

## **2020-2024 Strategic Plan: COVID-19 Impact Analysis and Communications Plan – Update**

<b>Date:</b>	June 22, 2020
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Public Library Board
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian

### **SUMMARY**

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The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the findings from staff's COVID-19 impact analysis on the plan's five priorities and enablers and an update on the communication and rollout of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan.

The impact analysis was conducted from April 28 to May 29, 2020 and included three phases: research, assessment and validation. The findings from the analysis strongly affirm TPL's strategic direction and highlight the importance of the five priorities and enablers in creating capacity to build success, resilience and well-being for our city and communities. Results of the analysis will continue to inform the implementation of the plan.

Timelines for the communication and rollout of the plan have been updated to align and integrate with the reinstatement/recovery of library services.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There is no financial impact arising from the information in this report.

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

### **DECISION HISTORY**

At the November 25, 2019 Toronto Public Library Board meeting, the Board directed

staff to develop a balanced scorecard, key performance indicators and associated activities and a comprehensive communications strategy and plan to inform and engage staff, residents, stakeholders, partners and funders in TPL's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan:

<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2019/nov25/12d-spsc-strat-plan-2020-2024-resilience-success-well-being-combined.pdf>

At the January 27, 2020 Toronto Public Library Board meeting, the Board received the *2020-2024 Strategic Plan: Phase 1 Communication Plan report* that provided an overview of the communications strategy and plan to inform and engage staff, residents, stakeholders, partners and funders in TPL's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan:

<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2020/jan27/19-2020-2024-strategic-plan-phase-1-comm-plan.pdf>

At the February 24, 2020 Toronto Public Library Board meeting, the Board approved the 2020 strategy map and balanced scorecard template and directed staff to develop and implement the balanced scorecard, with metrics, targets and initiatives for 2020 and future years:

<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2020/feb24/14-2020-2024-strat-plan-strategy-map-and-balanced-scorecard-combined-revised.pdf>

At the April 27, 2020 Toronto Public Library Board meeting, TPL provided an update on the communication and rollout of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and identified the need to conduct an impact analysis of COVID-19 on the plan's five priorities and enablers.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

Given the significance of the current pandemic on the lives of residents and communities, and the changing socio-economic environment in which TPL is operating, staff conducted an analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the strategic plan's five priorities and enablers to inform the communication, rollout and implementation of the plan.

## **COMMENTS**

The impact analysis was conducted from April 28 to May 29, 2020 and included three phases:

- Research – Updating the environmental scan with a focus on the evolving impact of COVID-19 on the socio-economic and service environments
- Assessment – Analyzing findings of the environmental scan and the implications for the plan’s five priorities and enablers
- Validation – Confirming findings with key stakeholders to inform TPL’s communication, rollout and implementation of the strategic plan

## Research

The environmental scan was updated with a focus on the evolving impact of COVID-19 on the socio-economic and service environments. Ten focus areas were reviewed under each of the five strategic priorities and enablers, including politics and government, economy and work, housing, transportation, social development, education, health and safety, arts and culture, environment and technology.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the first ever global shutdown of the economy, resulting in widespread and rapid economic and societal changes. COVID-19 has accelerated existing trends towards e-government, online learning and education, remote work, and technology trends, including ecommerce, streaming and telehealth; heightening the need for access to technology and digital literacy skills; and deepening existing social and income inequities for residents and communities.

Key issues that arose from the research and environmental scan include:

- The pandemic has changed people’s **perceptions and use of public spaces** that will result in interim and long-term changes in the way governments and organizations plan, design and operate public spaces.
- The **digital divide** in the city has deepened as education, government and work moved online during the pandemic, making digital access and digital literacy skills more critical than ever for Torontonians.
- **Canada’s job market** shrank with the closure of front-line services and continues to take a significant hit, with massive job losses and a rapid decline in employment. In the longer term, it is anticipated that the job market will be increasingly digitized and automated, making workforce development and reskilling initiatives essential components of economic recovery.
- **Access to accurate information** has been critical to how successfully governments and communities combat the pandemic; issues of data security and privacy, reliance on online channels for communication and engagement, etc.
- The pandemic led to a reduction in physical interactions for all ages resulting in **increased social isolation** and loneliness, highlighting the importance of social connection to the wellbeing of residents, communities and the city as a whole.
- **Social and economic inequalities** have deepened as a result of the pandemic, creating a greater reliance on an already over-burdened social service system.

