

Appendix 2 – Supplementary Review of Toronto’s Library Services

In April 2008, when Council reviewed Toronto’s 2006 Performance Measurement and Benchmarking Report, Council requested in the future that the City Manager annually select one target improvement area where the City’s performance is found to be within the first/top quartile in comparison to other municipalities, and identify how this has been achieved.

Scope of the Review

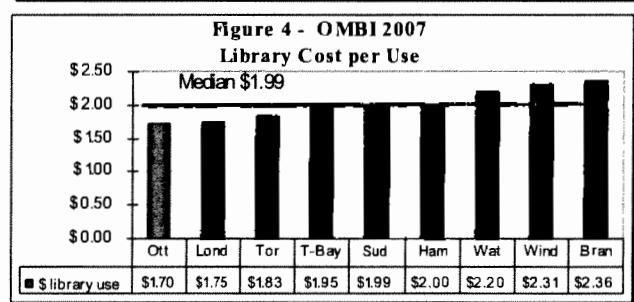
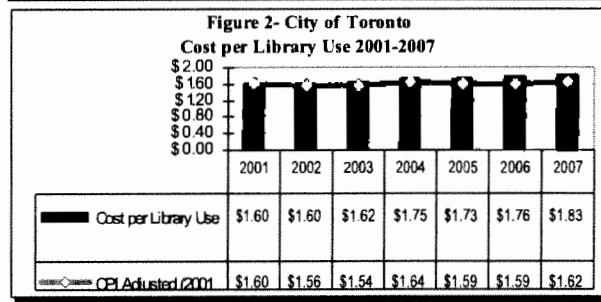
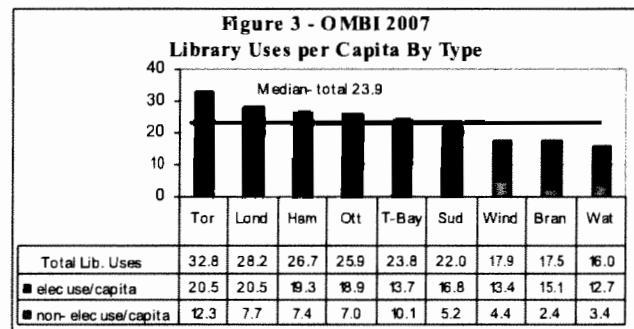
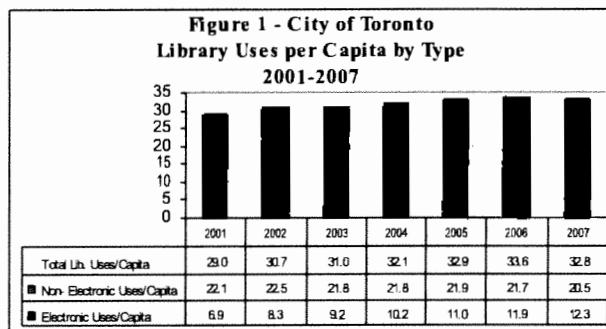
The area selected for this review, based on 2007 benchmarked results, was library services where the Toronto Public Library’s (TPL) results show a combination of very high library use and lower cost per use than in other Ontario municipal library systems.

This review covered a number of aspects of service delivery, including:

- A comparison of the TPL’s library use statistics to other large North American and World library systems
- Services and service levels provided at the TPL
- Staffing levels at the TPL since amalgamation
- The different components of Toronto’s library use and in which areas they excel and what factors contribute to Toronto’s higher library usage and lower cost per use in relation to other municipalities
- Initiatives the TPL has implemented to improve their efficiency and effectiveness
- Other key factors contributing to the TPL’s success
- Initiatives planned in the future by the TPL to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operations

How Does the Toronto Public Library’s Costs and Library Usage Compare to Other Ontario Library Systems?

Figures 1 through 4 below have been drawn from section 9 of the main report.



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In summary this data shows that:

- Figure 1- From 2001 to 2006 library use per capita increased each year, with this increase primarily related to electronic library use, while non-electronic use per capita remained stable. In 2007 electronic use continued to increase but cost containment measures undertaken in the fall of 2007, which included Sunday closings, a freeze on spending the library materials budget, and a hiring freeze may have resulted in declining library visits and other non-electronic uses.
- Figure 3 - In 2007 Toronto falls in the 1st/top quartile for the highest rate of library use per capita, ranking 1st of 9 municipalities for total library uses, electronic library uses and non-electronic. The other municipalities referred to are from Ontario and are members of the Ontario Municipal CAOs Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI).
- Figure 2 – Toronto has had a modest increase most years in its cost per library use. Adjusted for changes in Toronto’s consumer price index the cost per library use in 2007 was almost the same as in 2001.
- Figure 4- Toronto’s 2007 result for cost per library use places us 3rd of 9 (2nd quartile) in term of the lowest cost

How Does the Toronto Public Library Compare to Other Large Library Systems in North America and the World?

