



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Strategic Plan 2025-2029: Environmental Scan Focus Areas and Consultation Plan

Date: January 11, 2024

To: Strategic Planning Steering Committee

From: City Librarian

SUMMARY

At its December 4, 2023 meeting, the Toronto Public Library Board approved the report [Creating a New Strategic Plan: 2025-2029](#), which outlined the Roadmap for development of Toronto Public Library's (TPL's) next Strategic Plan. As outlined in that Roadmap, the purpose of this report is to present and seek input from the Strategic Planning Steering Committee on the focus areas for the environmental scan and the draft consultation plan, and to recommend that plan to the Library Board for approval and implementation.

The thirteen areas of focus for the environmental scan are:

1. Arts and Culture
2. Economy and Work
3. Education and Training
4. Environment and Sustainability
5. Housing

6. Libraries and Non-profits
7. Mental Health and Well-being
8. Politics and Government
9. Public Safety
10. Reconciliation with Indigenous Communities
11. Social Development (which includes children and youth, seniors and caregivers, immigration and settlement, poverty and homelessness, diversity, inclusion, equity and human rights)
12. Technology
13. Transportation

A robust and comprehensive approach to consultation and engagement is critical to an effective strategic planning process. It will ensure that TPL priorities are informed by the perspectives and insights of internal and external stakeholders and are aligned with the needs of Torontonians. A comprehensive consultation plan will include broad and rigorous engagement with a range of groups, including staff, current customers, non-library users, experts, library sector professionals, community partners and industry stakeholders.

The first phase of the consultation plan will begin in February to inform draft priorities. The second phase of consultations will refine and validate the draft priorities and actions and conclude in August.

A strong strategic plan requires a comprehensive understanding of the Library's operating environment and current context. It should identify priorities where the Library can add value, improve outcomes for Toronto's residents and communities, and advance City initiatives. Conducting a comprehensive environmental scan and consultation process is essential to ensuring a successful and effective strategic plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Strategic Planning Steering Committee:

1. receives the areas of focus for the environmental scan as outlined in the report for information; and
2. approves the consultation plan and recommends it to the Toronto Public Library Board for approval and implementation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Approval to conduct a thorough consultation process will enable TPL to develop an impactful Strategic Plan that will continue to fulfill its legislated mandate of providing a comprehensive and efficient public library service that reflects the unique needs of the community.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The areas of focus for the environmental scan and the consultation plan for the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan have been developed considering TPL's Equity Statement and the City's Equity Lens. This ensures ongoing integration of access and the removal of barriers for equity-deserving groups in the City of Toronto. Accessibility and engagement of equity-deserving groups will be key components of the consultation and engagement process for the development of the Strategic Plan, ensuring that the broadest range of voices are heard through the process, and that the Strategic Plan reflects the perspectives and

needs of equity-deserving groups. The approach strives to achieve equitable outcomes for all.

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.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

TPL's vision is to be recognized as the world's leading library by informing and inspiring Toronto and its communities, making Torontonians more resilient, more knowledgeable, more connected and more successful. As the city continues to grow and evolve, the Library plays an increasingly important role in providing the vital ingredients that Torontonians need to thrive.

To advance its vision, the Library is developing a new five-year strategic plan that will guide and shape its work. The plan will be informed by a comprehensive environmental scan, ongoing engagement, and consultation with staff, the public, and stakeholders.

The Strategic Plan describes the value and outcomes that the Library will deliver to Toronto's residents and communities. It is developed based on the following strategic planning principles:

1. Grounded in TPL's vision, mission, values, Statements and brand;
2. Responsive to City and community needs;
3. Integrated with the community;
4. Outcome-focused, actionable and drives continuous improvement.

COMMENTS

Preliminary Environmental Scan

Library staff are conducting a preliminary environmental scan to gather information on the external environment and to identify external influences and trends that may impact the library over the course of the next Strategic Plan. The environmental scan provides context for the overall strategic planning process, situates the Library in the broader environment and identifies important trends. The scan will be focused on thirteen areas:

1. Arts and Culture
2. Economy and Work
3. Education and Training
4. Environment and Sustainability
5. Housing
6. Libraries and non-profits
7. Mental Health and Well-being
8. Politics and Government
9. Public Safety
10. Reconciliation with Indigenous communities
11. Social Development (which includes children and youth, seniors and caregivers, immigration and settlement, poverty and homelessness, diversity, inclusion, equity and human rights)
12. Technology
13. Transportation

The preliminary environmental scan has informed the consultation plan and will provide input for subsequent strategic analyses, such as scenario planning and SWOT analysis.

