

Planning and Executing Facilities Capital Projects

Date:	October 25, 2021
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to describe how Toronto Public Library (TPL) plans, budgets, and executes major projects in its ten-year Facilities Capital Project Plan. This information is context for the 2022 capital budget submission and for future Board review and approvals of project awards.

There are four main areas of focus for TPL's Facilities Capital Projects: Multi-year Planning, Design Excellence, Project Execution, and Continuous Improvement. Together they ensure that the library is able to develop, deliver and maintain the vital physical and social infrastructure that Torontonians want and need.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Facilities capital projects are funded from the capital budget, which is approved each year. Funding for the capital budget is mainly in the form of debt and development charges.

Over the last five years, TPL's capital spending has averaged 85% of approved budget, which compares favourably with average spending levels across the City.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on Oct.19, 2020, the Toronto Public Library Board approved the [2020-2031 Capital Budget and plan submission](#) of \$31.931 million debt (\$41.303 million gross) for 2021 and \$351.596 million debt (\$501.108 million gross) over 2021- 2030, comprised of 32 projects.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

TPL's Facilities Capital Projects focus on equity by seeking to understand and break down barriers to access and increasing inclusion. The design and animation of our spaces allows for everyone to feel welcome and have equitable access and opportunity to use, and benefit from, library space. The planning, design and location of library spaces must represent the expressed needs of the communities they serve and support users of all abilities to feel comfortable, welcomed and represented. Specifically, adherence to AODA standards and TPL's Indigenous Strategies goals to increase Indigenization of TPL buildings and spaces are key equity initiatives of TPL's Facilities Capital Projects.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The first strategic priority in TPL's strategic plan 2020-2024 is to open up our public spaces. To achieve this objective, TPL will create and animate accessible, inclusive spaces that are flexible and sustainable to inspire Torontonians to be and grow together. TPL's Facilities Capital Projects are critical to the Library achieving this strategic objective.

COMMENTS

There are four main areas of focus for TPL's Facilities Capital Projects, which together ensure that the library is able to develop, deliver and maintain the vital physical and social infrastructure that Torontonians want and need.

1. Multi-year Planning
2. Design Excellence
3. Project Execution
4. Continuous Improvement

Multi-year Planning

Annually, TPL assesses and updates a 10-year capital plan and budget, which builds and maintains welcoming public spaces that are accessible and inclusive. The plan is informed by:

- **TPL's Service Delivery Model:** This is the framework the Library uses to envision the possibilities that result from an investment in library infrastructure and service delivery. It is both practical and aspirational, outlining a future-oriented, systematic approach to branch and service planning. As such, it is used in capital planning to identify, articulate and prioritize branch capital needs.
- **TPL's Facilities Master Plan (FMP):** This provides a framework for capital investment in the Library's facilities infrastructure. It guides the timing and location for renovations and rebuilding projects. The plan is informed by: population and community growth studies, property condition assessments, trends in building automation technology, and requirements to provide 21st century library service throughout the library system. The FMP was developed in 2018 and will be updated by December 2021.
- **Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020** This supports healthy communities across Toronto by partnering with residents, community agencies and businesses to invest in people, services, programs and facilities in 31 identified Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs). The needs of NIAs and elements of this city strategy are factored into the FMP and into TPL's 10-year facilities capital project plan.
- **Building Condition Assessments** These are conducted regularly and provide visual assessments of all TPL branches and administrative buildings. They provide a thorough evaluation of the major building components, systems and equipment, identify life cycle concerns and deficiencies and generate forecasts for present and future expenditures required to maintain the property and assist in the development of an asset management strategy. The assessment reports are used in planning to help prioritize investment in the renovation, expansion, development, maintenance and repair of existing library facilities.
- **Development opportunities:** Also significant to the capital planning process are any new and emerging development and relocation opportunities. In on-going collaboration with CreateTO and City of Toronto Corporate Real Estate Management, TPL keeps apprised of how the city's neighbourhoods are growing and changing and where there are opportunities for TPL to relocate, renovate, or build new branches to serve community needs.
- **Shared and Joint Use Facilities.** Opportunities can also arise at branches in shared use facilities with Parks Forestry and Recreation, Toronto Community

Housing, and other City divisions or the Toronto District School Board. TPL and partners work closely together to develop and align long-term strategies, plans and budgets for these sites.

- **Strategic Planning Research & Consultation:** With each strategic planning cycle, TPL engages library customers, staff, and a wide variety of other stakeholders across the city, asking them how the library can support them and their communities now and into the future. Consultation formats include questionnaires, focus groups, surveys and roundtable discussions. This, combined with extensive research and environmental scans, results in inputs and insights that inform capital project planning.

