

Tweed Public Library

Strategic Plan for 2011-2014

Context

The time has come to set a new direction for the Library that will position the Tweed Public Library to move forward in its service to the community.

Under the *Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, chapter P.44, section 20a (PLA)*, it is the responsibility of the Tweed Public Library Board to maintain a “comprehensive and efficient public library service that reflects the community’s unique needs.” To ensure that the Tweed Public Library continues to offer a comprehensive and efficient public library service to its community, it is important to examine any factors affecting the community itself; to look at the library environment itself for general trends; to review the existing library system to identify areas where the library might need to improve; and to briefly evaluate the organization itself to ensure that the staff and resources are in place to provide the comprehensive library service.

In May 2011, the Tweed Public Library Board began a process of mapping out a plan for service over the next three to four years. Board members reviewed the current situation in the community, reviewed statistics on library use, thought about the possibilities in the new facility, trying to create a vision of library service to the community and looked at trends and innovations in the broader library world. From this review, this strategic plan was created.

The Community

There are various sources of information about the community of Tweed, but perhaps the most useful is the data provided in the *Census of Canada – Community Profiles for 2006*. From that, trends which can have an impact on the services at the Tweed Public Library can be identified, for example, showing that the total population of the municipality of Tweed is stable at 5612 residents in 2001 and 5614 in 2006.

From the census data for 2006, the community had a median income for all census families of \$52,706, versus the provincial median income of \$69,156.

The community is definitely an English-language community with the mother tongue (that is, first language spoken) being represented as follows: 5,365 (English only), 45 (French only), 20 (English and French) 170 (other languages). In terms of the language spoken most often at home, as expected, English dominates (5575 listing English, none listing French, and 20 listing another non-official language).

With respect to educational level achieved, the breakdown for respondents aged 15 years and over living in Tweed against the provincial average is as follows:

- No certificate, diploma or degree – 1585 – 34% (provincial average is 22%)
- High school certificate or equivalent – 1375 -29.5% - (provincial average is 26.7%)
- Apprenticeship or trades certificate – 445 – 9.9% (provincial average is 8%)
- College, CEGEP or other non-university – 760 – 16.3% (provincial average is 18.4%)
- University certificate or diploma before the bachelor level – 120 – 2.5% (provincial average is 4%)
- University certificate, diploma or degree – 375 – 8% (provincial average is 20.4%)

The Library Environment

Public libraries in Ontario face many challenges with increasing demand for services, and trying to meet the needs of the community which often requests different resources and services. A list of noticeable patterns in the use and nature of library service was printed in an appendix to "***Creating the Future You've Imagined: A Guide to Essential Planning***". Written in 2007, "Current Trends in Ontario Public Libraries" is reprinted here:

1. Recognition of library as crucial public space; in some communities the only public space; increase in the use of the public library as a destination, a place to read/ study/ spend time without necessarily using library materials.
2. Libraries are, to varying degrees, endorsing the community development role, seeing themselves as serving groups and collective citizen initiatives, as well as individuals; also a highly valued source of community information, contributing to community awareness.
3. New facilities are being built to be noticed, with presence and profile, making a statement; library facilities often generate community pride, seen as a symbol of the community at its best.
4. More libraries are developing reading gardens, adding attractive landscaping, making the library an appealing destination, a quiet haven; outdoor space for reading and relaxing.
5. Adult programming, like book clubs and philosophers' cafés, is drawing people to the library to engage in dialogue and shared inquiry around meaningful topics.
6. Reading remains the primary reason for most visits to the public library; libraries are renewing efforts to promote reading, (i.e.) Canada reads, community reads, etc.
7. Library users are visiting their library more frequently, mostly due to shorter loan periods for DVDs and the availability of internet access.
8. The majority of internet users also make use of other library services, (i.e.) the collection, community information, programming.
9. The public library remains a key access point for internet users who do not have a computer at home or at work; also true for travelers wanting to access email to keep in touch while away from home.
10. The successful integration of technology into overall library service, (i.e.) an informative, user-friendly website, helpful staff familiar with technology, remote access to the library's resources, reference service via email, etc., is becoming a major contributor to overall effectiveness of the library; and the gap between effective and ineffective libraries is becoming more pronounced.
11. There is a growing culture of assessment in Ontario public libraries, using a variety of means and methodologies to assess services in relation to public demand and the needs of the community. Libraries want to know how well they are doing. The *Ontario Public Library Guidelines* is one assessment tool gaining momentum.
12. Fundraising is being embraced by more libraries as a means of augmenting municipal and provincial funding; libraries are getting better at fundraising, committing resources to it, and developing more formal programs and strategies.

