

What we heard

Most common ideas:

1. Maintain strong print, media and electronic collections
2. Library buildings are important as community hubs, and access to public space is important to community groups
3. Provide support and services for vulnerable people
 - Newcomers; low income; seniors; marginalized; children; youth at risk
4. Build and promote the virtual library and maintain strong Internet access in library branches
5. Work in partnership to achieve mutual goals and achieve greater impact- the library is a strong and valued partner
6. Increase awareness and use of a full range of library services by extending services, outreach and publicity to target groups
7. Reduce barriers to accessing the library – physical, cultural and administrative
8. Continue to build strategies that sustain a responsive, relevant and innovative public library service for all Torontonians

Encourage participation in city life

Theme 1:
**Engaging
diverse
communities**

- Increase awareness of branches as somewhere people can meet and hold events/programs etc.
 - Host events; take part in community festivals
- Encourage people to meet and to hold events at the library, and have more social and cultural programs
 - Advertise to community organizations
 - Cost of community rooms can be a barrier to access
- Use library collections and programs to support community and neighbourhood interest in Toronto's history and diversity
- Use partnerships to increase library participation in city life
 - The Library is a great partner to work with
 - Have more programs like Sun Life MAP



Promote greater participation in library programs and services

Theme 1:

Engaging diverse communities

- Make branches welcoming and attractive to the local community
 - Libraries can seem intimidating to non-users
 - Have a greeter; have newcomer “hosts” from cultural groups
 - Use renovations to incorporate local cultural elements in décor etc
 - Have “welcome” signs in neighbourhood languages
 - Staff in the branch who are members of the local community are appreciated
- Awareness is fundamental to participation
- Zone library time and space and time to meet the needs of different groups
 - Space for youth; lounges for quiet reading



Support Toronto's children in early reading skills

Theme 1:
**Engaging
diverse
communities**

- Partner so that early childhood literacy programs reach more children
 - Sharing expertise, space, contacts will reach more children
- Make access to library collections and programs easier
 - Increase contacts with mothers' groups, day care providers and workplaces
 - Have literacy kits and deposit collections in all day cares
- Support literacy in the family's home language and English
- Involve all generations in family literacy



Support educational achievement for youth as a foundation for future success

Theme 1:
**Engaging
diverse
communities**

- Increase reading help and after school programs, especially for middle years
 - Offer high quality after school programs
 - Some have difficulty getting to the library – have volunteers bring them from school to the after school programs
 - Extend the fine forgiveness program
 - Partnership with the Library in after school programs would be very welcome
- Help keep youth in school
 - Be a bridge back to school for at risk youth
 - Have literacy programs and access to reading for early school leavers
 - Provide programming that supports social integration



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

Theme 1:
Engaging diverse communities

- Know who “youth” are, and meet them on their own territory
 - “Youth” isn’t a single target group – characteristics vary within and across cultures e.g. newcomer youth
 - Have longer hours and give youth their own space where they can be noisy
 - Engage with community agencies to build on existing programs
 - Some branches, such as Albion, have great youth programs
 - Use what youth use to communicate: FaceBook, YouTube, IM etc.
 - They don’t read *What’s On* – Get youth to design some publicity

Enhance seniors quality of life and quest for lifelong learning (1)

Theme 1:
**Engaging
diverse
communities**

- Seniors can be very isolated, either because they are newcomers or because they don't have transportation
 - Have more bookmobiles; increase home library services
 - Bus seniors to the library
 - Offer intergenerational programming
 - E.g. traditional storytelling by seniors to children; youth as computer mentors for seniors
 - Advertise in publications seniors will see
- Seniors' use of libraries can be impacted by other user groups
 - Other types of library use can be challenging for older users e.g. youth on computers
 - Balance needs of older users with other users



Enhance seniors quality of life and quest for lifelong learning (2)

Theme 1:
**Engaging
diverse
communities**

- Have more books, audiobooks, DVDs etc. and programs for older adults
 - Increase access to high demand material and market its availability
 - Have more ESL, multilingual collections and settlement services for seniors
 - Have programs on health issues, or finding out about health
 - Have a lifelong learning centre on the website with subjects seniors are interested in



Address the needs of vulnerable individuals and neighbourhoods working in partnership with others (1)

Theme 2:
Addressing the growing income gap

- Reduce barriers that stop people using the library
 - Once someone has a fine on their card, they're likely to stop borrowing, or stop visiting the library
 - Make joining the library easier for people without a permanent address in the city
 - E.g. First Nations people arriving from reservations don't have the ID libraries require
 - Homeless people enjoy using the library, they know the library rules, and will stick to them
 - Let people in shelters borrow more than two books at a time



Address the needs of vulnerable individuals and neighbourhoods working in partnership with others (2)

Theme 2:

Addressing the growing income gap

- Make the library more accessible for people with disabilities
 - Have more online services
 - Increase adaptive technology
 - Ensure people of all ages know that home library service is an option
 - Improve access in branches:
 - “Just installing a grab bar does not make a washroom accessible!”



