

Strategic Plan 2025 – 2029: Phase 1 Communication Plan

Date: January 27, 2025

To: Toronto Public Library Board

From: City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the communications strategy and plan that will inform and engage key Toronto Public Library (TPL) stakeholders – including staff, Torontonians, partners, funders and influencers in TPL's 2025-2029 Strategic Plan.

This Communication Plan outlines the first of a three-phase approach which focuses on the rollout of the Plan in Q1 and Q2 of 2025 to internal and external audiences. Phase 2 (Q3 and Q4 2025) will focus on broadening engagement, and Phase 3 (2026-2029) will focus on telling the story of how and why the Library is delivering on the Plan's outcomes.

As is highlighted in TPL's new Strategic Plan, staff are foundational and critical to its success, playing a key role in bringing the Plan to life and delivering on its outcomes. This means staff education, awareness and engagement must be the first step in the Strategic Plan Communication Plan. In addition to informing and raising awareness of the Plan, TPL's internal communications strategies and tactics must also inspire, support, engage and empower staff.

Following the rollout to staff, a public rollout of the new Strategic Plan will begin later in March 2025, and will take a multi-faceted approach to reach and engage the many and varied audiences of the Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact associated with this report 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.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

TPL's multi-faceted Strategic Plan Communication Plan will ensure that key stakeholders, and TPL staff in particular, are aware of and understand the strategic priorities, objectives and outcomes of the new Strategic Plan, and are inspired to engage with it and with the Library. Effective communication of the Plan will also help achieve Strategic Plan Priority #4: Awareness and Availability by promoting understanding and awareness about the Library, its value to Toronto and many of its services, programs and resources.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Library's Strategic Plan Communication Plan is designed to reach and engage a broad range of individuals, communities, partners and stakeholders. A variety of formats and channels will be used, tailored to different audiences and to suit their different needs, and materials will be designed to be accessible and inclusive.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on December 2, 2024, the Toronto Public Library Board approved [TPL's Strategic Plan 2025-2029: Creating connection and belonging for Torontonians to thrive in every neighbourhood](#), which included the next step of developing a communication plan for the rollout of the strategic plan.

COMMENTS

The Strategic Plan Communication Plan has three phases, designed to raise awareness and understanding of the Plan, broaden engagement in the library and its activities, and report on updates and achievements of the Plan. The timing of each phase is:

- Phase 1: Strategic Plan Rollout (awareness and understanding) – Q1/Q2 2025
- Phase 2: Broadening Engagement with the Plan – Q3/Q4 2025
- Phase 3: Updates and Achievements – 2026-2029

Throughout the life of the Plan, TPL will promote and advocate for the value of the library by aligning its communications and promotions with its strategic plan accomplishments.

Phase 1 of TPL's Strategic Plan Communications Plan has several objectives:

- 1. Build awareness and understanding of the new strategic plan across multiple stakeholders**, with a particular emphasis on staff. Work in this area will require that communications strategies, tactics, channels and content are tailored to each audience, and designed with specific stakeholders in mind.
- 2. Demonstrate the value of the Library and how it supports Torontonians and the City's priorities**. This includes ensuring transparency and accountability and building on TPL's positive reputation and brand.
- 3. Encourage engagement with and ownership of the Plan for all staff**, with a focus on leadership and engagement by all managers to support staff understanding.

Successful execution of the Communication Plan will result in the following outcomes and understanding for Torontonians, TPL staff and other stakeholders:

- Torontonians will understand that TPL's strategic plan:
 - aligns with the City's priorities to support broader issues affecting Toronto and its communities; and
 - is focused on outcomes that will contribute to improving their lives and their communities.

- TPL staff will understand that the Strategic Plan belongs to all of them, and that everyone has a role to play in bringing it to life and delivering on its outcomes.
- The strategic plan will generate excitement about the Library's direction and the unique ways it supports Toronto's communities; and inspire stakeholders to engage with the Library and contribute to its efforts.

The Library's audiences

There are a broad range of audiences for the Strategic Plan, so multiple targeted strategies and tactics have been developed to engage them.

Audiences include:

- TPL Staff
- TPL Board
- TPL Management
- TPLWU – Local 4948
- TPL Foundation and donors
- Toronto Residents – TPL users and non-users
- Partner organizations (for-profit, not-for-profit, government) including consulted community groups and partners
- Library organizations and other public library systems
- Government – Federal, Provincial, Municipal: Public servants, politicians, policy-makers, funders
- Influencers – Media, authors, leaders in areas that align with the Library's priorities

Communications approach

Communication of the Strategic Plan must encompass more than the publication and promotion of a printed document. It must take a multi-faceted approach to reach and engage the many and varied audiences of the Plan. In addition to the traditional printed strategic plan document, the Library will create simple, modular assets that are easy for audiences to digest and understand. This modular approach to content will allow it to be adapted and packaged in different ways, for different channels, to reflect the different needs of a broad range of audiences.

TPL will also look at different ways to engage audiences with the Strategic Plan content – for example through storytelling, case studies, infographics and data

– and through different formats such as print, video, audio, animation, and live experiential events and activities. Opportunities will also be created for stakeholders to participate in the promotion and awareness-raising of the Plan, including opportunities for TPL Board member engagement, and the leveraging of partner networks and channels.

A phased approach, starting with a focus on staff

As is highlighted in TPL's new Strategic Plan, staff are foundational and critical to its success, playing a key role in bringing the Plan to life and delivering on its outcomes. So staff education, awareness and engagement must be the first step in the Strategic Plan Communication Plan.

In addition to informing and raising awareness of the Plan, TPL's internal communications strategies and tactics must also inspire, support, engage and empower staff. To achieve this, TPL will kick off the rollout of the Strategic Plan with a series of interactive and engaging Staff Launch Events in February and March, featuring opportunities for staff to celebrate past successes and to engage with colleagues and with the strategic plan content in creative and inspiring ways. For staff who are unable to attend one of these sessions, a recording of the online event, and resources and materials presented at the sessions will be made available through an online environment on TPL's intranet, share:tpl.

Other materials and activities that will be developed to aid staff in their understanding of and engagement with the Strategic Plan include:

- A dedicated staff handbook that highlights what staff need to know about the Plan, and help them see themselves in it.
- Toolkits for managers to use with their staff which can be used to contextualize the strategic plan content within their day-to-day work and help make it more relevant and concrete.
- Documents and infographics that staff can leverage to help tell the Strategic Plan story and related narratives.
- Cross-TPL integration of Plan content: e.g. with work plans, training, onboarding, etc.
- Stories published on TPL's intranet, share:tpl, telling key narratives of the Plan and highlighting key initiatives that contribute to its success.
- Engagement activities to build staff understanding and ownership of the Plan.

Reaching external audiences

Following the rollout to staff, a public rollout of the new Strategic Plan will begin later in March, and will include the following activities:

- Distribution of the strategic plan publication with an online version being made available on tpl.ca; and print and/or digital copies sent with personalized letters to City and Provincial stakeholders, and with thank you letters to consulted groups.
- Strategic Plan Engagement Toolkits will be developed for staff outreach and staff-led roadshows to targeted groups (for example youth, newcomers, community and City partners, advisory groups, etc.).
- A promotional video will be created to tell the story of TPL's strategic plan at a high level, and will be featured on TPL's website and as part of a social media campaign introducing the Plan to the public and telling some of its key narratives.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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