TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2011

Themes, Goals and Strategies

June 10, 2008

THEME ONE: Engaging Diverse Communities— in the City and in its Neighbourhoods

A. Proposed Definition of the Theme (includes the following ideas)

a) Building on legacy of equity and social justice.

b) Building dynamic partnerships at the City and local level to enhance collections, services and programs.

c) Engaging residents and young people in civic affairs and civic discourse.

d) Fostering community engagement, inclusiveness and social cohesion.

e) Recognizing Toronto's complex diversity of communities: those based on age, language, gender, ethnicity, race, ability, sexual orientation and culture as well as those based on geography.

f) Support for a common Canadian identity and values while recognizing the vitality of Toronto's diverse communities.

g) Fostering interest in Canadian history, politics and issues.

h) Increasing support for preschool years, middle years and youth at critical times in their development.

i) Addressing the needs of the City's growing and diverse population of seniors, supporting their quality of life and contribution to the community.

B. Goals/Strategies

1. Encourage participation in city life

a) Actively promote opportunities for civic engagement in the City and its neighbourhoods

b) Offer resources to inform and engage individuals and communities on current issues, in partnership with community organizations

c) Review the allocation of library space balancing the need for library programs and services, programs delivered in partnership and access by community groups and individuals

d) Engage individuals of all ages, heritage societies and other interested groups in collaborating and telling vibrant stories of community experience through different media. Examples: Toronto's social movements; the immigration experience; the community of performing artists in Toronto

e) Develop an annual program cycle for the new Events Space at the Toronto Reference Library through

partnerships that maximizes the library's position as a programming destination and engages the diverse communities of the city

f)   Create forums for the discussion of community issues, e.g., Toronto Matters lecture series through City and neighbourhood lens.

g)   Capitalize on technology as a method of engaging residents.

h)   Engage communities and partners in issues and activities that matter in the local community.

i)   Promote the Library's special collections and other services to tourists and visitors as part of their Toronto experience.

2. Promote Greater Participation in Library Programs and Services

a)   Promote opportunities to participate in shaping library buildings, programs and services and report on the results of consultation activities to ensure transparency and accountability

b)   Promote opportunities to support the library as a volunteer and in Foundation activities

c)   Review library policies and procedures to strive to eliminate barriers for at risk populations and people with disabilities

d)   Extend open hours to meet the needs of diverse groups of users.

e)   Launch registration campaigns to address priority audiences –preschool, middle years, youth and seniors.

f)   Design library branches that are destinations and extend into welcoming outdoor community space; build community connections; act as community gathering spaces; and support collaborative activities.

g)   Provide daily events programs and user education services in branches

h)   In order to communicate with diverse audiences and communities engage in product/customer/service segmentation and brand development

i)   Foster broad accessibility through communication strategies and program and service improvements

j)   Complete an assessment of library services and programs for people with developmental disabilities and implement program suggestions

k)   Make library programs in branches more accessible and visible online

3. Support Toronto's Children in Early Reading Skills

a) Promote and share Toronto Public Library expertise in early literacy, literature and in encouraging reading, with other service providers

b) Develop a comprehensive outreach strategy for the Ready for Reading program from birth to age five to take the program into the community to provide convenient access to parents and caregivers with emphasis on non-users

c) Expand the Ready for Reading program and other early literacy outreach initiatives to support parents and caregivers in languages other than English

d) Expand KidsStop to designated library branches to promote early literacy

e) Extend open hours in the morning and on Sundays to support the needs of preschoolers and their families.

f) Build collections to engage preschoolers and their families in the enjoyment of reading.

g) Foster connections with day care providers and other community partners to provide easy access to materials for young children.

h) Involve all generations in family literacy.

4. Support educational achievement for youth as a foundation for future success

a) Support high levels of literacy/numeracy as a foundation for academic and employment success and to enhance quality of life – provide a wide range of materials to engage youth in reading.

b) Increase literacy and learning support for school teachers, school librarians and homeschoolers by developing and participating in online communities.

c) Expand access to high quality out of school time and summer programs to engage children and youth, to build leadership, academic and social skills and to support parents currently in the workforce to complement other community-based initiatives.

d) Build research, analytical and communication skills among youth through curriculum-based online source materials from TPL's archives and special collections.

e) Extend open hours during evenings, late evenings at targeted locations and Sundays to provide access to safe study space and computers.

