



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Strategic Plan 2025-2029: External Consultation Phase One Results and Phase Two Consultation Plan

**Date:** May 27, 2024

**To:** Toronto Public Library Board

**From:** Strategic Planning Steering Committee

#### **SUMMARY**

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The purpose of this report is to request the Toronto Public Library Board's approval of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee's recommendations regarding the Strategic Plan 2025-2029: External Consultation Phase One Results and Phase Two Consultation Plan.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Strategic Planning Steering Committee recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. receives the environmental scan summary and the internal consultation phase one results as outlined in the [report presented at the April 15, 2024 Steering Committee meeting](#) for information;

2. receives the external consultation phase one results as outlined in the [report presented at the May 3, 2024 Steering Committee meeting](#) for information; and
3. approves the focus areas for the second consultation phase resulting from the May 3, 2024 Strategic Planning Steering Committee strategy session for implementation.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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This report has no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

At its meeting on December 4, 2023, the Board approved [Creating a New Strategic Plan: 2025-2029](#), including the terms of reference for the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the Roadmap for development of the next Strategic Plan.

At its meeting on January 29, 2024, the Board received the areas of focus for the environmental scan as outlined in the [Strategic Plan 2025-2029: Environmental Scan Focus Areas and Consultation Plan report](#) and approved the Steering Committee recommendations for the consultation plan and implementation.

At its meeting on April 15, 2024, the [Strategic Planning Steering Committee received the Strategic Plan 2025-2029: Environmental Scan Summary and Internal Consultation Phase One Results report](#) for information.

At its meeting on May 3, 2024, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee considered the [Strategic Plan: External Consultation Phase One Results and Phase Two Consultation Plan report](#) and recommended that the Board receive the first phase of external consultation results for information and approve the

focus areas for the second consultation phase resulting from the May 3, 2024 strategy session for implementation.

## COMMENTS

At its May 3, 2024, meeting, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee members reviewed the results of the external consultation phase one and phase two consultation plan. The members provided their input and feedback, which are outlined below, including updated focus areas for approval.

Additionally, [an interactive summary report of the external consultation phase one results](#) was shared with the Committee. Library staff will incorporate the Committee's feedback into the implementation of the second consultation phase.

The questions asked at the session were:

- Is there anything that stood out or surprised you?
- Does this align with your understanding of the challenges that the city is currently facing?
- What unique value can the Library add in these focus areas?
- What information should the Library gather in the second consultation phase to ensure the Library is being responsive to changing community needs in these focus areas?

Steering Committee input and feedback

- Further explore the potential role of libraries in mitigating climate change and promoting sustainable practices;
- Consider the Library's role as a trusted source of information in the context of social cohesion and the erosion of trust in public institutions;
- Consider how to design spaces and offer informal programming for social connection;
- Consider gathering input from newcomers in the second consultation phase;
- Consider how global issues such as climate change, rapidly evolving technology, economic challenges, and geopolitical conflicts impact the development of the Strategic Plan;
- Further explore the opportunity to bring partnerships and services to the Library as a third-party space where people feel welcome;

- Explore the opportunity to tell the Library's story and promote library services through the Strategic Plan and social media channels;
- Continue to set an example and share resources with others. TPL's role as the world's leading library should be a focus of the strategic plan;
- Consider how to sustain growth and scale services that are working well for long-term success, e.g. through the TPL Foundation and partnerships;
- Expanding library use should always be a priority. The overall value of the library benefits from having users from all classes and walks of life;
- TPL is a leader in promoting democracy and civic engagement. Look for partners who share the library's values and goals to amplify this message and strengthen impact;
- While cost of living and well-being are related, they are not always directly connected. Consider separating these issues and focusing on them separately in the second consultation phase;
- The Library can play a critical role in supporting economic resilience and skills development to help alleviate the cost of living crisis;
- Consider macroeconomic context and be aware of where the labour market is going and the opportunity to help people in different areas;
- Advocate for increased funding to enhance technology access; and
- Develop innovative strategies to encourage reading and learning to address literacy gaps.

