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2013 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Toronto Public Library – Branch Visits per Hour of the Day

Issue/Background

- This briefing note responds to the City Council request from its meeting on January 17, 2012 that the Toronto Public Library *provide customer count (information) for each library by week (day) and by the hour.*¹
- Branch hours are allocated by service tier (Research and Reference, District and Neighbourhood Branch) facility size, usage levels, geographic location and local considerations, including the requirements of joint facilities.
- Visits to Library branches are a standard performance measure used in library benchmarking reports. This briefing note provides an overview of branch visits by service tier and at the branch by day of week and time of day.

Key Points

Methodology

- In-person library visits are a measure of library branch use. Visits are captured during library open hours in four sample survey weeks per year, which is a standard methodology used in library benchmarking surveys. Sample survey weeks are scheduled in each quarter to reflect seasonal usage trends and are selected to reflect a typical week without school holidays or other significant events that may affect typical usage patterns.
- Data collected during sample survey weeks are pro-rated to provide an annual total. Currently, visits are tracked using laser counters and manual hourly counts of people entering the building. The Library is investigating an automated solution for all locations with visits tracked both in Library open hours as well as after hours use of the facilities and meeting room space.
- This report uses two sample survey weeks in November 2011 and May 2012 to calculate average branch visits by hour of the day.

Context

¹ January 17, 2012 Council approval of Capital and Operating budgets
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.EX14.1>

- Visits as a performance measure captures those residents who use the collections or services and when used with other measures including circulation, in-library use, reference questions, program attendance and workstation and wireless usage, contribute to an overview of branch-based library use (excluding virtual library services).
- In 2011 there were 19,083,534 visits to Toronto Public Library branches, an increase of 4% over 2010 and averaging over 367,000 visits per week, which reflects the role of library branches as community hubs providing access to a range of services and programs.

Branch Open Hours/ Schedules

- Research and Reference and District branches are open seven days a week, including Sundays (September to June). Most neighbourhood branches are open five to six days a week, including Saturdays; eight neighbourhood branches also offer Sunday service.

Tier	Visits per Hour*
Research & Reference (2)	387
District (17)	113
Neighbourhood (79)	56

*based on 2012 open hours

Branches Open by Day of the Week

- Percentage of visits is proportional to distribution of open hours;
- Sundays have a greater proportion of visits compared to the percentage of weekly open hours.

Day of Week	Weekly Open Hours	% Open Hours	Average Weekly Visits	% of Visits	Branches Open	Branches Closed
Sunday	94.5	2%	13,193	3.4%	27	71
Monday	657.0	13%	56,537	14.4%	61	37
Tuesday	918.5	18%	70,012	17.9%	96	2
Wednesday	916.0	18%	65,839	16.8%	96	2
Thursday	909.0	18%	65,395	16.7%	96	2
Friday	819.0	16%	61,015	15.6%	94	4
Saturday	758.0	15%	59,719	15.2%	95	3
Total	5,072.0	100%	391,710	100.0%	96	96

Visits by Hour of the day

- The number of visits to a branch is influenced by facility size, location and community needs;
- The busiest time of day varies by the service tier, day of the week, and programs and other events ongoing in the library;
- The charts below show the average visits per open hour in three time periods: 9am to 1pm, 1 to 5, 5 to 8:30. Not all libraries are open during the entire time period; average visit numbers are normalized to reflect the number of branches open on a given day.

Average Visits per Open Hour: Neighbourhood Branches (79 branches)

- Neighbourhood libraries are generally busiest from 1 - 5 pm followed by mornings and then evenings

Day of Week	Average Hourly Visits			Average Daily Visits	% of Daily Visits*		
	9-1 4 hrs	1-5 4 hrs	5-8:30 3.5 hrs		9-1	1-5	5-8:30
Sunday		61		243		100%	
Monday	60	72	45	652	31%	43%	26%
Tuesday	54	61	43	522	23%	47%	30%
Wednesday	51	54	45	483	34%	45%	21%
Thursday	54	56	40	486	23%	46%	31%
Friday	52	57	45	437	40%	51%	10%
Saturday	56	62		464	47%	53%	
Average Day	55	61	43	470	33%	41%	24%

*Percentage may not add to 100% due to rounding

Average Visits per Open Hour: District Branches (17 branches)

- District libraries are busiest from 1 - 5pm; from Monday - Thursday evenings are busier than mornings, Friday mornings are busier than evenings.

Day of Week	Average Hourly Visits			Average Daily Visits	% of Daily Visits*		
	9-1	1-5	5-8:30		9-1	1-5	5-8:30
Sunday		126		502		100%	
Monday	95	121	105	1,214	25%	40%	35%
Tuesday	95	123	108	1,299	29%	38%	33%
Wednesday	93	113	99	1,220	31%	37%	32%
Thursday	88	111	91	1,156	30%	38%	31%
Friday	100	124	88	1,164	34%	42%	23%
Saturday	119	149		1,074	44%	56%	
Average Day	98	124	98	1,090	32%	42%	31%

*Percentage may not add to 100% due to rounding

Average Visits per Open Hour: North York Central Library (1 branch)

- The North York Central Library is generally busiest in the afternoon with no clear preference for evening or morning hours.

Day of Week	Average Hourly Visits			Average Daily Visits	% of Daily Visits*		
	9-1	1-5	5-8:30		9-1	1-5	5-8:30
Sunday		394		1,578		100%	
Monday	313	417	438	4,673	27%	36%	37%
Tuesday	351	438	351	4,563	31%	38%	31%
Wednesday	398	407	361	4,664	34%	35%	31%
Thursday	355	414	398	4,670	30%	35%	34%
Friday	333	543	354	4,919	27%	44%	29%
Saturday	418	555		3,895	43%	57%	
Average Day	361	453	380	4,137	32%	41%	32%

*Percentage may not add to 100% due to rounding

Average Visits per Open Hour: Toronto Reference Library (1 branch)

- The Toronto Reference Library is generally busiest from 1-5 pm; evening hours are consistently busier than mornings.

Day of Week	Average Hourly Visits			Average Daily Visits	% of Daily Visits		
	9-1	Visits	5-8:30		9-1	1-5	5-8:30
Sunday		342		1,370		100%	
Monday	207	374	314	3,583	23%	42%	35%
Tuesday	231	415	290	3,748	25%	44%	31%
Wednesday	229	403	343	3,902	24%	41%	35%
Thursday	230	432	356	4,075	23%	42%	35%
Friday	266	414	150*	3,258	32%	50%	18%*
Saturday	201	388		2,289	34%	66%	
Average Day	227	395	291	3,175	27%	48%	31%

*Toronto Reference Library closes at 5:30 on Fridays

Appendix 1: Average Visits by Tier – shows average branch visits by tier (Research and Reference, District and Neighbourhood) by hour of day and day of the week during Sample Survey weeks: November 2011 and May 2012.

Appendix 2: Average visits by hour of day for 98 branches as captured during Sample Survey weeks: November 2011 and May 2012.

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