Consultation Plan (Attachment 1)

A robust and comprehensive approach to consultation and engagement is critical to an effective strategic planning process. It will ensure that TPL priorities are informed by the perspectives and insights of internal and external stakeholders and are aligned with the needs of Torontonians. A comprehensive consultation plan will include broad and rigorous engagement with various groups, including staff, current customers, non-library users, experts, library sector professionals, community partners and industry stakeholders.

The first phase of the consultation plan will begin in February to inform draft priorities. The second phase of consultations will refine and validate the draft priorities and actions and conclude in August.

The plan is flexible and provides opportunities for stakeholders to provide input into the new plan throughout the process. It will also integrate recent feedback already received from staff, the public, and stakeholders and build on current initiatives and strategies.

The consultation plan for approval by the Committee is included in Attachment 1, and includes an overview, planning principles for the strategic plan, goals, target audiences, and tactics to engage stakeholders in the process.

Key highlights and tactics of the consultation plan include:

- Engagement opportunities with library staff throughout the development of the plan including staff consultation forums, focus groups, and surveying;
- Branch activations to engage TPL customers;
- Engagement survey of Toronto residents focusing on their needs and priorities for library service for the next five years;
- Online and social media engagement to promote opportunities for engagement;
- A consultation toolkit for use at library and community events to engage residents and community partners in neighbourhoods across the city;
- Roundtable discussions with key public and private partners and industry leaders to understand opportunities for collaboration, innovation and enhanced service delivery;
- Engagement with City Councillors and City of Toronto staff;
- Focus groups with TPL Workers Union Local 4948; and
- A benchmarking public survey of Toronto residents conducted by a third party with a statistically valid sample of users and non-users that will aim to gather demographic data, measure service use trends, public awareness of, and attitudes toward the library, and to determine the needs of library users.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Vickery Bowles
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1:	Strategic Plan 2025-2029: Consultation Plan
Attachment 2:	Strategic Plan 2025-2029: Environmental Scan Focus Areas and Consultation Plan Presentation



Strategic Plan 2025-2029: Consultation Plan

Overview

Toronto Public Library's (TPL's) vision is to be recognized as the world's leading library by informing and inspiring Toronto and its communities, making Torontonians more resilient, more knowledgeable, more connected and more successful.

To advance its vision, the Library is developing a new five-year strategic plan that will guide and shape its work. The library's planning process will include a comprehensive environmental scan, ongoing engagement and consultation with staff, the public, and stakeholders. A robust and comprehensive approach to consultation and engagement is critical to an effective strategic planning process. It will ensure that TPL priorities are informed by the perspectives and insights of internal and external stakeholders and are aligned with the needs of Torontonians.

As the city of Toronto continues to grow and evolve, the Library plays an increasingly important role in providing the vital ingredients that Torontonians need to thrive. The strategic planning process offers an opportunity to have meaningful discussions about the significant role TPL plays in serving the City of Toronto, and how it can continue to grow and evolve.

Planning Principles

The Strategic Plan describes the value and outcomes that the Library will deliver to Toronto's residents and communities. It is developed based on the following strategic planning principles:

1. Grounded in TPL's vision, mission, values, Statements and brand;
2. Responsive to City and community needs;
3. Integrated with the community;

4. Outcome-focused, actionable and drives continuous improvement.

Goals

- To provide staff, residents, stakeholders, partners and funders with opportunities to participate in the creation of the Library's new Strategic Plan throughout the process;
- To create awareness of library service among residents, community agencies and stakeholders;
- To engage library staff in understanding residents' priorities and needs for library service;
- To identify communities of interest, including public and private partnerships to support the achievement of the plan, including joint initiatives, service partnerships, fundraising and advocacy;
- To provide seamless access to information about the strategic planning process online and in library branches; and
- To identify communities of interest to support the achievement of the plan.