## **Focus Areas**

Considering the input and feedback from the Committee members, the eight focus areas for the second consultation phase will be updated as follows:

<b>Focus Area</b>	<b>Change</b>
Awareness and availability of library services	No change
Democracy, civic engagement, and information literacy	No change
Cost of living and well-being	Cost of living, economic resilience, and skills development
Reading, learning and skills development	Reading, learning, and growth
Environmental sustainability	No change
Social and community connections	Social connections and mental well-being

Focus Area	Change
Technology and digital inclusion	No change
Welcoming and inclusive public spaces to meet and work	Welcoming and inclusive public spaces to meet, study, and do work

Along with the environmental scan summary and internal consultation phase one results received by the Steering Committee on April 15, 2024, the external consultation phase one results marked the completion of the first consultation phase. The next phase of the consultations will refine and validate the focus areas and inform draft priorities for the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan.

## CONTACT

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## SIGNATURE

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Vickery Bowles  
City Librarian

## ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Strategic Plan 2025-2029: Consultation Phase One Results and Phase Two Consultation Plan Presentation

# strategic plan 2025-2029

## consultation phase one results & phase two consultation plan

**Library Board Meeting**

May 27, 2024

# progress

## Phase 1 Consultation

1. Environmental Scan Findings
2. Staff Consultation Themes
3. Top Public Issues **(NEW)**
4. Public Consultation Themes **(NEW)**

## Phase 2 Consultation

- Focus areas
- Consultation plan

## October Board Meeting

- Review results of phase two consultations
- SWOT analysis and Scenario Planning results
- Draft Strategic Priorities
- Draft Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan

# environmental scan summary

# environmental scan summary

## contents

1. Arts and Culture	8. Non-profits	12. Technology
2. Democracy, Government & Civic Engagement	9. Public Safety	13. Transportation
3. Economy and work	10. Reconciliation with Indigenous communities	+ Toronto's population
4. Education and Training	11. Social Development -Poverty & Homelessness -Diversity, Inclusion, Equity & Human Rights -Children & Youth -Newcomers -Seniors & Caregivers	+ Related industries
5. Environment and Sustainability		+ Strategic plans from other jurisdictions
6. Housing		
7. Mental Health and Well-being		

13

Focus Areas

300+

Sources

# cross-cutting themes

	Increasing inequity	Technology & Digital Literacy	Cost of living	Social connections	Library as a public space
Arts & Culture	✓	✓		✓	✓
Democracy, Government & Civic Engagement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Economy & Work	✓	✓	✓		
Education & Training	✓	✓			
Environment & Sustainability	✓	✓			✓
Housing	✓		✓		✓
Mental Health & Well-being	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Non-profits	✓		✓	✓	
Public Safety	✓				✓
Reconciliation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Technology	✓	✓		✓	✓
Transportation	✓	✓	✓		

# internal consultation phase one results



# staff consultation forums

## overview

- Six Staff Consultation Forums between February to March
- 461 staff members attended, organized into 68 groups

**461**

Staff Members

**68**

Facilitated Tables

**6**

Forums

- Public service, support service and management staff attended
- Three roundtable discussion questions were asked
- 88% of staff surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the forums

# roundtable question 1

Based on your experience living and/or working in the city, what is the most important thing TPL can do for people living in Toronto over the next five years?