In 2008, the Ontario Ministry of Culture commissioned a report to assist with updating its policy framework for supporting public libraries. The report, entitled ***Third Generation Libraries***, examines how visionary thinking and services could apply to Ontario's public libraries by 2020. The complete report looks at social, economic and technological trends, major initiatives where libraries have partnered with other organizations, library innovation in Canada and elsewhere as well as Ontario government priorities. Excerpts from the report include the following:

“Research shows that, in communities large and small, public libraries have a strong role in literacy and learning, innovation, community, and prosperity. ...

Through changing times, people have continued to participate in and esteem their libraries. The public library of 2020 will respond to a new social, technological, and economic environment while keeping its enduring values. It will use new tools and partnerships in its traditional roles as part of a lifelong learning system and as an engine of cultural and economic development. It will remain an agent and sign of community and social cohesion. It will respond to Canada's uniquely “diverse diversity.” It will act on research on reading and learning and make information and communication technology accessible in a democratized and participatory digital universe of uneven quality. It will stimulate creativity in the community and provide exciting public spaces where people can participate and share ideas. Through all these means, the public library will contribute to sustainable prosperity for Ontario and Canada in an increasingly knowledge-based economy.

It is hard to name a public institution that has retained such high rates of participation and esteem amid volatility and change. ...

Public libraries of the future will be catalysts and leaders in community-based economic development. They will have a strategic role in knowledge-intensive industries like digital media. They will also be mainstays of community-based cultural planning and development. The amount of information available will grow, and much of it will be of questionable value and accuracy. Public libraries will play an increasingly significant role in the literacies of the twenty-first century that enable people to select, assess and use the information that will best meet their needs. As the number of technology devices increases, libraries will enable increased equality of access and participation and help people create and exchange new content. One of the ways libraries will do this is by collaborating, within the library sector and beyond, to develop stronger networks.

Public libraries will continue to be welcoming places of community, both real and virtual. Renewed physical libraries will be exciting and involving spaces. Public libraries will widely adopt research-based approaches. This will enhance their role as the preschooler's door to reading and learning and will strengthen early learning and family literacy. Initiatives for youth in school and at risk will be staples of future public library service, and youth will thrive in the redesigned spaces.

The public library of the future will work more systematically with partners, including government, to integrate newcomers and socially marginalized people. Based on results from pilot projects of the past decade, libraries will be important in responding to language and other settlement needs. The growing numbers of seniors will enjoy services better customized to their interests and abilities. Services to Aboriginal peoples, on and off reserves, will be responsive and relevant to their needs and preferences. The longstanding role of the public library as society's informal learning system will change in terms of service delivery, but it will remain constant in its values and commitment to the individual.”

This report from the Ministry provides a good map for a public library that wishes to ensure that it remains innovative, and yet maintains its accessibility and welcoming approach to serving its community. From this report, it is clear that libraries need to be welcoming places of community, both real and virtual, but also that libraries future will work more systematically with partners to provide services that are better customized to interests and abilities.

Another report, written in 2011, confirms the direction for libraries wishing to remain progressive in their approach to library service. In April 2011, Lumos Research Inc. prepared a report for the Canadian Urban Libraries Council to analyze data in the period from 2000 to 2009. Entitled, *an Analysis of Public Library Trends*, the report noted several trends among public libraries:

“The library environment has undergone substantial change over the course of the past decade, and libraries are meeting new challenges.

