

To: Toronto Public Library Board – June 14, 2004

From: City Librarian

Subject: **Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan 2004 - 2007**

Purpose:

To present the *Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan 2004 - 2007* to the Toronto Public Library Board for endorsement and approval.

Funding Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no direct financial implications for the 2004 operating or capital budgets. The strategic plan will provide a context and direction for the development of annual business plans, and funding requests in future operating and capital budgets.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board:

- (1) approve *Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan 2004 - 2007* as presented in Attachment 1; and
- (2) direct Library staff to integrate the strategic plan into the Library's future annual operating and capital budgets.

Background:

At its meetings on May 12th and June 9th, 2003, the Toronto Public Library Board approved a structure, process and consultation strategy for developing the Library's second strategic plan. The structure included the appointment of Board representatives to a steering committee to oversee the process. The plan was created through this approved structure and is being presented for approval.

Comments:

Planning and Consultation Process

The goal of the strategic planning process was to produce a plan which is a dynamic response to current City issues, and which also provides a framework from which to develop and enhance services and facilities over the next three years.

The Steering Committee, including Board representatives, met throughout the process to provide leadership and direction in the strategic planning process and to provide regular updates to the Library Board.

The planning process began with an extensive environmental scan. This included analysis of the external 2001 Census data for Toronto as well as planning reports from City departments and community agencies such as the United Way of Greater Toronto and the Toronto Community Foundation. Trends in technology and society were identified which would have an impact on library service in the future. The internal scan included an analysis of achievements from the last strategic plan, trends in Library usage and interviews with Library staff members.

Results of the environmental scan were used to create a series of briefing notes and a summary presentation, which provided background to the Steering Committee at a planning day in October 2003. At the planning day, emerging themes were identified. These themes identified City issues that the Library was well positioned to address through its programs and services.

The next phase was to broaden consultation. The consultation plan approved in June 2003, outlined a number of activities designed to invite and encourage residents, stakeholders and Library staff members to participate in the development of the strategic plan throughout the process. The purpose of the first phase of public consultation was to develop a common understanding of key issues in the City and to develop areas of strategic focus and priority. Three public forums were held for members of the public and a comment form was posted on the Library's website. Four focus groups were held for Library staff members, and a presentation was made to the Union Executive.

At the January 19, 2004 meeting, the Board approved the *Strategic Plan Consultation Workbook* as a framework for the second phase of public consultation. The *Workbook* was intended to be an engaging summary of emerging issues and themes. It introduced the proposed areas of strategic focus: promoting books and culture, addressing the needs of youth, supporting newcomers, and meeting the needs of low-income residents. To provide opportunities for the general public to comment on the plan, copies of the *Workbook* were made available in all Library branches and on the Library's website. A short-print flyer was also distributed in English and six other languages. Through this public consultation, the Library received many detailed and thoughtful comments about how to maintain and improve library service. Many residents also expressed appreciation for the value of existing programs and services.

Three stakeholder roundtables were conducted with over 100 groups represented at the stakeholder round table sessions. Each participant received a copy of the strategic plan

workbook in advance. Many participants had read the materials and consulted with colleagues in advance of the sessions and made very insightful comments. Library staff members were also able to answer questions about existing services and programs. Valuable input into the strategic plan was received and many community contacts were initiated and strengthened.

The consultation confirmed the key priorities and enabled the development of specific goals to address each of the priority areas.

The final phase of public consultation (May 2004) focused on communicating the draft plan and receiving feedback for further refinements. A copy of the plan was available on the Library website, and five public meetings were held throughout the City.

After each stage in the consultation, staff carefully reviewed and synthesized all the input that was received and shared the results with the Steering Committee. In total, 1384 individuals participated in the development of the strategic plan.

Summary of the Plan

The Library's 2004 - 2007 strategic plan is found in Attachment 1. It includes the Library's vision, mission and service values and the four key service priorities as outlined below:

1. Books and Culture

Addresses:

- residents' first priority for library service
- ongoing cultural renaissance in the City

Goals:

- increase spending to build collections and improve access
- champion and promote reading: contribute to Toronto's literary culture
- broaden Torontonians' access to the City's civic and cultural life

2. Low Income Neighbourhoods

Addresses:

- growing income disparity in the City

Goals:

- provide library service that meets the needs of low income neighbourhoods in identified areas
- increase the Library's contribution to community capacity building

3. Newcomers

Addresses:

- the number of newcomers in the City

- barriers to finding employment for newcomers

Goals:

- contribute to the successful adaptation of newcomers to Toronto
- help address barriers to labour market integration for immigrants

4. Youth

Addresses:

- the increasing number of youth in the City
- the need to support youth in gaining literacy skills, being successful in school and finding employment
- the issues of youth alienation and violence

Goals:

- create library services which address the needs of youth
- encourage youth to read
- support youth in school, career development and employment
- expand access to high quality volunteer experiences throughout the City

In addition to the key priorities for service, consultation reinforced the important roles of staff, financial resources, governance approaches and buildings in achieving our goals. These were addressed through a statement of operating principles.

Operating Principles

Addresses:

- how the Library will fulfill its strategic objectives

Goals:

- support the essential role of staff in achieving the Library's strategic objectives
- ensure the priorities of the strategic plan are reflected and integrated with the budget-planning process
- preserve and maintain the legacy of public buildings and public space
- ensure governance structure and relationships support the direction and democratic quality of the strategic plan

Next Steps

After approval by the Library Board, the strategic plan will be made available to residents across the City in Library branches and through the Toronto Public Library web page. As directed by the Library Board, the strategic plan will provide a framework and context for developing the Library's annual business plan and operating and capital budgets. Achievements resulting from the strategic plan will be presented to the Library Board.

Conclusion:

The Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan is the result of a comprehensive strategic planning process which brought together extensive research and consultation with residents, stakeholders and Library staff members.

Public response to the priority areas in the new plan has been very positive. By focusing attention and resources on these priority areas, Toronto Public Library will continue to make a positive contribution to the quality of life of residents of Toronto.

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List of Attachments:

Attachment 1: Urban Stories: The Next Chapter: Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan 2004
- 2007