Strategic Plan Consultation Process

From February through August 2024, TPL will be providing multiple opportunities for staff, the public, and stakeholders to share ideas and help shape the Library's next Strategic Plan. The consultation process will be conducted in two phases, with broad participation encouraged in each phase. Stakeholders will be notified and outreach efforts will be made prior to each phase. After each consultation phase, TPL will report its findings to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

Phase 1: February to April

The purpose of Phase 1 is to hear from staff, the public and stakeholders on their needs and priorities for Library service for the next five years. The first phase of the consultation plan will begin in February. The results from these consultations will inform draft priorities for the strategic plan.

Phase 2: June to August

The purpose of Phase 2 is to validate and seek input from staff, the public and stakeholders on draft priorities and actions for the strategic plan.

Target Audience

The consultation process will engage a diverse audience of staff, the public, and stakeholders, including:

- All library staff
- Toronto Residents (users and non-users)
- Equity-deserving groups
- Indigenous communities
- Community partners
- Industry leaders
- City Councillors and City of Toronto staff
- Federal and Provincial stakeholders
- Toronto Public Library Workers Union Local 4948
- Toronto Public Library Foundation and Board
- Broader Library Community e.g. Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL), Ontario Library Association (OLA)

Tactics by Target Audience

To ensure the consultation process effectively and efficiently engages a diverse audience, a variety of tactics will be employed, including:

Library Staff

- Staff consultation forums, focus groups, and surveying;
- Internal platform includes regular updates, strategic plan documents and a discussion forum.

Toronto Residents

- Engagement survey of Toronto residents focusing on their needs and priorities for library service for the next five years;
- Consultations at library and community events to engage residents in neighbourhoods across the city;
- Online and social media engagement to promote opportunities for engagement;
- A benchmarking public survey of Toronto residents conducted by a third party with a statistically valid sample of users and non-users that will aim to gather

demographic data, measure service use trends, public awareness of, and attitudes toward the library, and to determine the needs of library users.

- Focus groups for targeted audiences and for equity-deserving and vulnerable groups (e.g. seniors, youth, people with disabilities, newcomers)

Indigenous Communities

- Ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities.

Community Partners/Industry Leaders

- A consultation toolkit for use at library and community events to engage community partners;
- Invitation to roundtable discussions with key public and private partners and industry leaders to understand opportunities for collaboration, innovation and enhanced service delivery.

City Councillors and City of Toronto Staff

- Ongoing engagement with City of Toronto and Partners;
- Digital engagement and survey platform;
- Announcement of opportunities for resident engagement online;
- Engagement session with City of Toronto staff;
- Opportunities for engagement with City Councillors.

Federal and Provincial Stakeholders

- Announcement of opportunities for resident engagement online;
- Consultation with federal and provincial stakeholders.

Toronto Public Library Workers Union Local 4948


- Announcement of opportunities for staff engagement;
- Focus groups throughout the process.

Toronto Public Library Foundation and Board

- Presentation to Toronto Public Library Foundation and Board for alignment of funding priorities.

Library Community

- Presentation to Library Community (e.g. FOPL, OLA).



strategic plan 2025-2029

environmental scan focus areas and consultation plan

Strategic Planning Steering Committee

January 11, 2024

agenda

- Election of Committee Chair
- Strategic planning process
- Environmental scan focus areas
- Consultation plan
- Next steps



strategic planning process

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supports TPL's vision

Toronto Public Library's vision is to be recognized as the world's leading library by informing and inspiring Toronto and its communities, making us all **more resilient**, **more knowledgeable**, **more connected** and **more successful**.

strategic planning principles

Developed based on the following strategic planning principles:

1. Grounded in TPL's vision, mission, values, Statements and brand;
2. Responsive to City and community needs;
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steering committee purpose

Reporting to the Library Board, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee provides leadership and oversight of the strategic planning process, provides input, and recommends the draft strategic plan to the Board for approval.

