

Overview

Toronto Public Library is creating its fourth strategic plan since amalgamation. The plan will ensure that the Library continues to fulfill its legislated mandate and mission *to provide library services that meet the changing needs of the people of Toronto* and delivers library service which is innovative, efficient and sustainable. The strategic planning process is an opportunity for the Library Board to engage residents, stakeholders, partners, funders and Library staff in a thoughtful discussion about the Library and its current and future contribution to the quality of life in Toronto.

The timeline of the Strategic Plan, 2012-2015, is both an interesting and challenging time for Toronto Public Library as the Library evolves as a virtual and community hub.

Consultation for the plan will address broad questions about library service, including:

- What are residents' priorities for library service?
- What priorities address the broadest range of residents' needs?
- What level of service does the Library need to provide to address community and residents' needs both now and in the future?
- How can the Library ensure that services are innovative, efficient and sustainable?

Consultation is an opportunity to engage stakeholders and funders in both the development and achievement of the plan's goals and strategies.

Consultation Plan

Principles

- To use a range of accessible consultation techniques to engage residents; including users and non-users and current and potential stakeholders, partners and funders in the development of the strategic plan
- To use efficient and effective methods of consultation leveraging the reach of earned media and online and social media tools, as well as surveys, interviews, focus groups and open houses
- To support reasonable expectations for library service within the current fiscal environment
- To be flexible and adjust the plan to respond to emerging issues or to reach under-represented groups
- To inform participants about how their input will be used and the results of the process

Goals

- To provide residents, stakeholders, and other funders with opportunities to participate in the creation of the Library's new strategic plan throughout the planning process
- To understand a broad range of residents' needs, priorities, concerns and interests in library service both now and in the future
- To incorporate results from the City and Library's 2011 consultation on the Core Service Review and 2012 Budget into the strategic plan
- To create awareness of library service among residents and stakeholders
- To build partnerships and networks to support joint initiatives, fundraising, and advocacy
- To create shared priorities for library service both now and in the future with residents, City Council, stakeholders, partners and current and potential funders
- To integrate online and in branch communications to provide broad access
- To create communities of interest to help support the achievement of the plan through partnerships, direct service delivery and fundraising

Target Audiences (Users and Non-Users)

1. **Toronto Residents** (to understand needs and priorities for library service)

- **Adults** (males and females, parents and caregivers, including those engaged in lifelong learning, recreational users, and users of different types of Library use, including online and in branch,)
- **Youth** (males and females, students, volunteers, online and in-person visitors and recreational users, including strong and reluctant readers)
- **Children** (boys and girls, including strong and reluctant readers, users of different Library services, including online, in person and those attending Library programs)
- **Older Adults and Seniors** (those entering second careers, recreational users online and in person users, program attendees and at different stages in their life journey)
- **Newcomers** (at different stages in the settlement process (e.g. accessing community resources for themselves, their families and communities)
- **At Risk Communities** (individuals and community groups to support use of the Library as a resource to access literacy and life skills and employment resources and to access computers)
- **Users of specific subject/special collections** (users and supporters of special collections, including genealogy, local history and rare book collections to understand areas of collaboration)
- **People with disabilities** (consulting directly and through community agencies serving people with disabilities to understand how to make Library services relevant, accessible and that support an increased quality of life)

2. **Municipal Funders** (To understand City priorities and the fiscal environment through consultation with the City Manager or designate and City Councillors and to build and maintain cross divisional service strategies)
3. **Boards of Education, City and Community Service Providers and the Business Community in Toronto**
 - **City Service Departments/Service Providers** (including Parks, Forestry and Recreation and community agencies to understand opportunities for collaboration, co-location to achieve shared goals)
 - **Boards of Education, colleges, universities and the continuing education community, and private educational institutions** (to understand strategic priorities, service directions, priorities, potential partnerships)
 - **Cultural Institutions in Toronto** (to support partnership development and joint initiatives)
 - **Newcomer and Settlement Agencies** (to understand needs of newcomers and their families and identify opportunities for collaboration with the settlement community)
 - **Communities of interest/geographic communities** (to understand interests and needs for library service and build support for joint projects)
 - **Business Community** (to communicate strategic directions and explore funding and advocacy opportunities in cooperation with the Toronto Public Library Foundation)
 - **Small Business/Entrepreneurs** (to understand how the Library can provide effective services to support information needs)
4. **Toronto Public Library staff** (to understand the changing nature of public service, residents' needs, training and development requirements, and to draft service strategies and initiatives)
5. **Toronto Public Library Foundation** (To understand the fundraising context; to communicate the Library's needs and to support the development of fundraising strategies)
6. **Toronto Public Library Workers' Union Local 4948 (CUPE)** (to communicate work force concerns)
7. **Provincial** (to understand provincial policies and priorities in key areas, including literacy)
8. **Federal** (to understand federal policies and priorities in key service areas, including immigration and settlement, and copyright and to build service delivery and funding partnerships)
9. **The Public Library Community**
 - **Canadian Urban Libraries Council** (to consult and communicate common areas of interest/advocacy and to develop new areas)

- **Canadian and Ontario Library Associations** (to understand common areas of interest/advocacy and develop new areas)
- **Federation of Ontario Public Libraries** (to understand and shape priorities for library advocacy across the province and to reflect areas of mutual interest)
- **American and International Library Community** (to understand the evolving nature of public library service)
- **Benchmark/innovative public libraries** (to understand innovation and best practices from comparative libraries)