Address the needs of vulnerable individuals and neighbourhoods working in partnership with others (3)

Theme 2:
Addressing the growing income gap

- Newcomers find settlement services by trial and error
 - Work with partners and immigrant communities to coordinate settlement services
 - Advertise more in ethnic media
 - Include library information in Welcome Wagon packs
- Have more ESL programs, and multilingual services for newcomers and immigrants
 - With partners, increase support for newcomers
 - Have more partners located in libraries
 - Have children's stories in different languages on YouTube

Focus on supporting literacy and education goals

Theme 2:

Addressing the growing income gap

- Have more resources and services supporting literacy and education
 - Increase study space and homework support
 - Maintain collections that support literacy and learning throughout life and in different languages
 - Lend laptops, have wireless in all branches and software kids want to use
 - Use volunteers as a support in homework/tutoring programs
 - Deposit collections are incredibly important to people who are institutionalized e.g. halfway houses; shelters; prisons
- Income and literacy are often related
 - Marginalized individuals often have low literacy levels or are early school leavers
 - Have more literacy programs that reach at risk groups
 - Have child care available at adult programs on literacy, job hunting, computer skills etc.



Create an outstanding virtual library branch

Theme 3:

Libraries in the virtual world

- Make the website easy to navigate and search
 - Use plain language; use icons to navigate
 - “Google-ize” searching
 - Translate the site into more languages
- Have more online services, and use social networking sites
 - Podcast author visits, have webinars and do more virtual programming
 - Communicate online more with users
 - Make the library more visible on the web and publicize what’s on the site more effectively
 - You should be able to register online

Ensure access to technology for all

Theme 3:

Libraries in the virtual world

- Increase accessibility to library services, and Internet/computer resources
 - Use adaptive technology and equipment to increase access for people with disabilities
 - Timeslots on PCs aren't long enough for doing a serious amount of work e.g. job applications; learning assignments
 - Keep the technology infrastructure up-to-date with what people need
 - Increase the number of PCs and sockets in branches
 - Create spaces where people can work together with Internet, video, voice etc.
 - Make content compatible with different platforms like, PDAs and cellphones

Build virtual content

Theme 3:

Libraries in the virtual world

- Promote the content more
 - People probably only know about 10% of the website content
 - People don't know about the "fantastic databases" the library has on the website
- Make access to on-site databases available in more branches
- Continue to digitize the historic collections
- Have more multilingual content, including downloadable materials
- Invite users to contribute content – Heritage content; Youth input; Book reviews and comments
- Make sure the "real world" library doesn't become less important as virtual content increases
 - Don't turn the library into "just a server in the basement"

Support city-wide and local cultural expression

Theme 4:

Supporting Creativity and Culture

- Continue to take part in events like Luminato and Nuit Blanche
- Take part in more indigenous, community and neighbourhood festivals
- Make sure more people know about all the different collections the library has – multilingual, cultural, historic, art
- Make sure TPL reflects all the City's diverse cultures in its collections and promotions
 - Children's materials and stories in different languages and about different cultures
 - Promote gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender collections more
 - Work with partners to help people access all relevant collections in the City e.g. Native Canadian Centre library



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

Theme 4:

Supporting creativity and culture

- Welcome and celebrate local talent in libraries city-wide
 - Maintain attractive exhibit and performance spaces in libraries
 - Work with partners to make space available to more people
 - Have more branches take part in the big City events
 - Use library network to educate – circulate displays about a community's culture to other libraries in the city
- Give more prominence to programs in libraries across the city
 - Make it easier for authors to read in library branches
 - There are many celebrated authors, artists, writers and performers working in different parts of the city – have them come to the local library
 - Get in touch with local community – who do they think should be invited to do a program at the library?
 - Have more weekend programs

Promote environmentally sustainable practices

Theme 5:
Supporting a sustainable library

- Keep developing environmentally friendly practices
 - Step up recycling, energy conservation, “green” practices
 - Have more bike racks at libraries, and showers for the staff
 - Showcase “green” products, services and innovations in branches, and offer programming on environmental issues
 - Use living walls, solar heating, natural light etc. to increase conservation
 - Provide drinking fountains/alternatives to bottled water
 - Expand the Library’s collections on the environment and sustainability
 - “The library is the ultimate in recycling – one book gets re-used and re-used until it falls apart!”



Engage in leadership and advocacy for the essential role of the public library in the community

Theme 5:
Supporting a sustainable library

- Get involved in public policies like the poverty reduction strategy to show that the library is part of the solution
- Target specific audiences on different library strengths such as seniors for genealogy
- Make sure the City's diversity is represented throughout the library, especially on the Board
- “Communicate, communicate, communicate”
 - To non-users and lapsed users
 - With community agencies and organizations
 - In different media to different audiences



Ensure sustainability of the budget, staff resources and infrastructure

Theme 5:
Supporting a sustainable library

- Work with partners to achieve shared goals, thereby making most efficient use of each partner's resources
- Fundraising can support users' needs
- Celebrate library success more to draw attention to its value to the City
- Where possible, make library space flexible for differing needs – study hall/program room
- Balance innovation with the ability to sustain existing services
- Staff are committed to neighbourhood focused services but are stretched to deliver them
- Succession management is important
- Promote the library as a great place to work and maintain a competitive compensation package
- Balance external hiring with internal career paths and promotion