steering committee

2024 milestones

chair elected,
environmental scan focus
areas & consultation plan
january

phase one external consultation
results, SWOT analysis, risk
assessment alignment, draft
priorities (workshop)
may

finalize strategic plan,
execution roadmap
implementation plan &
communication plan
november

environmental scan &
phase one internal
consultation results
april

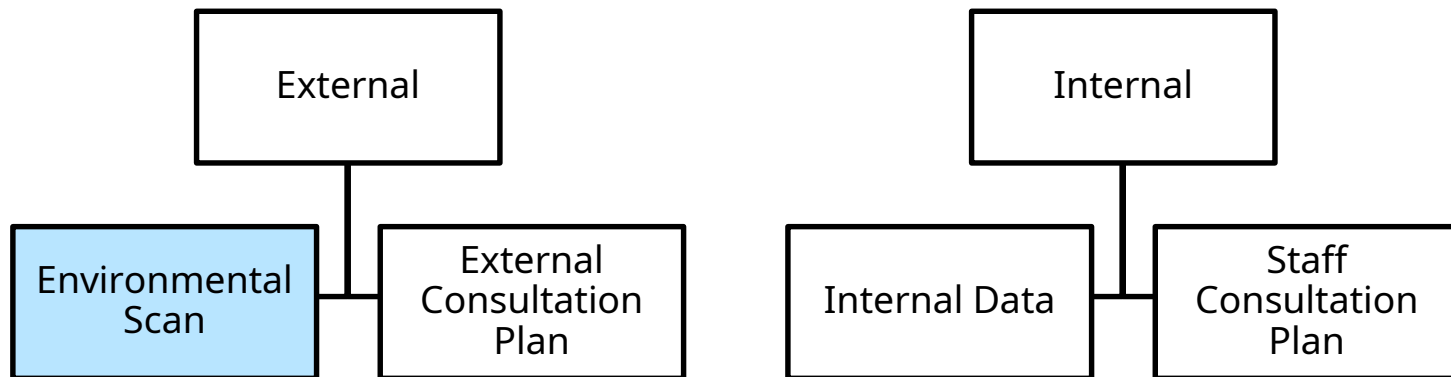
phase two consultation
results, third-party survey
results, draft strategic plan,
execution roadmap,
implementation &
communication plans
october



environmental scan focus areas

environmental scan process overview

TPL's strategic planning process draws on a number of internal and external inputs.





environmental scan opportunities

- Provides context for the overall strategic planning process and situates the Library in the boarder environment
- Identifies important themes
- Informs consultation and engagement plan
- Provides input for subsequent strategic analyses, such as scenario planning and SWOT analysis



environmental scan scope

- Focus areas organized around PESTLE-type analysis and aligned with the City
- Main focus is Toronto and Ontario, but also looked nationally and globally
- Top 3-5 trends in each area, conducted with library specific lens
- Mostly limited to secondary sources, with internal consultation as needed



environmental scan focus areas

1. Arts and Culture
2. Economy and Work
3. Education and Training
4. Environment and Sustainability
5. Housing
6. Libraries and non-profits
7. Mental Health and Well-being
8. Politics and Government
9. Public Safety
10. Reconciliation with Indigenous communities
11. Social Development
12. Technology
13. Transportation

environmental scan

focus areas sample topics 1/3

Focus Area	Sample Topics
Arts and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provincial, municipal initiatives
Economy and Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporations, small business, entrepreneurship and incubators• Workforce development
Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary, secondary, higher and continuing education• Federal, provincial, municipal initiatives
Environment and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global, federal, provincial, municipal initiatives• UN's Sustainable Development Goals
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affordable housing• Provincial, municipal initiatives

environmental scan

focus areas sample topics 2/3

Focus Area	Sample Topics
Libraries and Non-profits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issues faced by libraries, e.g. Intellectual freedom, digitization/preservation, funding• Related industries, e.g. book publishing, internet service providers• Foundations
Mental Health & Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental health and addiction, impact of COVID-19• Social determinants of health• Aging and long-term care• Loneliness and social isolation
Politics and Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Federal, provincial, municipal priorities• Demographic changes, trends and patterns• Democracy and civic engagement
Public Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Criminal justice, policing

environmental scan

focus areas sample topics 3/3

Focus Area	Sample Topics
Reconciliation with Indigenous Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Federal, provincial and municipal initiatives
Social Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immigration and settlement• Diversity, inclusion, equity, and human rights, including 2SLGBTQ+, accessibility• Seniors and caregivers• Poverty and homelessness• Children and youth
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital literacy, digital privacy, digital divide/digital inclusion• Artificial intelligence
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public transit

mental health & well-being

sample summary (1/2)