As a result of all of these factors and considerations, the 10-year facilities capital plan changes each year. Projects are added, brought forward to begin sooner, or pushed to later years in order to seize opportunities in new neighbourhoods and developments and/or to more urgently address building condition and state of good repair concerns. On occasion, projects may be rescheduled in the plan due to reasons outside of TPL's control (for example, permit delays), thereby allowing work on another project to begin earlier than planned.

For example, the Dawes Road project was originally put forward in the capital plan to begin in 2015. This project depended on TPL purchasing the residential condominium units above the existing branch. These complex transactions were completed in 2020 and the Board approved the architectural contract in November 2020. Each year's capital plan submission reflected what was known about the project's progress and what was anticipated to occur in the coming years.

Similarly, the timing of the Northern District project has changed in recent capital plan submissions. As new information has become available (e.g. deteriorating building elements requiring immediate attention, development interest in the area), the plans for this branch and the scope of the project has changed and is now planned further into the future in the capital plan.

Multi-branch and State of Good Repair Planning

The "Multi-branch project" in the capital budget is the funding for state of good repair (SOGR) work. To date, SOGR priorities and budget have been determined by considering what work was required at each branch, each year. A better approach is to also plan by type of work, such as paving, roofing, HVAC system etc., over several years. Planning bundles of SOGR work over a three to five-year horizon is a more efficient way to procure materials and services, and execute projects.

The COVID-19 pandemic has added a new planning perspective to TPL's 2022 10-year facilities capital plan. Supply chain impacts and delays, as well as rising costs of lumber and construction material have had an impact on the current portfolio of projects. These impacts are expected to continue into 2022. As a result, cost increases and extended project timelines have been factored into the 2022 capital plan.

Board oversight and approvals

Annually, the Board reviews and approves the 10-year capital plan and budget (October-November). In addition, at different stages of a project and based on TPL Purchasing Policy, the Board may review and approve:

- awards of contracts (i.e. architects and general contractors)
- increases to awards of contracts
- changes to project budgets.

1. Design Excellence

In its strategic plan (2020-2024), TPL is committed to creating and animating accessible, inclusive spaces that are flexible and sustainable, to inspire Torontonians to be and grow together. TPL's branches are Toronto's urban living rooms in which customers can come together or be alone together, relax, make community connections, pursue ideas, engage their imagination, and develop their interests.

Branches are also neighbourhood hubs, vitally connected to the 100 diverse communities that they serve, and are important aesthetic, architectural and cultural contributions to the city. Each branch is designed to uniquely reflect the culture, heritage, and history of the neighborhoods they serve. In Toronto neighbourhoods that traditionally have had much less investment in their cultural spaces and public infrastructure, TPL branches demonstrate that each community deserves beauty and culture as much as any other community in Toronto.

So when undertaking major capital projects, TPL consistently employs the following design principles:

- **Principles of 21st century public library service:** Each TPL branch must be designed and built to deliver modern library services across its five service pillars. As important community cornerstones, branches should be attractive and welcoming spaces that can function as gathering places, as a third place, a home away from home. Branches must also allow for distinct spaces with zoning for children, youth, adults and seniors, and allow for meeting and programming spaces for performance, events and human interaction. Modern public library service also provides easy access to new and evolving technology,

to information in all its forms, and to the connectivity vital to today's social and economic success.

- **Architectural Vision** begins with architects articulating their vision of the project and TPL challenging firms to meet and exceed design principles and values.
- **Design excellence** is ensuring that all TPL branches offer beautiful and impressive, welcoming public spaces that engage communities and revitalize neighbourhoods. It also means creating flexible spaces that support many different uses and anticipate how service offerings may change in the future.
- **Alignment with the TPL Brand and Customer Experience:** TPL has the vital active ingredients to help Torontonians thrive in their city. TPL branches uniquely serve Toronto and its residents by creating value through experiences that are accessible, inclusive, knowledgeable and flexible. TPL branches reflect and support these principles and experiences.
- **A welcome environment** makes people feel comfortable by providing options that allow them to choose how to use the space. Examples of thoughtful design that contributes to a welcome environment are easy access to power outlets and Wi-Fi, “separate but together” seating, and bright, open spaces with clear sight lines.
- **Flexibility and functionality** of library space is key to delivering modern library services. For example, spaces must be able to easily transform to host diverse programs and events in addition to core library service.
- **Durability and sustainability:** The Toronto Green Standard is Toronto's sustainable design requirements for new private and city-owned developments. The Standard consists of four tiers of performance measures with supporting guidelines that promote sustainable site and building design. TPL incorporates the Toronto Green Standards on all capital projects, starting with feasibility studies.
- **Accessibility and AODA standards** are factored into the design of all TPL renovations and building projects so that physical barriers are identified, removed, and prevented.