5. Engage with our youth in ways that are meaningful to them, with emphasis on leadership skills and social integration

   f) Continue to offer youth leadership and volunteer opportunities within the library with emphasis on priority neighbourhoods.

   g) Continue to engage youth in planning interesting and fun programs at the city and neighbourhood level.

   h) Develop an online strategy to network with youth and to build a virtual community.

   i) Build partnerships with community-based agencies to deliver programs.

   j) Explore strategies to support newcomer youth in partnership with other agencies

   k) Expand information on volunteer and employment opportunities available for youth within the community.

   l) Address barriers to youth accessing library services including fines and fees.

6. Enhance Seniors Quality of Life and Quest for Lifelong Learning

   a) Create programs and services and collections reflecting the unique needs of three distinct groups: older adults in the workforce, active retirees, and frail elderly persons and which reflect the cultural diversity of the seniors population

   b) Create partnerships with agencies serving seniors to support seniors in life long learning and independent living

   c) Investigate methods of engaging seniors in program planning e.g. seniors advisory groups

   d) Review accessibility of library services and spaces and make improvements where required

   e) Improve access to reading materials for older adults and seniors throughout the City including popular materials and materials to support lifelong learning

   f) Build and promote collections in formats that are easily accessible for older adults including downloadable materials and large print

   g) Seek opportunities to deliver intergenerational programs

   h) Expand open hours to ensure the needs of seniors are met.

   i) Expand user education programs of interest to seniors

j) Expand access to health information and other information to improve quality of life.

k) Build capacity in home library service and other targeted services for seniors.

m) Develop a marketing strategy targeting older adults.

THEME TWO: Addressing the Growing Income Gap—Towards a City of Opportunity Shared by All

A. Proposed Definition of the Theme (includes the following ideas)

a) Prosperity linked to quality of employment.

b) Employment- linked to education.

c) Education- linked to literacy/numeracy levels.

d) Universal access to public library service – a core strength.

e) Under employment of highly educated immigrant population.

B. Goals/Strategies

7. Address the needs of vulnerable individuals and neighbourhoods working in partnership with others

a) Extend open hours to provide safe community space and to support access/study/programs when residents need them- mornings, evenings and weekends.

b) Build and maintain a strong capital program/state of good repair to provide facility upgrades, provide new technologies and act as a strong community anchor.

c) Address barriers to accessing library services, including fines and fees, in partnership with local agencies.

d) Extend access to cultural opportunities and cultural venues through Sun Life MAP program and other initiatives.

e) Provide access to collections in a variety of formats which reflect the needs of individuals and communities.

f) Contribute to community engagement and identity – strong virtual and physical presence at the neighbourhood level.

g) Build local activities which contribute to community cohesion and pride— create library/community garden projects/ celebrate local history and community festivals.

h) Use partnerships to expand outreach including Neighbourhood Action Teams and other networks

i) Continue to work with the settlement sector in coordinating service delivery.

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

8. **Focus on supporting literacy and educational goals for adults**

    a) Strengthen literacy programs to address the needs of ESL learners, early school leavers, adult learners and older adults.

    b) Support language/skills upgrading, volunteer opportunities and employment for newcomers and others.

    c) Review opportunities for deposit collections to serve individuals in institutions

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

THEME THREE: Our Lives in Digital Times— Libraries in the Virtual World

A. Proposed Definition of the Theme (includes the following ideas)

a) Strong virtual presence for the library.

b) Access includes digital content, software, hardware, Internet access and training people.

c) Technology provides new opportunities and the potential to personalize and deliver services in different ways – gives users opportunity to access services in channel of choice.

B. Goals/Strategies

9. **Create an outstanding virtual library branch**

a) Improve the Library's website and access to e-content resources by enhancing usability and user centred design

b) Build an online community by increasing the presence and voice of librarians online who will engage with users and promote library use by developing, supporting and participating daily in online communities

c) Deliver traditional services in new ways e.g. podcasting, online homework help.

d) Increase availability of self-serve online.

10. **Ensure access to technology for all**

a) Create a comprehensive strategy to enhance access to technology in library branches- including workstations, wireless, collaborative learning spaces and laptop lending

b) Address technology learning needs of specific audiences e.g. seniors or job seekers.

c) Use popular technologies to engage youth and seniors, e.g., cell phones and gaming.

d) Provide access to downloadable content in library branches

e) Increase availability of self-serve in branches.

f) Increase wireless access.

g) Consider easily accessible technologies for delivering services, e.g., telephone.

h) Remove barriers to access for people with disabilities through adaptive technologies.

11. **Build virtual content**

a) Promote virtual content and collections from a broad range of services including databases and library collections, to embrace all kinds of resources that are collected and made available in TPL's online environment.

b) Develop a multi-year plan to increase and promote online access to digitized historical content and specialized themed learning and discovery sites relating to Toronto and Canada, supported by guided exhibits.

c) Increase awareness and use of digitized reference and historic collections through partnerships with other providers and through contributions to national and provincial aggregate sites.

d) Provide opportunities for users to contribute content to sites such as the Ontario Time Machine.

e) Offer access to electronic products and services in library branches and from home, school or work

f) Use technology to provide service enhancements e.g. on-demand services such as digitization requests; access to material in older or print formats; online purchase requests

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

THEME FOUR: Supporting Creativity and Culture: Participation and Access at the City and Neighbourhood Level
A. Proposed Definition of the Theme (includes the following ideas)
a) Reflecting linguistic, regional, cultural, aboriginal, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, age and gender diversity.
b) Support for Creative Toronto – participation in Luminato, Nuit Blanche, Toronto Book Awards, LitCity, MAP and One Book.
c) Showcasing local arts talent – support both City arts initiatives and grassroots community arts expression.
B. Goals/Strategies
12. Support city-wide and local cultural expression
a) Partner in arts festivals and community/cultural events - Luminato, Nuit Blanche, Toronto Book Awards, LitCity, etc to broaden accessibility
b) Develop a comprehensive, city wide strategy to market library collections and provide forums for established and emerging authors to promote their work
c) Promote library print and electronic collections through a coordinated communications strategy creating synergy with promotional events organized by the publishing industry and media.
d) Develop strategies to preserve and extend access to TPL's special collections, and to build expertise in the rich and diverse experiences that will become the future history of this city.
e) Expand the role of library branches as hubs for culture and creativity- showcasing local arts talent.
f) Create links to indigenous, community, neighbourhood and cultural festivals.
g) Promote collections reflecting the diversity of Toronto especially in conjunction with other cultural events
h) Extend access to cultural opportunities and cultural venues through Sun Life MAP program and other initiatives.
i) Utilize new media as an opportunity to foster cultural expression.

13. **Build the Library's role in providing original and accessible cultural programming**

a) Position the Toronto Reference Library revitalization- as major creative institution and an accessible cultural/arts venue in City with extended hours to support access.

b) Build on the strengths of TPL's special, multilingual, popular and research collections.

c) Use multiple channels to engage residents in library programs- in branch programs, online interactive activities, pod casts, etc.

d) Expand cultural programming with a range of subject areas – literary, travel, current affairs, visual arts to appeal to different interests in branches across the city.

e) Promote the Library's space for local art exhibits

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

THEME FIVE: Supporting a Sustainable Library
A. Proposed Definition of the Theme (includes the following ideas)
a) Supporting environmental sustainability, promoting green practices- reducing the library's environmental foot print.
b) Engaging all residents in environmental discussions and practices.
c) Leadership and advocacy for the essential role of the public library in the community.
d) Sustainability of finance, infrastructure (buildings and IT) and staff resources.
B. Goals/Strategies
14. Promote Environmentally Sustainable Practices
a) Develop a comprehensive green strategy for the library to address buildings and systems, energy consumption, waste diversion and the reduction and recycling, and environmentally friendly alternatives to printing and photocopying.
b) Provide public education, programming and collections on "green" issues, e.g., a green focus for Writers in Residence program or Toronto Matters discussion forum on international and national best practices.
c) Use library branches as a venue for showcasing green products, services and innovations.
15. Engage in leadership and advocacy for the essential role of the public library in the community
a) Advocate for the essential role of the public library in addressing key public policy areas including the settlement of newcomers, early childhood literacy, needs of at risk youth, poverty reduction, strong neighbourhoods, environmental agenda, copyright.
b) Advocate for broad public access in decisions relating to national and international copyright law
c) Ensure the library's policy framework supports the strategic agenda.
d) Foster representation of the city's diversity at all levels of the organization.

16. **Ensure Sustainability of the Budget**.

a) Ensure sustainability of the library's budget

b)Actively promote opportunities for innovative city and local partnerships and sponsorships

c) Enhance public service delivery through value added services in partnership with the Toronto Public Library Foundation.

17. **Ensure Sustainability of Staff Resources**

a) Ensure the staff complement and the staff development and succession strategies enable the delivery of the library's strategic agenda.

b) Strengthen the staff training and development program with emphasis on skills related to community development, developing and supporting partnerships, and participating in online communities

c) Develop staff specialization for services to seniors.

18. **Ensure Sustainability of Infrastructure**

a) Achieve excellence in library architecture and interior design while working towards ambitious environmental standards.

b) Maximize utilization of the library's extensive real estate portfolio to enhance public library service and to promote environmental practices.

c) Continue to build strategies that sustain a technology infrastructure that meets the evolving needs of the community and the organization.