Key Trends

- **Increasing in Canada:** Mental health and well-being issues were on the rise among Canadians.
- **Homelessness:** People with lived experience of mental health and addictions are disproportionately affected by homelessness.
- **Economic Cost:** Mental illness costs Canada an estimated \$50 billion a year in health care costs, lost productivity, and reductions in health-related quality of life.
- **Libraries at the frontlines:** Consistent underfunding of mental health services and insufficient community supports have placed libraries at the frontlines in dealing with people in crisis.

Initiatives

- Our Health, Our City: A Mental Health, Substance Use, Harm Reduction, and Treatment Strategy for Toronto (City of Toronto)
- HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan (City of Toronto)

mental health & well-being

sample summary (2/2)

Data

- About 20% (1 in 5) of Canadians experience mental illness each year. By age 40, half of Canadians have had or will have a mental illness ([Smetanin, 2011](#)).
- In Canada, symptoms of depression and anxiety saw large increases in 2020 and 2021.
- It can take 2 to 5 years to recover from a mental health or well-being decline ([Ferreira, 2022](#)).
- Canadian youth aged 15 to 29 face the greatest challenges to their quality of life and face disproportionately high levels of poverty making them more vulnerable.

Sources

- Ferreira, J. (December 23, 2022). Some Canadians waiting months for public and private mental health services. CTV News.
- Smetanin et al. (2011). The life and economic impact of major mental illnesses in Canada: 2011-2041.

cross cutting themes sample

Focus Area	Inequity	Costs	Link to Mental Health	Lack of Public Space	Partnerships
Arts & Culture	X			X	X
Economy & Work	X	X		X	
Education & Training	X				
Environment & Sustainability			X		
Housing	X	X	X		X
Libraries & Non-profits	X	X	X	X	X
Mental Health & Well-being	X	X	X		



environmental scan discussion questions

- Have we missed any key research focus areas?
- Are you aware of any specific reports or initiatives we should consider?
- What issues are most important to you?
- Is the scope and level of information proposed what you need to best support you in the strategic planning process?
- Anything else?



consultation plan



consultation plan phased approach

Phase 1: February to April

- The purpose of Phase 1 is to hear from staff, the public, and stakeholders on their priorities for Library service for the next five years. The results will inform draft priorities.

Phase 2: June to August

- The purpose of Phase 2 is to validate and seek input on draft priorities and actions for the strategic plan.

consultation plan

target audience


- All library staff
- Residents (users and non-users)
- Equity-deserving groups
- Indigenous communities
- Community partners
- Industry leaders
- City Councillors and City of Toronto staff
- Federal and Provincial stakeholders
- Toronto Public Library Workers Union Local 4948
- Toronto Public Library Foundation and Board
- Broader Library Community



consultation plan

key highlights and tactics

- Engagement opportunities with library staff;
- Branch activations to engage TPL customers;
- Engagement survey of Toronto residents;
- Online and social media engagement;
- A consultation toolkit for use at library and community events;
- Roundtable discussions with partners and industry leaders;
- Engagement with City Councillors and City staff;
- Focus groups with TPL Workers Union Local 4948; and
- A benchmarking survey of residents conducted by a third party.



consultation plan

discussion questions

- What would a successful consultation process look like to you?
- Have we missed any key groups/areas to consult?
- Would you like to be involved with the consultations? If so, how? (e.g. attend sessions and report back to the Board, invite attendees, suggest speakers, promote sessions)



next steps

next steps

- Present report to the Board on January 29 for approval with input and endorsement from the Strategic Plan Steering Committee
- Implement phase one of consultation plan
- Prepare for the April Steering Committee meeting for recommendations to the Board on April 29. This includes the environmental scan summary and phase one internal consultation results.

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thank you
questions?

tpl: