

January 30, 2020

Budget Committee
City of Toronto
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
10th Floor West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Chair Crawford and Members of the Budget Committee:

At its meeting on January 27, 2020, the Toronto Public Library Board (TPLB) asked the Board Chair to prepare a communication to Budget Committee emphasizing the importance of the Library's Open Hours Plan, which was not included in the City staff-recommended 2020 operating budget.

The Library's Open Hours Plan, an initiative driven by the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy, is a comprehensive, equitable plan to increase services across the city and respond to a number of council priorities, including community safety, youth strategy and digital literacy. The Plan builds on the success of the impact of library services. For example, youth-related incidents at the Downsview branch were reduced over 75% with the introduction of a Youth Hub.

The Plan is also a very cost-effective way to manage expected population growth and increasing service demands by leveraging and investing in existing infrastructure to expand service, and would result in an approximate 20% increase to current hours of operation for only a 10% net increase to the Library's operating budget, doubling the return on the investment.

As requested by City Council, the Board submitted the Plan as a budget enhancement request in its 2020 Operating Budget submission.

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Library Board

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Alim Remtulla

City Librarian

Vickery Bowles

“The Best Thing a Library Can Be Is Open”

With 100 locations distributed across the city, Toronto Public Library (TPL) branches respond to the demand for library services, as well as access to welcoming and supportive public space, reaching and serving people where they live. Increased open hours benefit all Torontonians and equity seeking groups by providing expanded opportunities to enjoy the city's and their community's cultural and literary life.

The Library's Open Hours Plan was developed in 2006 and detailed in a report “The Best Thing a Library Can Be Is Open”. To date, just over 30% of the Open Hours Plan has been implemented through reinvestment of efficiency savings, the opening of two new branches and funding through the Poverty Reduction Strategy for Sunday service.

In response to a request from Council, the Plan was updated in 2018 and was included in both the 2019 and 2020 budget submissions. The estimated cost for full implementation of the remaining Plan is \$18.3 million, including the addition of 97.1 Full Time Equivalents, and it would deliver approximately 56,000 additional hours of service annually (a 20% increase) with increased hours at 80 branches. The following table summarizes the full enhancement request, which is currently not included in the City staff-recommended budget being considered by Budget Committee:

Table 1: TPL Open Hours Plan Budget Enhancement

	2020		2021		2022		Total	
	<u>NET</u> (in \$M)	<u>FTEs</u>						
Phase 1 - Adding Mon hours, Sunday seasonal service and late evening service at some branches	\$ 2.231	40.9	\$ 3.347				\$ 5.578	40.9
Phase 2 - Inc. Mon-Sat hours, Sunday hours and late evening service at some branches	\$ 2.894	56.1	\$ 4.341				\$ 7.235	56.1
Phase 3 - Increase Sunday hours and late night service to midnight			\$ 2.178		\$ 3.267		\$ 5.445	-
	\$5.125	97.1	\$9.866	-	\$3.267	-	\$18.258	97.1

While the implementation plan and budget enhancement request dollars have been presented in three phases, Library staff have developed a more flexible and manageable breakdown of the Plan costs into 14 groupings, which were presented to the TPLB at its meeting on January 27, 2020.

The Plan helps to advance and increase the impact of key City strategies including:

- removing barriers to access for all Torontonians, with prioritization of Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIA), ensuring that these neighbourhoods will see specific benefit, support the outcomes of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020 as well as the Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- additional programs and services for youth, including access to safe public spaces that can serve to reduce crime and provide youth with alternatives to keeping them active and engaged in a welcoming and supportive environment, which aligns with current City initiatives involving youth violence prevention, as well as the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy.
- support community safety by providing a safe and engaging out-of-school destination for children, where they can socialize, study and learn. The Open Hours Plan would increase the number of branches that are open on school days by 561 hours per week (including all NIA branches), and positively impact areas of the city with lower participation in early learning and care as identified in data provided by the *Raising the Village: Measuring the Well-being of Children and Families in Toronto* initiative. More open hours will also enable the Library to provide more programming to children and families, supporting early childhood literacy.
- contributing to economic development by meeting the information needs of remote and shift workers, job seekers, small business owners and entrepreneurs, and addressing the growing demand for access to technology by providing increased access to the internet/wireless and computer workstations, while also supporting digital literacy and digital inclusion initiatives.

In summary, the funding of the Open Hours Plan is a cost effective way to support many Council strategic priorities. The Board appreciates your consideration.

Sincerely,



Sue Graham-Nutter
Chair, Toronto Public Library

c: Vickery Bowles
City Librarian