The per capita number of library usage transactions was up sharply in the past decade, rising 45% from 16.6 to 24.1 transactions on average. Much of this increase in transactions was driven by digital information. For example, use of electronic databases (library Internet subscriptions or stand-alone or networked CD-ROM databases) more than doubled, and Internet visits to library websites and catalogues grew five-fold in the period. Nevertheless, the number of items circulated per capita had also increased a substantial 16% over the past decade, while per capita in-person visits have remained stable.

Compared with the rapid rise of website visits, electronic database transactions are still in their nascence, at just 0.71 uses per capita in 2009, or fewer than 3% of all transactions. Libraries should be prepared to expect strong growth in database transactions, which will contribute added momentum to library use.

Libraries are providing better value than ever to their stakeholders. Although library expenses have increased overall, the expansion in number of user transactions means that cost per use has declined by nearly 27% from 2000-2001 to 2008-2009.

Although spending on library materials has increased in the decade, pressure from higher overhead costs means that materials make up a smaller percentage of libraries’ expenses than in 2000, decreasing from 13% to 11% of total library expenses.

Among materials expenditures, a smaller percentage is being spent on books and periodicals, while strong increases have been seen over the past decade in spending on electronic and audiovisual materials. The percentage of materials expense devoted to these latter items had increased from 18% in 2000-01 to 31% in 2008-09.

Spending on materials has a strong role in increasing library use. Libraries whose per capita spending on materials is in the top third register nearly twice the number of usage transactions as do libraries whose materials spending is in the bottom third. The impact of materials on usage is so great that libraries which are among the top per capita spenders on materials realize the lowest costs per usage transaction.”⁶

Noting these trends, the Tweed Public Library is operating in an environment where electronic information, and the accompanying technology issues must be considered in any strategic plan moving forward from 2011, and which was certainly a consideration of the planning work.

Another aspect of the library environment in Ontario is the presence of the **Ontario Public Library Guidelines**. Now in its fifth edition, these guidelines represent community-based norms for public libraries and public library development in Ontario. They are developed, monitored and revised by a broadly-based group, representative of the Ontario public library community. The *Guidelines* aim to assist public libraries in developing and maintaining consistently strong public library service. They provide public library boards, managers and staff and local governments with up-to-date public library guidelines on policies, resources and services. More information on the guidelines is posted at www.fopl.ca.

The Present Situation at the Tweed Public Library

To be able to offer library services, the library has a new physical building in which library service can be offered to the community, with a paid staff, good collection and programming.

As one of the requirements under the Public Libraries Act (PLA), the Ministry of Tourism and Culture requires that every public library, and all contracting municipalities, submit a set of statistics on specific aspects of the library. The latest statistics available to June 2011 are from 2008. In these statistics, Tweed is grouped with 68 libraries serving a population of 5,001 to 15,000, which reflects the population of the Municipality of Tweed of 5153 (according to Ministry's population figures).

In 2008, within this grouping of libraries, the Tweed Public Library serves the second smallest population, and so, by comparison, would be ranked lower in terms of most of the statistics. In 2008, the library received \$12,676 through a provincial per household operating grant, and 70,452 in local operating grants from the municipality, as well as some project grants, donations and self-generated revenue.

One problem in using statistics for 2008 is that the library is now in a new facility, with different expenses, and also has one more part-time staff person, so the situation has changed for the library. There is one interesting statistic from that time, with relates to collections. At that time, the collection size was limited to the size of the facility. With additional space, it is possible to better represent the collection. In 2008, the collection size was 21272. According to the specifications in the **Ontario Public Library Guidelines**, 5th edition, the book stock for a population of 5,000 - 9,999 should be 22,500 + 3 volumes per capita over 4,999 population. So for a population of 5153, the minimum book stock should be 22959 or 1687 more than currently available.

With the new space, there is room for additional collection items. With the new space, the situation with respect to "traffic" has also changed. There are a number of ways to measure "traffic" in a library, but the most common way is to measure circulation.