discuss

# themes

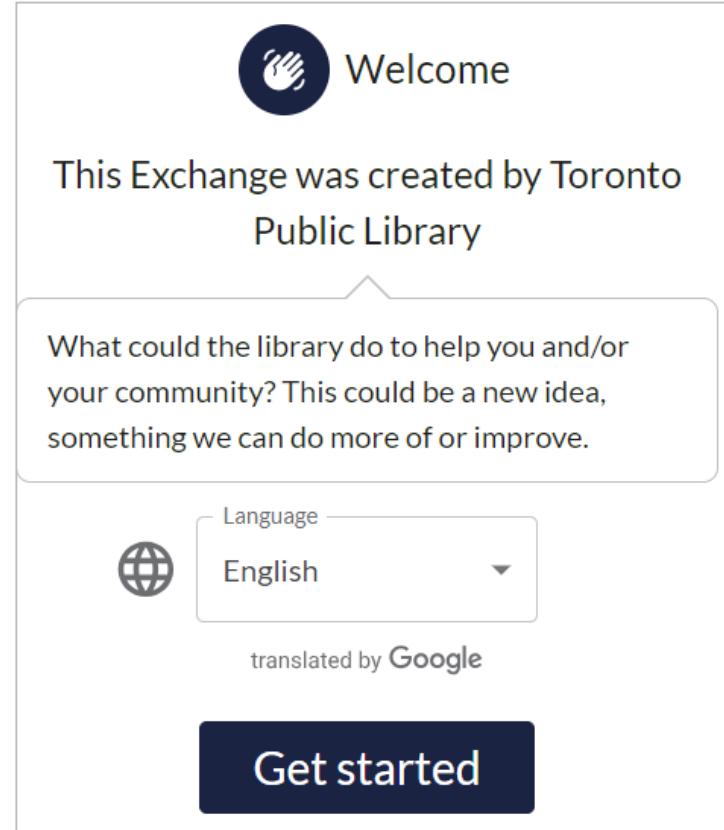
Based on the analysis, **eight themes** were identified by staff as important areas TPL should focus on over the next five years.

Theme	Tables	% of Tables
Addressing the digital divide	61/68	90%
Providing welcoming spaces	60/68	88%
Supporting vulnerable persons	50/68	74%
Developing skills to address cost of living crisis	47/68	69%
Creating community connections	46/68	68%
Fostering literacy and lifelong learning	45/68	66%
Building staff capacity	39/68	57%
Improving public safety	36/68	53%

# public consultation phase one results

# overview

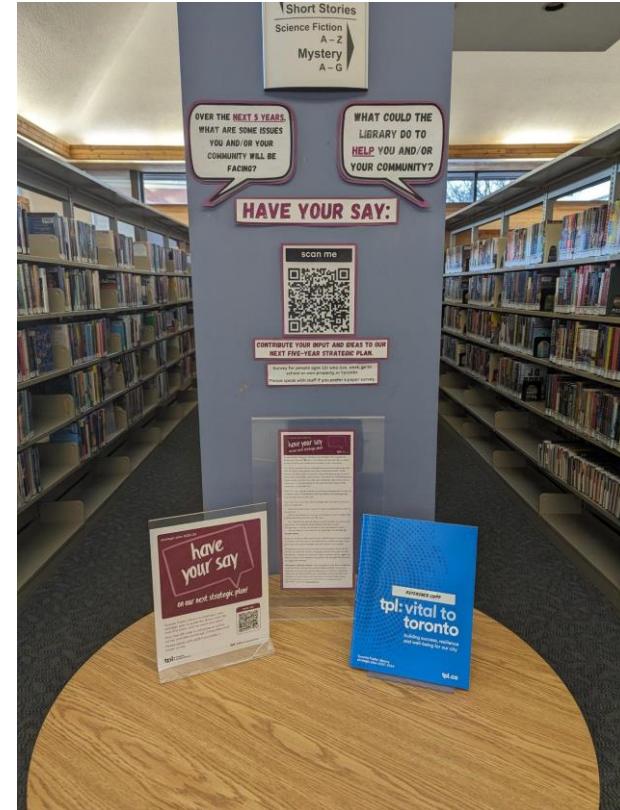
- Survey period from March 6 to March 27
- ThoughtExchange platform
- Survey was available online and in library branches for customers, residents, community stakeholders, and partners to participate



The image shows a screenshot of a website. At the top right, there is a dark blue circular icon with a white hand icon and the word "Welcome" next to it. Below this, a text block states: "This Exchange was created by Toronto Public Library". A large, light blue rounded rectangle contains the question: "What could the library do to help you and/or your community? This could be a new idea, something we can do more of or improve." At the bottom left, there is a globe icon next to a dropdown menu labeled "Language" with "English" selected. Below the globe icon, the text "translated by Google" is visible. At the bottom right, there is a dark blue button with the white text "Get started".

# awareness and promotion

- Digital communications (website, enewsletter, social, City's webpage)
- Branch displays
- Community outreach
- Partner and stakeholder networks



# participation



3,020  
Participants

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2,783  
Thoughts

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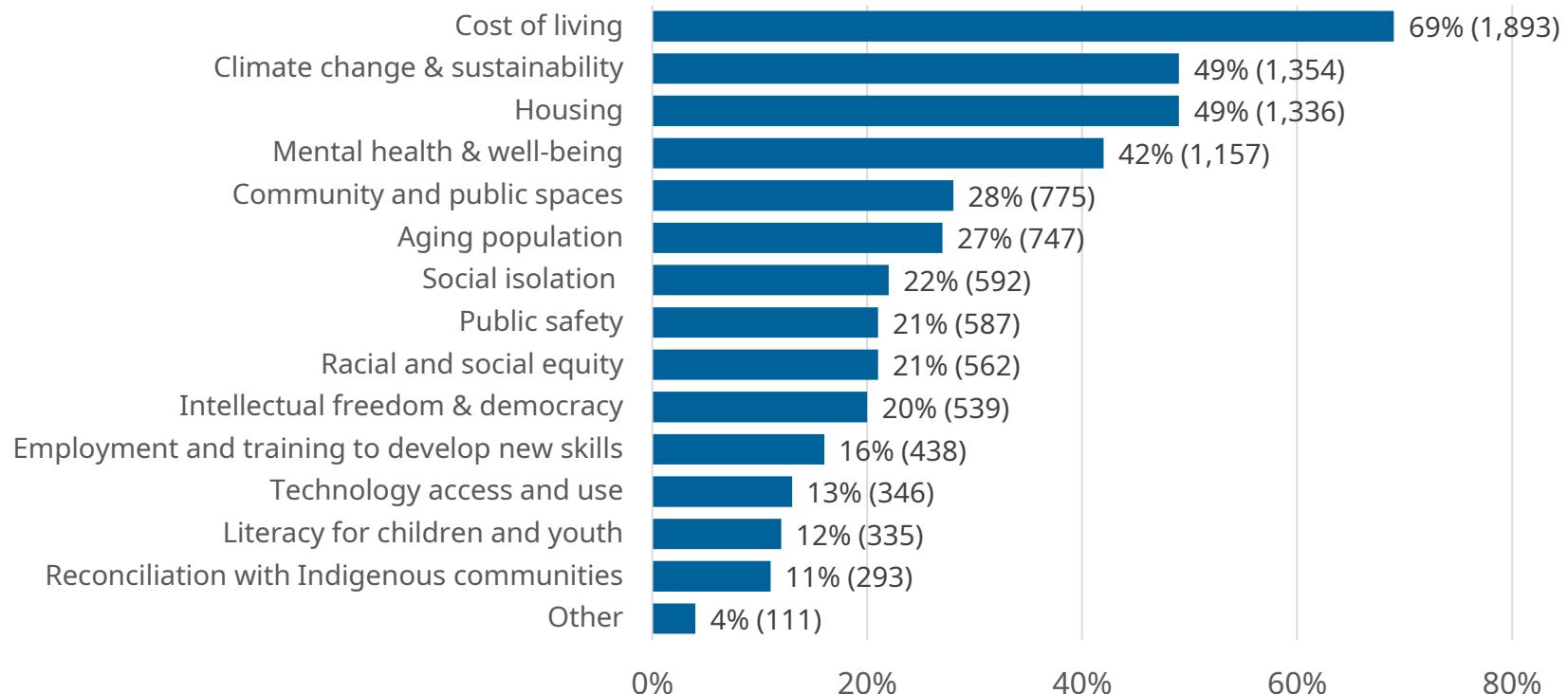


82,233  
Ratings

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# top public issues

Over the next 5 years, what are the most significant issues you and/or your community will be facing? Select the top three issues.