The International Context

On the international front, the Toronto Public Library is the world’s busiest urban public library system. Results show that:

- The TPL has higher circulation per capita (11.56) than any other international library system serving a population base over 1 million
- The TPL has the highest number of visits per capita (tied with Singapore).

The North American Context

The Toronto Public Library is also the largest and busiest public library system in North America, a result that has been consistent for the past seven years. The TPL has the highest circulation (both total and on a per capita basis) and the highest number of library visits (both total and on a per capita basis). Figure 5 reflects 2007 statistics for all North American libraries serving populations of two million or greater.

Figure 5

2007 North American Library Statistics for Library Systems Serving >2,000,000 Residents

Library System	Library Circulation			No. of Library Branches			No. of Library Visits			Pop'n Served	
	Total	Ranking on Total	Per capita	Total	Ranking on Total	Per 100k pop'n	Total	Ranking on Total	Per capita	Total	Ranking on Total
Toronto Public Library (ON)	28,925,965	1	11.56	99	1	4.0	16,391,516	1	6.5	2,503,281	5
Queens Borough Public Library (NY)	21,033,861	2	9.43	61	6	2.7	14,077,794	3	6.3	2,229,379	8
New York Public Library (NY)	16,556,899	3	5.00	86	2	2.6	13,815,951	4	4.2	3,313,573	3
Brooklyn Public Library (NY)	16,488,414	4	6.69	58	7	2.4	12,410,531	5	5.0	2,465,326	6
Los Angeles Public Library (CA)	15,574,773	5	3.88	71	5	1.8	16,003,909	2	4.0	4,018,080	1
County of Los Angeles Public Library (CA)	13,981,247	6	3.81	84	3	2.3	11,952,539	6	3.3	3,673,313	2
Chicago Public Library (IL)	7,771,541	7	2.68	78	4	2.7	-	-	-	2,896,016	4
Miami-Dade Public Library System (FL)	7,582,777	8	3.64	41	8	2.0	5,872,671	7	2.8	2,083,984	9
Houston Public Library (TX)	5,643,846	9	2.53	38	9	1.7	4,261,685	8	1.9	2,231,335	7

Source: Public Library Data Survey 2008 - Information compiled by TPL Planning & Development, July 2008.

Note: Toronto's population in these statistics is based on census and is considered understated relative to the most recent estimate used in OMBI of 2,730,000

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While Toronto has the largest total circulation and library visits of the ten largest North American library systems, by population it ranks only fifth. One important factor that contributes to Toronto’s high library usage is the number of library branches (columns 5 to 7 in figure 5) with Toronto having the most branches (99) and a significantly higher rate of 4.0 branches per 100,000 population, than the other systems.

What are the Services and Services Levels the Toronto Public Library Offers?

Branches and Mobile Library Services

As cornerstones of their neighbourhoods, the Library’s 99 branches strive to reflect the diverse communities they serve. Branches are strategically located for visibility and accessibility. They are positioned in a range of facilities including community centres, shopping malls and stand alone sites; they are designed to be welcoming and safe. The Toronto Public Library is committed to achieving architectural excellence in design and green principles in all renovations. The planning of all branch renovations includes broad consultation with local residents, stakeholders and community leaders.

The service delivery model is comprised of 79 neighbourhood, 17 district and 3 research and reference branches, and city wide services. Neighbourhood libraries are smaller branches meeting the needs of the immediate community. District libraries offer larger collections within a larger facility and provide extensive services to a wider audience. Research and reference libraries provide comprehensive and specialized collections and services with an emphasis on access, research and preservation. City wide services include services such as home library service and bookmobile services.

Virtual Branch and Technology Based Services

The Toronto Public Library’s virtual branch is its online face providing e-services that extends and integrates with all other library services. The use of technology extends service 24/7 remotely and conveniently, which not only makes it easier for customers to find information, it has also allowed the Library to manage increasing demand in an effective and efficient manner without additional staff.

Demand for technology based services has increased dramatically with the shift to electronic sources of information, access to increasingly rich digitized content, the availability of downloadable e-content, and the rise of user generated content and social networking sites. Web 2.0 technology is offering new opportunities to reach residents, deliver service and engage online community participation in collaborative learning, programming and discussions.

Access to the Library’s 1,922 public workstations, office software applications and high speed internet computers is an essential feature of 21st century public library service. The demand now extends to wireless service, increased bandwidth to support multimedia, and laptop lending to allow increased access to the online world of information.

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Collections

The Toronto Public Library has 11 million items in its collection and actively develops collections in 40 languages and in multiple formats including books, CDs, audio books, videos, DVDs, magazines, newspapers, and downloadable content such ebooks. The Library also has five major Special Collections which include over 2 million items and feature rare, fragile and valuable books, manuscripts, art, pictures and newspapers that require special care, cataloguing and use.

The online collection which is accessible at home or within branches includes full-text magazine and newspaper databases, encyclopaedias, information on careers and computers, and products for self-testing academic and reading skills. The growing collection of downloadable content includes books, audio books, music and videos accessible anywhere with an internet connection.

Programs

The Toronto Public Library's programs are popular and varied with over 24,000 programs delivered by staff or in partnership annually, reaching an audience of 650,000 participants in 2007. The types of programs range from weekly children's programming to local music concerts for youth, celebrity author readings, literary and arts events, cultural activities that celebrate heritage and help build community memory, and online computer training.

Reference Service

Staff are, well trained in delivering customer service, and help customers navigate the wealth of information available to them; there were 2.2 million reference service transactions in 2007.

Outreach Programs

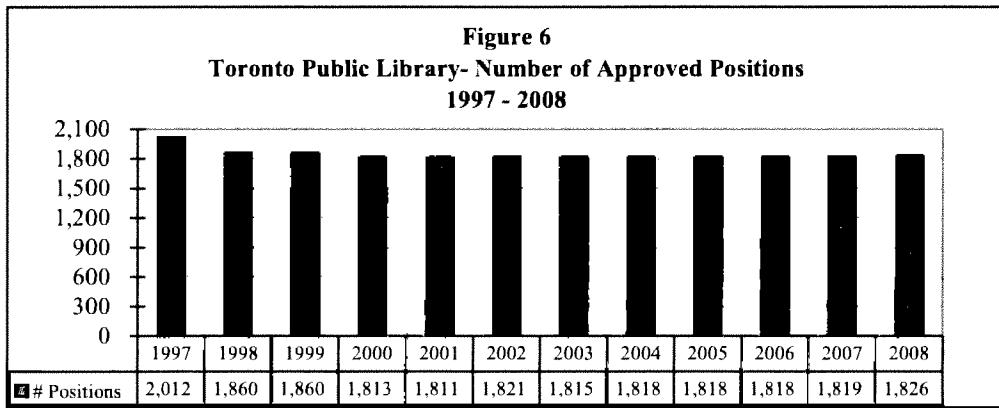
The Toronto Public Library excels in community outreach by identifying and promoting library services for increased access to its resources. Outreach initiatives are throughout the city and are an important focus in all communities including Toronto's priority neighbourhoods. Outreach programs include:

- Ready for Reading early literacy programs
- Kindergarten Outreach
- High School Outreach promoting electronic services
- Participation in Neighbourhood Action Teams in priority neighbourhoods
- Newcomer Orientation (Library Settlement Partnership)
- Outreach to youth shelters
- Home library service and book deposits for frail and housebound seniors.

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How Have Staffing Levels Changed at the Toronto’s Public Library?

Staffing is the largest area of the TPL’s expenditures, with salaries and benefits representing 75% of the 2008 gross operating budget in 2008. Figure 5 shows the number of approved positions from 1997 (the year prior to amalgamation) to 2008.



Over the 11 year period staff decreased by-186 position or -9.2%. If the three-year amalgamation downsizing period of 1998 to 2000 is excluded, over the past 8 years from 2001 through 2008 staffing increased by only +13 positions or +0.7% in total.

As noted earlier the utilization of technology and electronic services by the TPL has grown quickly and made it easier and more convenient for many users to access and find information in branches and on a 24/7 basis remotely. It has allowed the TPL to manage increasing demand and manage its costs in an effective and efficient manner without adding staff.

In What Areas of Library Use is the Toronto Public Library Excelling?

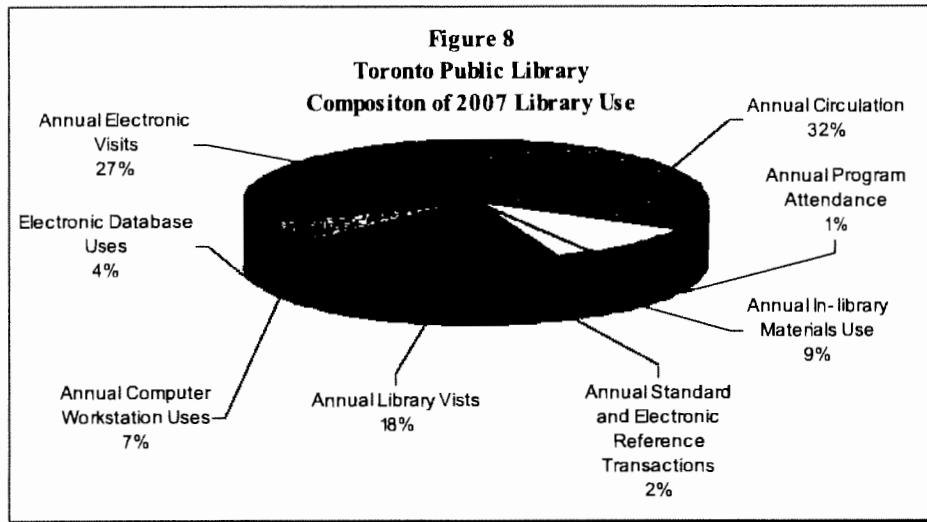
Figure 7 provides an overview of the number and different types of library use there were at the TPL in 2007 by Toronto residents. It includes the total number of uses, the number of uses per capita and Toronto’s ranking based on per capita results (in terms of the highest use) in relation to the nine members of the Ontario Municipal CAOs Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI).

Figure 7
Toronto Public Library - 2007 Library Uses

Type of Use	Number of Uses	Uses per Capita	OMBI Ranking of Nine Munic.
Non-Electronic			
Annual Circulation	28,925,965	10.60	2
Annual Program Attendance	646,457	0.24	4
Annual In-library Materials Use	7,717,000	2.83	3
Annual Standard and Electronic Reference Transactions	2,219,750	0.81	2
Annual Library Visits	16,391,500	6.00	4
	55,900,672	20.48	
Electronic			
Annual Computer Workstation Uses	5,845,950	2.14	1
Electronic Database Uses	3,208,750	1.18	4
Annual Electronic Visits	24,472,075	8.96	1
	33,526,775	12.28	
Annual Library Uses	89,427,447	32.76	1

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Figure 8 provides a percentage breakdown of Toronto’s 2007 library uses, by type of use.

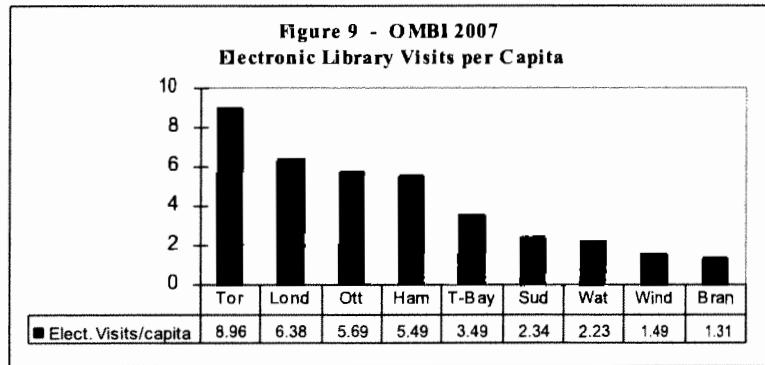


Together figures 7 and 8 show that electronic library visits and the circulation of library materials:

- Are the two largest types of library use in Toronto, together accounting for 59% of all library uses
- Are the two key areas of significance where Toronto ranks either first or second of the nine OMBI municipalities

Annual Electronic Visits per Capita

Figure 9 provides 2007 data for Toronto and the other OMBI municipalities on electronic library visits per capita. Electronic visits represent the number of visits made to the library website via the internet. Toronto ranks first by a wide margin.



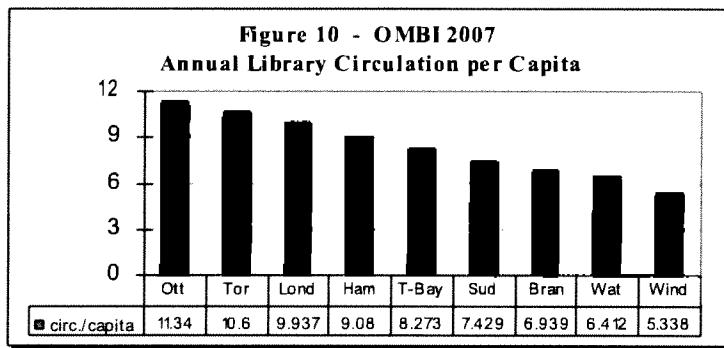
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The Toronto Public Library achieves high electronic visits per capita through:

- Availability of a broad range of resources that are easy to access and use
- Community awareness of electronic products and services which include enriched digitized content, online programs, downloadable books, movies, magazines and music, amongst other deliverables
- Availability of 1,922 public access workstations and high speed internet computers in branches throughout the city
- Availability of 24/7 access to e-content remotely
- Increased availability of wireless service, currently available in 33 branches.
- The TPL also provides provincial-level service in establishing and developing the Virtual Reference Library

Annual Circulation per Capita

Figure 10 provides 2007 data for Toronto and the other OMBI municipalities on annual circulation (borrowing) of library materials per capita. Toronto ranks 2nd of the 9 OMBI municipalities.



Toronto Public Library is able to achieve high circulation per capita through:

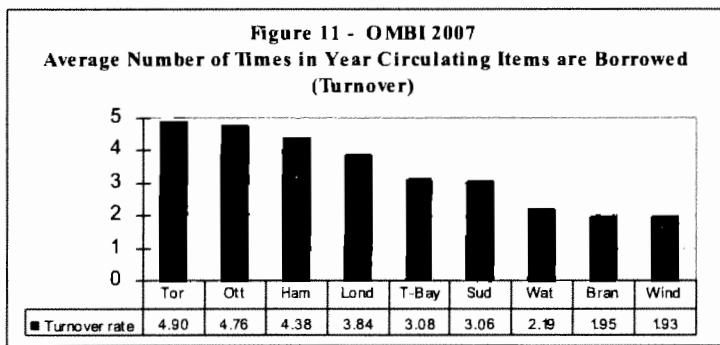
- Convenience of 99 library facilities offering neighbourhood based facilities
- Customer focused circulation policies/loan periods
- An online catalogue available in library branches and remotely (web) with the ability to request delivery of books and other materials to any of the 99 TPL branches
- Effective marketing of resources
- Having well maintained library collections that range from popular to research and respond to the needs of local communities
- Recreational materials for people of all ages, extensive children's collections for pre-school and school age children, materials for youth for education and employment, personal development resources for activities such as skills upgrading, accreditation and employment, special collections, diverse and community targeted collections available in a variety of formats

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- The TPL has a diverse multilingual collection with 40 different languages in its circulating collections that are available at various branches throughout the city
- The Languages Centre of the Toronto Reference Library houses materials in more than 100 languages
- English as a Second Language (ESL) collection - The TPL keeps extensive collections of books and other tools for studying English as a Second Language (ESL). Many of their 99 libraries across the city offer ESL materials for people who want to learn English, or improve their speaking, reading, writing and understanding of the language.

Average Number of Times in a Year Circulating Items Are Borrowed (Turnover Rate)

The quality of a library’s collection is an important consideration for library users and the total circulation of a library system. The average number of times each item in a library’s circulating collection is borrowed (turnover), is one way of measuring this quality. Figure 11 provides 2007 data for Toronto and the other OMBI municipalities and Toronto ranks 1st of the 9 OMBI members.



Generally, if the number of times an item has been borrowed in a year is higher, it is an indication of how popular and relevant the item is to users. It is a challenge for library systems to balance demand for popular material with maintaining and enhancing a collection with subject depth.

In addition to the factors relating to high circulation per capita noted above, the TPL is able to achieve a high turnover rate of its collection through:

- Variant loan periods reflecting format and use to maximize availability
- Annual collection development plans that respond to users’ needs
- Current collections that balance in branch browsing for materials and the popularity of the holds system

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What Has the Toronto Public Library Been Doing to Further Improve its Efficiency and Effectiveness?

The following initiatives have been implemented by the TPL to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations:

- Extensive growth in virtual branch and technology based services
- Development of a service delivery model that allocates resources appropriately to neighbourhood, district and reference and research branches
- Scheduling practices and use of self serve technology to optimize open hours
- An ordering system for library materials that minimizes duplication and allows for economies of scale
- A delivery system and customized circulation software to manage a 156 % increase in holds service

Guided by its mission statement and vision, the TPL excels in public service performance by providing free and equitable access to public library services which meet the changing needs of Torontonians. The result is high use and satisfaction rates. Based on results of a survey conducted in 2006, 73% of the Toronto population report that they have used a public library in the past year and nearly 90% of new immigrants (living in Canada 10 years or less) visit the library at least once a year.

The TPL offers:

- A strong commitment to strategic planning based on model of extensive public consultation that is responsive to Toronto’s community needs and diverse populations
- Collections with depth and breadth with levels that range from popular to research and are available in many languages, formats, and reading levels
- Staff who are professional and well trained in delivering customer service
- Access to technology and high quality online services accessible both in the library and externally

What are Other Key Factors Contributing to the Toronto Public Library’s Success?

Volunteers

The residents of Toronto are engaged. Close to 3,000 volunteers, many of them youth, donate over 94,000 hours each year to the TPL. They enrich reading and literacy programs for children and adults, offer advice on youth programs and services and volunteer in the Library’s Book Ends bookstores.

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Key Partnerships

The TPL is committed to outreach and partnerships. The Strategic Plan provides a framework for the ongoing development of city and community partnerships, and the City of Toronto is a key partner in shaping library service in the city. By aligning the Library’s strategic priorities with those of the City’s, the Library has the opportunity to participate in community development initiatives such as neighbourhood action in 13 priority areas, and in forging new partnerships for the provision of library service.

In addition, the TPL has created key partnerships with school boards to support early literacy, reach at risk youth and deliver ESL programs. Another key partnership involves reaching out to the immigrant community and helping newcomers integrate and adapt to a new country and city. The *Toronto Library Settlement Partnerships* (LSP) is an innovative service delivery partnership between Toronto Public Library, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and local settlement service agencies that provides settlement services to newcomers at library locations throughout the city. This partnership was developed in Toronto, and based on its success, has been extended to other cities throughout Ontario.

What is the Toronto Public Library Planning for the Future to Further Improve its Efficiency and Effectiveness?

The TPL continues to actively investigate ways to improve service. Plans for cost-effective methods for the delivery of high quality and enhanced library services to the residents of Toronto include:

- Improving access to public space through increased open hours resulting from the City’s capital investment in the expansion of self serve technologies
- Redesigning the Library website for ease of use, increased functionality and visibility
- Opening the Toronto Reference Library’s new event space. The venue will enhance civic engagement and cultural programming using in part, funds raised by the TPL Foundation for programming.
- Expanding access to wireless service to all 99 branches, improving bandwidth for multimedia and introducing laptop lending
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- Developing a staff diversity plan, and strengthening staff training and development
- Developing a comprehensive green strategy focusing on buildings and systems, energy consumption, waste diversion, reduction and recycling
- Supporting the Toronto Public Library Foundation in raising funds to enhance library service
- Continuing to develop partnership opportunities and removing barriers for at risk populations

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Strategic Directions

The Toronto Public Library promotes and enriches the democratic, cultural, educational, and economic life of the city. To accommodate the diverse and evolving needs of the people of Toronto, the Library sets strategic goals every four years as a framework for service delivery. The themes and goals of the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan; *Our Shared Stories: Writing the Future of Toronto’s Libraries* were derived from an environmental scan and guided by extensive public consultation.

The priorities for the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan are:

- Engaging Toronto’s diverse communities
- Addressing the growing income gap
- Expanding access to technology and online services
- Supporting creativity and culture
- Supporting a sustainable library

To meet these goals TPL is working to working to:

- Promote greater participation in library services and programs through the expansion of open hours, preschool reading programs, and services for youth and older adults
- Expand access to literacy and employment collections, programs and services, and be a strong partner in city and local neighbourhood initiatives
- Improve access to the internet, computers, laptops and wireless service in library branches as well as offer enriched online content and self service technology
- Build the Library’s role in providing original and accessible cultural programming, expand access to cultural venues in the city and preserve community memory
- Promote environmentally sustainable practices and ensure the sustainability of the budget, staff resources and infrastructure

Summary

On the North American and international front, statistics show the Toronto Public Library to be the busiest urban public library system in the world. This has been achieved through a combination of high service levels, through its branches, collections, programs and electronic services, and managing its costs by maintaining existing staff levels, while also expanding particularly its electronic services. Toronto residents continue to use TPL’s services at a very high rate confirming these services are both accessible and relevant to them.