

To: Toronto Public Library Board – February 26, 2007

From: City Librarian

Subject: **Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative – 2005 Performance Benchmarking Report**

Purpose:

To provide an overview of the Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative and provide the 2005 performance results related to libraries.

Funding Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board receive the report *Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative – 2005 Performance Benchmarking Report* for information.

Background:

The Ontario Municipal CAOs Benchmarking Initiative has been established since 2000, and includes participation from fifteen regional municipalities and cities across the province, representing approximately 72 percent of all Ontario residents.

The purpose of the initiative is to identify and develop appropriate service-specific performance measures and benchmark the results in order to identify best practices in terms of service quality and efficiency. Thirty-four program areas are included in the initiative with library participation beginning in 2005. In addition to this benchmarking initiative, the Library also submits performance measures as part of the Municipal Performance Measurement Program (MPMP), a mandatory reporting program of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Libraries were included for the first time in 2004. The results for MPMP are reported in September of each year.

## Comments:

*Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative – 2005 Performance Benchmarking Report* marks the first time the results of this initiative are being reported publicly. Nine library systems participated in 2005.

Libraries are represented by five key measures:

- annual number of library service hours per capita;
- number of library holdings per capita;
- number of times in a year circulating items are borrowed;
- number of library uses per capita;
- cost per library use.

Library use is a composite measure that includes circulation, in-library use, reference requests, library visits, virtual visits, workstation use, database searches and program attendance.

## **Overview of Results**

Toronto Public Library performs very well in four of the five key measures. Toronto ranks:

- 1<sup>st</sup> in number of library holdings per capita (Figure 3.2 in the attachment)
- 1<sup>st</sup> in number of times in a year circulating items are borrowed (Figure 3.3)
- 1<sup>st</sup> in number of library uses per capita (Figure 3.4)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest in cost per library use (Figure 3.5)
- lowest in annual number of library service hours per capita (3-way draw) (Figure 3.1)

In January 2006, the Toronto Public Library Board approved a vision for branch open hours. The first phase of this plan was implemented in Fall 2006 and January 2007, with subsequent phases to be implemented as funding becomes available. The implementation of the vision for branch open hours will begin to address the lower number of library open hours per capita in the City of Toronto.

## **Influencing Factors**

Results for any particular regional municipality or city can be influenced by a number of factors that must be considered when interpreting the results including:

- differences in the service levels established by Library Boards and Municipal Councils in terms of the number and size of branches, the range of open hours provided, the organizational structure and staffing levels, the expenditures on collections including the mix of formats and number of languages supported, the range of program offerings and the number of public access computers and other electronic services;
- differences in the mix, variety and depth of library uses, including the number and types of staff time needed to support the different activities;

- library systems can also provide services to residents beyond their municipal borders. For example, reference or research libraries may have significant collections and other specialized services that are accessed by other users including the business community, post-secondary students, and residents from other municipalities. These groups of users are not considered in the per capita measures;
- specialized facilities such as reference and research libraries with rare or special collections are more costly to maintain than facilities which house more customary collections and services. Some library systems may also provide specialized services such as bookmobiles, home library service, and literacy programs.

There are a number of factors that specifically influence results for Toronto Public Library:

- in response to Toronto's extensive multilingual and immigrant population, the Library has actively developed library collections in over 40 languages as well as English as a Second Language, and provides outreach, services and programs to support newcomer integration;
- in response to high-needs neighbourhoods, the Library continues to build services and outreach programs to target marginalized groups;
- Toronto Reference Library is a research and reference centre for an extensive business community, many independent researchers and post-secondary students from three universities and several colleges in the city;
- Toronto Public Library provides provincial-level service through the Reference Libraries' extensive collections and electronic services;
- the transient population - e.g. people who work / study but do not live in Toronto, as well as approximately 18.5 million tourists annually;
- urban form: the Library must provide service in the densely populated urban core and in growing suburban neighbourhoods;
- the Library's aging infrastructure results in higher maintenance costs. The Library has 99 branch libraries, at least half of which are over 30 years old. In addition, three administration centres are also in need of improvements for asset preservation. Land costs in Toronto have often resulted in multi-floor library facilities on small footprints. These facilities cost more to operate in terms of staffing and security costs. Joint facilities with recreation centres / schools and locations in commercial facilities allow the Library to capitalize on high-traffic nodes.

Conclusion:

Toronto Public Library continues to be very interested in participating in the Ontario Municipal CAOs Benchmarking Initiative. Results in future years will provide for fuller analysis of data as more municipalities take part in the initiative and as historical results become available.

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Josephine Bryant  
City Librarian

List of Attachments:

Attachment 1: Excerpt from *Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative – 2005 Performance Benchmarking Report* (pages 18-22, Library Services)