10. The Publishing and Book Industry

- **Association of Canadian Publishers, the Canadian Publishers Council, the Canadian Booksellers Association, BookNet Canada and others** (to build understanding of residents' needs, library service directions, and areas of common interest, to support productive relationships and joint initiatives)
- **Current and potential library vendors** (to communicate residents' needs and priorities for online information to influence future product development, including enriched online content)
- **Self Publishing Community/Content Creators** (to understand the Library's role in providing access and promoting content by individuals)

11. Other Sectors

- **The technology sector** (to understand innovations and options for access to internet, wireless and online services for the Library)
- **The creative sector** (to understand the potential to build online content)
- **The marketing sector** (to understand areas of mutual benefit and potential collaboration)

12. Other Groups

- **National Reading Campaign** (to understand advocacy efforts around the value of reading and reading promotion, and to shape and build effective partnerships and initiatives and leverage successful campaigns to support Toronto's readers)

Proposed Tactics to Engage Participant Groups

Context:

- Consultation will take place throughout the development of the strategic plan
- A range of accessible consultation tactics will be used; there will be more than one tactic per participant group
- The plan will be adjusted to address themes and service issues; sample consultation activities are listed below
- Participation will be monitored to ensure representation by a broad cross section; the plan is flexible and will be adjusted to support broad participation and to address emerging issues

Toronto Residents

- Survey of Toronto residents by external polling firm to determine residents' awareness, satisfaction, usage and attitudes towards library service
- Outreach and communication strategy using traditional and social media channels and tactics to create awareness of the strategic planning process and opportunities to participate with ongoing updates throughout the process
- Communication of the planning process through the Library e-newsletter etc.
- Web and social media presence, including overview of the planning process, key research and consultation findings, with visual and fun interactive elements, including polls, questionnaires, and online discussion forums updated through the planning process
- Discussion tool kit available for use with the public at Library and community events by Library staff, stakeholders and members of the public
- Focus groups/discussions at Library and community events
- Public meetings/open houses on the draft plan at designated locations and by request
- Ongoing updates on progress in achieving the plan's results through the website

Youth

- Invitation to the Library's Youth Advisory Groups to devise consultation tactics online and in Library branches to engage youth
- Online discussion forums, questionnaires and polls on RAMP, the teen website
- Invitation to participate in the process online through the high school outreach campaign and other youth events

Children

- Interactive activities available online at Kidspace with printable versions for use at Library and school events to encourage kids to share ideas about their ideal library space, tips for encouraging reading, and top reading picks. Parents and caregivers will be consulted through targeted library programs and outreach activities
- Branch specific events

Older Adults and Seniors

- Discussions at targeted Library programs and events, interviews with Home Library Service clients and service providers.

Newcomers

- Focus groups/ discussions at events targeting newcomers, including ESL classes, settlement programs and through the Library Settlement Partnership.

At Risk Communities

- Discussions at targeted branches and programs, including the adult literacy program and children's reading support programs and through joint initiatives

targeting persons at risk, including Investing in Families, a City of Toronto initiative.

People with Disabilities

- Targeted outreach to agencies serving persons with disabilities to encourage participation in online consultation; mediated consultation available through the Answerline Service.

Municipal: Mayor and City Councilors

- Communication announcing the process with links to web presence and updates on the public consultation activities
- Communication of draft priority areas with opportunities to provide feedback
- Communication of draft plan with goals and initiatives and performance, monitoring and evaluation indicators

Municipal: City Manager or designate

- Communication of the draft priority areas with opportunities to provide feedback and draft plan to address areas for partnership and joint initiatives

Other audiences

- The Library will engage audiences throughout the process through interviews, focus groups, online discussions, stakeholder round tables and other tactics as appropriate.

The Toronto Public Library Foundation

- Updates on the strategic planning process, including key findings of the environment scan, and service priorities to build understanding and to support fundraising

Library Staff

- Interviews, focus groups and online discussions open to staff at all levels in the organization with ongoing participation through departmental and service committees
- Presentation and updates to Local 4948 (CUPE)

Strategic Plan Phase	Tactic	Timeline
Environmental Scan	- Public Survey of Toronto residents - Outreach and communication strategy using traditional and social media channels and tactics - Creation of web and social media presence - Interviews with key partners and stakeholders - Communication of results of environmental scan Milestone: Review and approval of draft priority areas, service levels and service options by the Steering Committee and Library Board	February-April 2012
Consultation on draft priorities service levels, and service options	- Outreach and communication strategy using traditional and social media channels and tactics - Communication to City Councillors and City representatives announcing the process with opportunities to provide input - Posting of draft priorities on website; discussions through social media, blogs - Distribution of Consultation Tool Kit for use at Library and community events - Discussion and focus groups at Library and community events (minimum 12) - Targeted initiatives to engage residents, communities and partners (as required) - Theme-based focus groups or interviews with sector representatives (minimum 4) - Focus groups and discussions with Library staff (4 focus groups) Milestone: Review and approval of priority areas, service levels and service options by the Steering Committee and Library Board	April-May 2012
Consultation on draft final plan, including service levels, service options, targets and accountability measures	- Outreach and communication strategy using traditional and social media channels and tactics - Communication of the draft plan to residents, stakeholders and funders - Public meetings/open houses on the draft plan (minimum 4); targeted communications with partners and potential funders Milestone: Review and approval of the plan by the Steering Committee and Library Board Integration of the plan into capital and operating budgets, and system and departmental work plan	May-September 2012