

**Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan, 2012 - 2015:  
Establishing a Process**

<b>Date:</b>	November 21, 2011
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Public Library Board
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian

**SUMMARY**

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The purpose of this report is to propose a structure, process and timeline to create a new strategic plan for Toronto Public Library for the years 2012 - 2015; 2011 is the final year of the current strategic plan *Our Shared Stories: Writing the Future of Toronto's Library 2008 - 2011*. A new strategic plan will establish service priorities for the next four years and fulfill the Board's legislated mandate "to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service that reflects the community's unique needs".

It is recommended that a Strategic Planning Steering Committee of the Board be appointed to provide leadership and direction in the process and ongoing updates to the Board. The plan will reflect current city directions and the fiscal environment. The recommended planning process includes standard steps beginning with an environmental scan, the identification of draft key priorities with service levels and service options as a framework for public consultation; and the development of business plans, indicators and performance measures to monitor the achievement of the strategic plan goals and provide for sustainability, monitoring and evaluation. It is recommended the process begin in January 2012 and conclude in September 2012.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board**

1. approves the proposed structure, process and timeline for the creation of Toronto Public Library's strategic plan 2012 - 2015 as outlined in Attachment One; and
2. appoints a Strategic Planning Steering Committee of the Board as part of the Committee selection process.

## **IMPLEMENTATION POINTS**

The Library will work through a planning process that includes an environmental scan, the creation of draft priority areas, service levels and service options, a public consultation process and development of business plans, indicators and performance measures to monitor the achievement of the strategic plan goals and provide for sustainability, monitoring and evaluation.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACTS**

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The one-time costs associated with the creation of the strategic plan have been provided for in the 2012 operating budget. These costs of approximately \$60,000 to \$89,000 include a phone survey of users and non-users, meeting facilitation, staffing resources and online and print communications.

The Director, Finance and Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

The strategic planning process will create the Library Board's fourth plan as an amalgamated library system. The creation of a new strategic plan ensures 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 innovative, efficient and sustainable services.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The new strategic plan will be developed within the context of city directions and priorities and the current fiscal environment. City Council adopted the report "Service Review Program, 2012 Budget Process and Multi-Year Financial Planning Process" on April 13, 2011, which set out the requirement that all city programs and agencies engage in service planning and priority setting and develop three to five year service plans which include up-front public engagement.

## **COMMENTS**

The Toronto Public Library Board has developed, approved and overseen the implementation of three strategic plans since amalgamation. These plans have been highly effective in achieving goals for library service that are aligned with city priorities and that are shared by Council, stakeholders, partners, staff, communities, and residents resulting in high levels of usage and satisfaction with library service in Toronto.

The creation of a new strategic plan will allow the Board to establish service priorities for the next four years. The strategic planning process will address both current and future service addressing broad questions including:

- What are residents' priorities for library services?

- 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 deliver services which reflect the City directions, current fiscal environment and respond to community needs?
- How can the library ensure that services innovative, efficient and sustainable?
- What performance metrics ensure public transparency and accountability and ensure that the Library is achieving its objectives?

Consultation with councillors, stakeholders, residents, partners, funders and city and library staff will support an inclusive process and result in shared service priorities. Upon approval by the Board, the plan will provide a framework to ensure that the Library uses available funding from all sources in an effective and efficient manner to meet current and future community needs. The plan will provide a context for the development of capital and operating budgets and system and departmental work plans. Regular reporting to the Board on achievements related to the plan will support sustainability, transparency and accountability.

### **Structure**

It is recommended that a Strategic Planning Steering Committee of the Board be appointed to provide leadership and direction of the process. The committee will provide regular updates to the Board and ensure that the plan is informed by customer needs and priorities. A separate report is before the Board on committees, which includes the approval of the terms of reference and selection of committee members, including the Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

### **Public Consultation**

The Board's Public Consultation Policy includes the requirement for public consultation on the formulation of strategies and long term plans. The strategic planning process is an important opportunity to engage members of the public in a discussion of how the Library can contribute to the economic vitality and quality of life in the city and its neighbourhoods, and deliver services that meet residents and community needs in the current fiscal environment.

### **Process and Timeline**

The process and timeline for the strategic planning process is included in Attachment 1. The process will begin with the appointment of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee of the Board and conclude in September 2012. Direct costs associated with the planning process are outlined in Attachment 2. Where possible, strategic planning initiatives are aligned with existing programs, outreach activities and staff training sessions to allow for broad participation and to minimize costs.

## **CONCLUSION**

Toronto Public Library is one of the largest, busiest and most successful public library systems in the world with usage by a broad cross-section of Toronto residents. Engaging in a strategic planning process that addresses city directions and priorities will support the

Library in fulfilling its mission to provide library service that meets the changing needs of the people and Toronto. A strategic plan endorsed by the Board will support the delivery of high-quality customer service that is efficient, effective and sustainable.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Jane Pyper  
City Librarian

Attachment 1: Strategic Plan Phases and Timeline  
Attachment 2: Strategic Plan Costs