# qualitative analysis methodology

- We coded and analyzed over 2,700 thoughts using qualitative data analysis tools in ThoughtExchange.
- Results were analyzed by total number of thoughts and rating of thoughts.
- Example:

Theme = # of thoughts

= average rating e.g. 3.9 out of 5

# idea exchange

What could the library do to help you and/or your community?  
This could be a new idea, something we can do more of or  
improve.

# themes

Based on the analysis, **ten themes** were identified.

Theme	Number of thoughts	Average rating
1. Offer more programs to support learning and growth	719	3.7
2. Expand and enhance collections	368	3.7
3. Create modern and well-designed multi-use spaces	261	3.6
4. Expand library hours	225	4.0
5. Ensure libraries remain a welcoming and inclusive third space	218	3.9
6. Foster social connection	203	3.8
7. Increase awareness and access of library services	197	3.8
8. Build civic engagement and information literacy skills	190	3.6
9. Increase technology access and support digital literacy	144	3.6
10. Promote awareness of climate change and further learning about sustainable practices	86	3.7

## phase two consultation focus areas

# inputs for phase two focus areas

	Research & Phase One Consultation Inputs				Build staff capacity Equity
	Environmental scan findings	Staff consultation themes	Public top issues	Public consultation themes	
1 Awareness and availability of library services		✓			✓
2 Democracy, civic engagement and information literacy					✓
3 Cost of living, economic resilience, and skills development	✓	✓	✓		
4 Reading, learning, and growth		✓			✓
5 Environmental sustainability			✓		✓
6 Social connections and mental well-being	✓	✓			✓
7 Technology and digital inclusion	✓	✓			✓
8 Welcoming and inclusive public spaces to meet, study, and do work	✓	✓			✓

# **focus areas for phase two**

1. Awareness and availability of library services
2. Democracy, civic engagement, and information literacy
3. Cost of living, economic resilience, and skills development
4. Reading, learning, and growth
5. Environmental sustainability
6. Social connections and mental well-being
7. Technology and digital inclusion
8. Welcoming and inclusive public spaces to meet, study, and do work

# phase two consultation plan

# purpose

- The purpose of the second consultation phase is to validate and prioritize the focus areas and identify potential action items to execute on the plan.
- Target audiences for the second phase include all staff, underrepresented audiences from the first phase of public consultations, community partners, industry experts, and stakeholders.
- This phase is scheduled to begin in June and conclude in August.

# key highlights and tactics

- Staff engagement survey and focus group consultation sessions;
- Public engagement survey;
- A consultation toolkit for use at library and community events to engage residents and community partners in neighbourhoods across the city;
- Focus groups with targeted and underrepresented audiences, e.g. non-library users, equity-deserving groups, vulnerable persons;
- Expert panels on social connectedness and technology;
- Engagement with City Councillors and City of Toronto staff;
- Stakeholder meetings, e.g. Local 4948 and TPL Foundation;
- A benchmarking public survey of residents conducted by a third party.

## phase two survey questions

1. Where should the library focus in the next five years? Rank the following focus areas based on their importance to you and/or your community.
2. What can the library do to support the top three focus areas you identified? This could be a new idea, something we can do more of or improve.

## next steps

# october meeting

- Review results of phase two consultations
- SWOT analysis and Scenario Planning results
- Draft Strategic Priorities
- Draft Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan



thank you  
questions?