In June 2011, the libraries in the area collected figures for the total circulation in 2010. The area covers the counties of Hastings, Peterborough, Northumberland as well Prince Edward County. We asked each library to report statistics on a branch-by-branch basis. We then took the number of hours open during the year, to create an average for circulations per hour (this is a measure of 'busyness'). Of the 58 branches/sites reporting, Tweed was 26th in this ranking. Here are the libraries with approximately the same "busyness" – of course, with circulation about the same, the number of open hours affects the busyness. Also remember that these figures are for 2010, when the library was still in the old facility.

| | Hours of Operation | Hours per week | Total Circulation for 2010: | Hours/year (52 weeks) | Circulations per hour open |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Tweed <i>Hours in 2010</i> | Tuesday and Wednesday: 10-5:30 Friday: 10-12:30 & 1-5 Saturday: 10-12:30 & 1-4 | 27 | 20,850 | 1404 | 14.85 |

From this, there is a further note. The new library facility was opened in January 2011. From this time until August 31, 2011, the circulation of 20,170 had almost exceeded the total circulation for 2010. At this rate, the circulation per hour open is as follows (based on 33 weeks plus additional hours in March)

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|-------------------------------|--|----|--------|----------------------------|-------|
| Tweed <i>Hours in 2011</i> | Tuesday: 10-5:30 – (7.5 hours) Wednesday: 12-7 – (7 hrs.) Thursday: 4-7 – (3 hrs.) Friday: 10-12:30 & 1-5 – (6.5 hrs.) Saturday: 10-3 – (5 hrs.) | 29 | 20,170 | 957 (based on 33 weeks) | 21.08 |
|-------------------------------|--|----|--------|----------------------------|-------|

Note: The "standard" is 13 transactions per staff hour as being an adequate amount of time to deal with library matters in circulation, reference, etc. While there are many factors to account for in terms of staffing a library, such as number of floors in the library, separate computer labs, your own choice of service level, what this statistic means is that if you have 13 circulations per hour, then you should have **at least one person in the public areas of the library**, but if you have 26 circulations per hour, then you should have two staff in the public area of the library, and so on. It does not account for "back-room" activities such as selecting, ordering, and processing – which, in smaller libraries, might be done at a public desk during service hours and which would take time.

Looking at the "busyness" of the library from 2010 to 2011, the circulation per hour has increased by 50%, with the number falling into almost needing two people at the service desk at all times.

Strategic Directions

The new accessible facility at the Tweed Public Library will provide welcoming spaces for people of all ages to gather, learn, develop and connect with each other. And now we need to get the word out about the services and resources available at the new facility and electronically on the library's website. The Tweed Library will work to enhance the library's role as a destination and a community gathering place.

From the planning review, the four strategic directions have been developed for the Tweed Public Library during the period of time from 2011 to 2014. While these strategic directions will be the centre of attention for the next three years, under each the Library Board has developed goals which further focus the direction of the library. Under each goal is a series of actions to be taken over the course of the plan, with specific, measurable tasks for each year. The tasks are not listed in this document as they form a separate annual work plan for the library staff and board.

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| Strategic Direction #1: Administrative alignment |
| The Tweed Public Library will ensure that it means the minimum requirements of a well-run public library in Ontario |
| Goal 1 – Accreditation – The library will work toward achieving accreditation under the <i>Ontario Public Library Guidelines</i> . |
| Action 1 – Review the list of guidelines which are considered fundamental for good board governance and management. |
| Action 2 – Identify missing items, categorizing those which are mandatory and require action and those which would help the library achieve 90% |
| Action 3 - For those guidelines which were missing, work to correct the deficiency |
| Goal 2 – Policies The library will have a complete set of governance and operational policies as recommended in SOLS publication, <i>Trillium Public Library: Sample Policies, Library Development Guide #4</i> |
| Action 1 – Check all library policies and create a list of policies with creation dates, review dates. |
| Action 2 - For those guidelines which were missing, write new policies or update or adapt existing policies to correct the problem areas |
| Action 3 – Put policies on board agenda for review and adoption |
| Goal 3 – Staffing Review – The library will ensure that there is sufficient staff to be able to implement the programs and services at the expected level and to ensure the safety of staff working in the building. |
| Action 1 – Undertake a review of the number of circulations per hour, and the staffing levels compared to other public libraries in the area |
| Action 2 – Put staffing levels and job descriptions on the board agenda for review and recommendation |

Strategic Direction #2: Communication and Outreach

To be the dynamic, involved service provider that we envision, it is not enough to open the new doors and wait for our community to find us, the Tweed Public Library must reach out, connect and facilitate a communication process that allows us to be known by every member of our community.

Goal 1 – Marketing – The Tweed Public Library will market the library to the community through effective communication.

Action 1 – Develop a bi-weekly report to go into newspaper which highlights library services, collections and programming, and investigate other media which could be used to promote the library.

Action 2 - Leverage relationships with municipality so that the library is included in any promotional materials or information reports.

Action 3 – Ensure that the website has the latest information on library hours and activities and is constantly updated

Goal 2 – Programs – The Tweed Public Library will work to increase the number of programs available through the library (as an outreach, to introduce new users to the library).

Action 1 - Create a program plan that responds to the diverse interests and needs of all patrons, without duplicating the activities of other groups and organizations in the community, and offered in collaboration.

Action 2 – Create programs to appeal to the 15-25 year category, in tandem with work on the collection and the website aimed at this age group.

Action 3 – Plan special events for other targeted groups, e.g. seniors with a social hour, game of bridge or Wii.

Goal 3 – Community Engagement - The Tweed Public Library will ensure that there is two-way communication to and from the community on an ongoing basis.

Action 1 – Establish a mechanism to continually seek feedback from the community, through a survey and meeting with community groups and organizations.

Action 2 – Promote the library to the various hamlets within the municipality and engage them in the work of the library, for example, through small reception, tour of library, getting a card

Action 3 – Promote the library to specific groups and organizations within the community and engage them in the work of the library, e.g. speaking with seniors organizations

Strategic Direction #3 – Collaboration

To create a strong library for our community, the Tweed Public Library will seek and develop partnerships within the community to be able to work in unison for the greatest mutual benefit.

Goal 1 – Partnerships – Operating within the community, the Tweed Public Library will work to strengthen its relationships and collaborative efforts with other community groups and organizations.

Action 1 - Develop a partnership framework and identify which groups/organizations to target for possible partnerships and assistance with fundraising. The framework will include a wish list so that groups will know the specific needs of the library

Action 2 – Develop a working plan for the Friends group so that the group can effectively help the library.

Action 3 - Work with groups to support some of the initiatives that may require funding –e.g. subscription Overdrive, DVD Pool, Large Print Pool

Strategic Direction #4 – Services

The Tweed Public Library will build its capacity to deliver services to its community.

Goal 1 – Technology – The Library will make the best use of available technology to deliver effective library services.

Action 1 – Ensure sufficient IT support staff to look after the library’s systems, for patron training and in the planning of technology.

Action 2 – Review a technology plan / IT Strategic Plan to ensure that the library is maintaining its place at the “leading edge”.

Goal 2 – Collections – The Library will develop its capacity for information and reading for pleasure with respect to collection development in both print and electronic formats

Action 1 – Develop and write a coordinated collection plan for all areas of the library, ensuring that the collections are accessible for patrons.

Action 2 –Using the collection development work, purchase materials at the level and pace expected from this community,

Action 3 – To maintain high usage of library collection, work to increase circulation of the collection by at least 10% over 2010

Goal 3 – Facility – The Library will continue to effectively use new facility and ensure that its use is optimal.

Action 1 - Clearly identify and document any deficiencies with the facility and identify operational shortcomings that may emerge and move to address the concern and remedy.

Review process

Each year during the period of the plan (September 2011 to September 2014), the strategic directions and goals must be evaluated to see if the plan is on target.

Each year, any action items not completed in the previous year, with reason, could be carried over to the next year. New action items within the goals can be created. At the end of the three year term, the Strategic Plan for the library should be reviewed in its entirety to measure success and to plan for the next three year period.