## Assessment

In the analysis phase, staff assessed how the research findings impacted the plan across its priorities and enablers. The chart below summarizes the evolving impact of COVID-19 on the five priorities:

Strategic priorities	Research implications	Plan and implementation considerations
1. Public Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrictions on the use of public spaces</li> <li>• Use of physical distancing measures</li> <li>• Increased demand for more services in an online environment</li> <li>• Increased social isolation and loneliness among all ages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt our public spaces for greater safety and accessibility</li> <li>• Greater emphasis on making our digital space to be more accessible, flexible and personalized</li> <li>• Improve customers' experience navigating between our digital and physical spaces (omni-channel customer experience)</li> </ul>
2. Digital Inclusion & Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The digital divide in the city has widen</li> <li>• Accelerated technology trends</li> <li>• Increased concerns over digital privacy and surveillance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerate the provision of digital inclusion and digital literacy services</li> <li>• Strengthen and build new and non-traditional partnerships</li> </ul>
3. Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Massive job losses and a rapid decline in employment</li> <li>• Small businesses were most impacted by the COVID-19 economic downturn</li> <li>• In the longer term, job market will be increasingly digitized and automated</li> <li>• More people working remotely and reliance on technology to do so</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerate the provision of workforce and job skill development services</li> <li>• Leverage partnership, funding and technological opportunities with government, business and philanthropic organizations</li> <li>• Provide more access to resources that connect entrepreneurs and small business to government grants</li> </ul>
4. A Democratic Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased challenges to civic engagement</li> <li>• Increased spread of misinformation online and social media</li> <li>• New challenges to democracy and human rights (e.g. access to information, privacy)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support participation in inclusive democratic decision-making through virtual and in-person participation</li> <li>• Continue to advocate for econtent as the publishing and tech industries consolidate and demand for econtent continues to grow</li> </ul>

Strategic priorities	Research implications	Plan and implementation considerations
5. Public Service Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerated changes to workplaces including existing trends towards flexible work arrangements and remote work</li> <li>• Expectations for public services to deliver increasingly responsive services in a complex, disruptive and uncertain environment</li> <li>• More constraints to public service funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase emphasis for staff to deliver an omni-channel experience to customers</li> <li>• New models of working</li> <li>• New health and safety focus in the workplace</li> </ul>

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical importance of responsive public services, creating new requirements for the Library to build resilience and capacity in response to a volatile and changing service environment. In this context, the Library's enablers take on renewed importance to effectively deliver on the plan's strategic priorities, especially in the increasingly constrained funding environment COVID-19 has created.

Enablers	Research implications	Impact on enablers
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More constraints to public service funding</li> <li>• Unprecedented levels of collaboration amongst government and Canada's businesses, academic institutions, associations and entrepreneurs to combat COVID-19 pandemic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships are even more critical to innovation and delivery of library services</li> <li>• Rethink and reimagine partnerships to include new forms of partnering</li> </ul>
Modernization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerated rate of innovation and digital transformation of public services</li> <li>• Greater expectations for organizations and businesses to offer efficient, seamless interactions across digital and physical service channels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerate innovation of our digital services – to support customers and staff</li> <li>• Greater emphasis on digital customer experiences</li> </ul>
Evaluation and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater expectations for transparency and accountability in governments and other institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No impact</li> </ul>

Overall, the findings from the analysis strongly affirm TPL's strategic direction and highlight the importance of the five priorities and enablers in creating capacity to build success, resilience and well-being for our city and communities.

### **Reaffirmed importance of focus on equity**

The impacts of the pandemic have disproportionately affected low-income individuals and families, older adults, those with pre-existing health conditions, Indigenous and racialized communities, marginalized groups and vulnerable populations. There is a greater urgency to address the growing economic and societal inequalities in our city.

### **Validation**

To validate the environmental scan findings and confirm what we heard at the 2019 2020-2024 Strategic Plan stakeholder consultations, follow-up surveys were conducted to the 2019 TPL 2020-2024 Strategic Plan Technology and Equity & Inclusion Roundtables participants from May 13 to May 27, 2020.

The surveys provided the opportunity for stakeholders to provide input into the Library's priorities and direction. While the response rates were low, those who did respond overwhelmingly confirmed and reiterated the environmental scan findings and what was heard at the 2019 consultations. When asked whether the priority areas heard in 2019 are still relevant, survey respondents said:

*"These trends continue and, in light of COVID 19, there is an even more pressing need for access to technology and the internet. One of the most pressing needs is access to Wi-Fi, laptops, and tablets to work and learn from home."* – 2019 Technology Roundtable participant

*"Yes. These trends are still the most relevant. In terms of computer literacy, I think there should be some programming related to cybersecurity."* – 2019 Technology Roundtable participant

*"I believe that these are still areas of priority. The library should help provide more support virtually for those of us who are trying to move forward during these trying times."* – 2019 Equity & Inclusion Roundtable participant

*"Yes, most definitely still relevant. During this time, accessing government benefits might be another area of importance for our clients."* – 2019 Equity & Inclusion Roundtable participant

## **On-going process**

The strategic plan is a living document that is reviewed and evaluated each year to assess progress against the identified outcomes. In February 2020, the Board approved the 2020 strategy map and balanced scorecard template and directed staff to develop and implement the balanced scorecard, with metrics, targets and initiatives for 2020 and future years.

The COVID-19 Impact Analysis will inform the update to the 2020 balanced scorecard metrics, targets and initiatives. These balanced scorecard metrics will be assessed against the metrics identified in the *COVID-19 Impact Report – March-May, 2020 – Three-Month Review*, which are producing quality data to assess system-wide and divisional performance.

## **Communication and rollout plan update**

While the strategy for the communication and rollout of the strategic plan remains unchanged, timelines and tactics have been revised to reflect the Library's temporary closure and to align and integrate with the reinstatement of library services.

Staff remain a critical audience, and the robust internal plan developed to support their understanding and engagement in phases remains the approach. However, these activities will need to be phased in more gradually, to ensure that staff can continue to focus on the reinstatement of library services over the coming weeks and months. The public rollout of the strategic plan will happen in early July, and education and engagement assets for staff will be developed and introduced over the summer and into the fall 2020.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings from the analysis strongly affirm TPL's strategic direction and highlight the importance of the five priorities and enablers in creating capacity to build success, resilience and well-being for our city and communities.

The social and economic impact of the pandemic are both evolving and unknown. Consultation with staff, public, partners and stakeholders will ensure the Library continues to meet the diverse and changing needs of residents and communities, including those of vulnerable residents most impacted by the pandemic, while advancing the longer term outcomes: success, resilience, and well-being.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Vickery Bowles  
City Librarian




# 2020-2024 Strategic Plan: COVID-19 Impact Analysis and Communications Plan - Update Toronto Public Library Board

June 22, 2020

# Agenda

1. Summary of COVID-19 Impact Analysis on the Plan's five priorities and enablers
2. Revised timelines for communication and rollout of the Plan



# Summary of COVID-19 Impact Analysis

# COVID-19 Impact Analysis



1. **Research** - Update the environmental scan



2. **Assessment** - Analyze findings of the environmental scan



3. **Validation** - Confirm findings with key stakeholders

# Environmental Scan

- Updated from **April 28 to May 29, 2020** with a focus on the evolving impact of COVID-19
- Ten focus areas were reviewed under each of the five strategic priorities and enablers
- Main focus is Toronto and Ontario, but also look nationally and globally
- Reviewed current state of affairs and predicted trends

**3**  
Staff

**10**  
Focus  
Areas

**150+**  
Sources

# Key issues that arose from environmental scan



- Changes to people's **perceptions and use of public spaces**



- The **digital divide** in the city has deepened



- **Massive job losses** and a rapid decline in employment

# Key issues that arose from environmental scan cont'd



- Importance of **access to accurate information**



- **Increased social isolation**, loneliness, and anxiety



- **Social and economic inequalities have deepened**

# COVID-19 Impact Analysis



1. **Research** - Update the environmental scan



2. **Assessment** - Analyze findings of the environmental scan



3. **Validation** - Confirm findings with key stakeholders

# 1 Public Space

## Research implications

- **Restrictions on the use of public spaces**
- Use of **physical distancing measures**
- Increased demand for more services in an **online environment**
- **Increased social isolation** and loneliness among all ages

## Implementation considerations

- **Adapt our public spaces** for greater safety and accessibility
- **Greater emphasis** on making our **digital space** more accessible, flexible and personalized
- **Improve customers' experience** navigating between our digital and physical spaces (omni-channel customer experience)

## 2 Digital Inclusion & Literacy

### Research implications

- The digital divide in the city has widened
- Accelerated technology trends
- Increased concerns over **digital privacy and surveillance**

### Implementation considerations

- **Accelerate the provision** of digital inclusion and digital literacy services
- Strengthen and build new and non-traditional **partnerships**

# 3 Workforce Development

## Research implications

- **Massive job losses** and a rapid decline in employment
- **Small businesses were most impacted** by the COVID-19 economic downturn
- In the longer term, **job market will be increasingly digitized and automated**
- More people **working remotely** and **reliance on technology** to do so

## Implementation considerations

- **Accelerate the provision** of workforce and job skill development services
- **Leverage partnership, funding and technological opportunities** with government, business and philanthropic organizations
- **Provide more access** to resources that connect entrepreneurs and small business to government grants