TPL branches are consistently recognized for excellence in design:

- Toronto Urban Design Award: Albion, Mount Dennis, Pape/Danforth, St. James Town, McGregor Park
- OLA Library Building Awards: St. James Town, S. Walter Stewart, Dufferin/St. Clair, Jane/Sheppard, Bloor/Gladstone, Cedarbrae, Mount Dennis, Fort York, Scarborough Civic Centre, Albion

- Toronto Heritage Award: Bloor/Gladstone, Dufferin/St. Clair
- Ontario Association of Architects: Scarborough Civic Centre, Albion, Mount Dennis, Bloor/Gladstone, Runnymede
- Design Exchange Awards: St. James Town, Bloor/Gladstone

2. Project Execution

TPL uses Project Management Institute (PMI) standards and phases for project execution. These are best practice project management standards used in all industries.

In the **initiating** phase, the project objectives, scope, timing, and purchases and procurement activity are defined. At this stage, the service plan for the branch is defined. It describes the ideal and intended services and equipment for the branch. Similarly, the project conducts feasibility assessments to plan how the Toronto Green Standard will be adopted.

In **planning** (pre-construction), the architect is selected and design development begins. Community consultation is a key step in the development of good design. TPL engages with the public, community groups, City and partner agencies through open houses, on-line focus groups, forums and surveys, and design charrettes. TPL staff are also engaged in the design process and throughout the project.

Energy modelling, traffic studies, storm water management, site surveys are some of the technical deliverables in the planning stage. These precede site plan approvals, zoning, and Design Review Panels. Finally, building permits and construction awards are approved and issued.

When applicable, pop-up branch alternate service plans are developed and joint-use operating agreements with other City departments are arranged. Branch closure is the final step before construction begins.

On-site work occurs during the **executing (construction)** phase. Project scope, costs, cash flow, change orders and schedule are closely monitored. As construction nears completion, interior elements such as furniture, equipment, and shelving are procured. This phase ends with inspections, occupancy permits issued, and building permits closed.

The revitalized branch is turned back over to staff and facilities operations during the **closing** (post construction) phase. TPL facilities and branch staff take part in on-site inspections and training as well as building commission activities. Branch re-opening completes this phase.

The project is considered complete when all warranty inspections are done, deficiencies have been closed, invoices paid, and project documentation is completed and filed. A lessons-learned exercise is conducted to capture how the project unfolded so that future projects can adopt what went well and prevent avoidable hardship.

3. Continuous Improvement

Ongoing evaluation of how capital projects are planned and executed is key to continually improving and finding efficiencies in project delivery.

Work is currently underway to understand when different stakeholders are engaged across the life cycle of a project, for what purpose, when, and how often. An example of this is the creation of a consistent approach and timeline for defining, designing, approving and installing branch branding and signage.

Similarly, greater transparency and communication about projects and their progress to internal TPL stakeholders (staff, management, Library Board) should become a standard and expected component of all capital projects.

Continuous improvement also extends to design and construction. Physical elements designed and constructed in one branch are improved upon and incorporated in future branch projects.

CONCLUSION

TPL branches are vital physical and social infrastructure in Toronto. It is critical that they are located and equipped to meet customer needs and are in a good state of repair. This requires multi-year planning that takes into account Toronto's population, community needs, development opportunities, and the age and condition of the branches.

The 10-year capital plan and the annual refresh of this plan with partners and stakeholders demonstrates that TPL has evaluated and determined the investment required to improve the branches that serve Torontonians for years to come.

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SIGNATURE

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1. **Multi-year Planning**
2. **Design Excellence**
3. **Project Execution**
4. **Continuous Improvement**



multi-year planning: assess & update

- 2022-2031 capital plan: 29 building projects, \$406M gross
- 83% budget spending average over last 5 years
- SOGR planning evolving from branch-by-branch planning to programs of work over 3-5 year horizon



design excellence: every community deserves beauty & culture

- Principles of 21st century public library service
- Architectural vision
- Design excellence
- Alignment with the TPL brand and customer experience
- Welcome environment
Flexibility and functionality
- Durability and sustainability
- Accessibility and AODA standards



project execution: PMI standards & best practices

- Initiating
- Planning
- Executing
- Closing

continuous improvement

improving how projects are planned & executed

- Standardize stakeholder engagement points in the project lifecycle
- Improve communication about projects and their progress
- Learn from physical elements designed and constructed; incorporate improvements in future projects



tpl capital projects conclusion

vital social & physical infrastructure

- Multi-year planning takes into account:
 - Toronto's population
 - community needs
 - development opportunities
 - age and condition of the branches
- The 10-year capital plan and budget ensures branches are built and maintained to serve their communities





thank you
questions