broader community, incorporating themes into future years' capital and operating budgets, achieving strategies in the 2009 work plan with ongoing reporting to the Board to ensure accountability.

The themes of the strategic plan are:

- Engaging Diverse Communities- in the City and its Neighbourhoods;
- Addressing the Growing Income Gap;
- Expanding Access to Technology and Online Services- Our Lives in Digital Times;
- Supporting Creativity and Culture- Participation and Access at the City and Neighbourhood Level; and
- Supporting a Sustainable Library.

Strategic Plan Public Document

The purpose of the strategic plan public document (Attachment One) is to communicate the Library's strategic directions in an engaging and accessible manner. It reinforces the Library's ongoing mission, vision and service values and acknowledges participants involved in the consultation process. Readers of the document should gain an understanding of Toronto Public Library's vision for library service, its service culture and values, the environment that the Library is operating in and its priorities for the next four years.

Communication of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan Communication Strategy (Attachment Two) describes how the strategic plan will be shared with residents, stakeholders, councillors, partners and staff. The Strategic Plan is an advocacy tool for enhancement of Library services and programs. The goals of the communication strategy are to:

- Communicate the Library's strategic priorities;

- Build awareness of the Library's contribution to the City and its neighbourhoods and the importance of library services to residents, especially those at risk;
- Provide potential partners with information about Library priorities to develop understanding of areas of mutual interest; and
- Provide opportunities for ongoing comment on the Library's strategic priorities.

Communication vehicles include the print version of the plan, an interactive website and presentation on themes. Successful implementation of the strategy will result in an enhanced understanding of Toronto Public Library's role in improving the quality of life in Toronto, areas of mutual interest where partnerships could support strategic directions and increased resources to achieve strategic initiatives.

2009 Work plan for the Strategic Plan

The 2009 work plan for the strategic plan (Attachment Three) is a high level summary of major, system level initiatives that will be undertaken to achieve strategic plan goals. The expansion of Sunday hours and the revitalization of the Toronto Reference Library will require increased resources. A number of complementary programs and initiatives across the Library's 99 branches will bring the strategic plan to life in neighbourhoods and branches across the City. Key initiatives in 2009 include:

- expanding Library open hours to provide increased access to library services and programs;
- revitalizing the Toronto Reference Library through the launch of a capital campaign with support from the City, Province and the Foundation;
- launching the new event space at the Toronto Reference Library providing access to high profile Library programs and public event space;
- expanding the reach of the Ready for Reading program to support caregivers in creating a supportive and engaging environment for children to acquire pre literacy skills. Program enhancements include translating materials into other languages, increased outreach to work places and other convenient locations for caregivers and the addition of KidsStops at new additional locations;
- offering an enriched after school environment for children and youth with increased programming, additional homework support and programs to develop leadership and social skills with emphasis on priority neighbourhoods;
- creating a comprehensive service plan to address the needs of older adults;
- introducing a new website with a highly effective search engine to substantially improve access to Library collections, services and programs online;
- offering more digital content including books, music and video;
- using new media to reach audiences through social networking sites and other emerging technologies;
- creating a comprehensive plan to expand wireless access, increase bandwidth and offer laptop lending at piloted locations;
- supporting welcoming communities for newcomers through the expansion of the Library Settlement Partnership, related programs and collections;
- creating a comprehensive green strategy for the Library;

- negotiating a new collective agreement.

Successful achievement of these strategies will ensure that the Library continues to offer relevant, inclusive and sustainable services which meet the changing needs of the residents of Toronto.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jane Pyper
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Strategic Plan
Attachment 2: Strategic Plan 2008 – 2011 – Marketing & Communications Plan
Attachment 3: 2009 Work Plan for the Strategic Plan