# 4 A Democratic Society

## Research implications

- **Increased challenges to civic engagement**
- **Increased spread of misinformation** online and on social media
- **New challenges to democracy and human rights** (e.g. access to information, privacy)

## Implementation considerations

- **Continue to support participation** in inclusive democratic decision-making through virtual and in-person participation
- **Continue to advocate for econtent** as the publishing and tech industries consolidate and demand for econtent continues to grow

# 5 Public Service Excellence

## Research implications

- **Accelerated changes to workplaces** including existing trends towards flexible work arrangements and remote work
- **Expectations for public services** to deliver increasingly responsive services in a complex, disruptive and uncertain environment
- **More constraints to public service funding**

## Implementation considerations

- **Increase emphasis for staff to deliver an omni-channel experience** to customers
- **New models of working**
- **New health and safety focus** in the workplace

# Impact on Enablers

partnerships



- **Partnerships are even more critical** to innovation and delivery of library services
  - **Rethink and reimagine partnerships** to include new forms of partnering
- 

modernization



- **Accelerate innovation of our digital services**  
– to support customers and staff
  - **Greater emphasis on digital customer experiences**
- 

evaluation & accountability



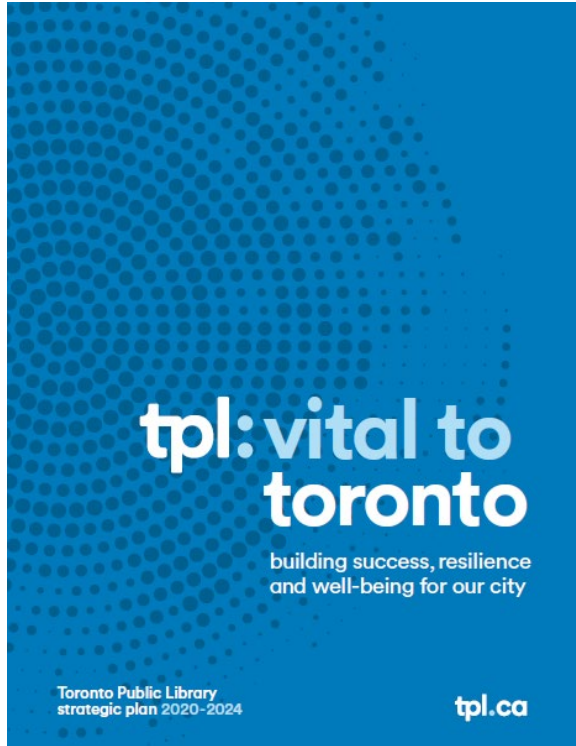
- **Reaffirmed importance** for evaluation, transparency and accountability

# Reaffirmed importance of focus on equity



- The pandemic has **disproportionately affected equity-seeking groups and vulnerable populations**
- **Greater urgency** to address the growing inequalities
- **Reaffirmed importance to understand and address inequities and barriers** to library services and to advance an inclusive and equitable workplace

# Assessment



Overall, the findings from the analysis **strongly affirm TPL's strategic direction and reiterate the importance of the five priorities and enablers** in building success, resilience and well-being for our city and communities.

# COVID-19 Impact Analysis



1. **Research** - Update the environmental scan



2. **Assessment** - Analyze findings of the environmental scan



3. **Validation** - Confirm findings with key stakeholders



# Follow Up Surveys - Technology & Equity Roundtable Participants

- Surveys were conducted from **May 13 to May 27, 2020**
- **Survey response rates:** Technology (14%), Equity (31%)
- **Overwhelmingly confirmed** the environmental scan findings and what was heard at the 2019 consultations

## What we heard

“

*Yes. **These trends are still the most relevant.** In terms of computer literacy, I think there should be some programming related to **cybersecurity**.*

– 2019 Technology Roundtable participant

*I believe that **these are still areas of priority.** The library should help provide **more support virtually** for those of us who are trying to move forward during these trying times.*

– 2019 Equity & Inclusion Roundtable participant

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# Moving forward

- **Continue to monitor the social and economic impacts** of the pandemic as it evolves
- **Update to the 2020 balanced scorecard** metrics, targets and initiatives to reflect the COVID-19 Impact Analysis
- **Continue consultation** with staff, public, partners and stakeholders including vulnerable residents most impacted by the pandemic



# Revised timelines for communication and rollout of the Plan

# Communication and rollout: updated timeline

## PUBLIC

### Launch

- Share with Library Board
- Post on tpl.ca
- Begin stakeholder distribution

Develop assets and tools for ongoing communication, reinforcement

## STAFF

### Build awareness

- City Librarian message
- Provide basic communication tools as needed

### Manager engagement

### Staff engagement

- Managers cascade, connect with staff

June

July

August

