

Security Guard Services – Update 2

Date:	November 5, 2014
To:	Budget Committee
From:	Acting City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to a Budget Committee request for information on the projected cost of providing mobile security guard response to the 31 branches that now have some in-house security (other than TRL and NYCL) through mobile (roving) security guard response, similar to what is currently given to the other 68 branches. This analysis is to include the cost and projected response time of six mobile security guards (at a cost of approximately \$75,000 each) distributed as appropriate city-wide. The Budget Committee also requested staff to report back on how many mobile guards might be needed to achieve a 10-15 minute response time city-wide.

The projected cost of providing mobile security guard response to the 31 branches that now have some in-house security through six mobile security guards is estimated at \$450,000. The projected response time would be 30 minutes or more depending upon traffic and the location of the mobile security guard at the time of the call.

It is estimated that 15 mobile security guards would be needed to provide 10-15 minute response time city-wide. The cost of 15 mobile guards is estimated at \$1,125,000.

In-branch security guard service provides a visible, proactive and preventative presence in the branch, maintaining a safe and welcoming environment, and is an important component of the Board’s response to its responsibilities as an employer and as an operator of public spaces. Therefore, the continued use of in-branch security guards in select branches is the most effective course of action in providing an appropriate level of security guard response to the varied security situations that take place in the Library’s branches. The annual review of guard service has been completed, and will result in a reduction in the security guard budget for 2015 of \$150,000, which has been integrated into the recommended operating budget submission.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts resulting from this report beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget. Cost savings of \$150,000, representing 9% of the security guard budget of \$1,663,540, have been identified by staff during the annual review, and have been incorporated into the recommended 2015 operating budget submission.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At the August 21, 2014 meeting of the Budget Committee, the Security Guard Services – Update report was presented for information. The report was in response to a Budget Committee request for further information about security guard services at Toronto Public Library. The Budget Committee adopted the following motions regarding the Security Guard Services – Update report, that:

1. *defers the Security Guard Services – Update report to the next meeting of the Budget Committee;*
2. *requests staff to report back on the projected cost of providing mobile security guard response to the 31 branches that now have some in-house security (other than TRL and NYCL) through mobile (roving) security guard response, similar to what is currently given to the other 68 branches. This analysis is to include the cost and projected response time of six mobile security guards (at a cost of approximately \$75,000 each) distributed as appropriate city-wide;*
3. *requests staff to report back on how many mobile guards might be needed to achieve a 10-15 minute response time city-wide.*

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In response to a Budget Committee request for information about security guard service at Toronto Public Library, the Security Guard Services report (July 28, 2014) addressed the relationship between reported incidents and security guard deployment; the feasibility of migrating to a roving patrol model complemented with a fixed presence in select branches; and the feasibility of increasing the Streets to Homes Outreach Worker program to deal with patrons in distress.

The report concluded that maintaining a security guard service model with a scheduled guard presence in select branches was the most effective model that provided a visible, proactive and preventative presence in the branch, maintaining a safe and welcoming environment.

In response to a Budget Committee request for additional information, the Security Guard Services – Update report (August 21, 2014) addressed the impact of a reduced security guard budget of \$400,000 per year and \$600,000 per year; and on the legal requirements for public buildings that would inhibit any changes. The report outlined the options under the reduced

budgets, however, the reduced levels of security guard service were not considered viable by library staff. The report spoke to the statutory duties that TPL has, both as employer and as an operator of public spaces, to take 'reasonable' measures to see that staff and members of the public entering library premises are 'reasonably' safe while on the premises. Failure to take 'reasonable' precautions may increase TPL's liability in the event that an injury or some other adverse outcome to a member of the public or an employee takes place on library premises.

The report also stated that the annual review of security guard service was underway to assess the need for security guards, branch-by-branch, to consider the number of hours at each branch and to re-assess the use of mobile guards, including assessing how TPL is meeting its legal requirements as an employer and in operating public spaces. The results of the review and the cost savings would be incorporated into the Library's operating budget submission for 2015.

At the August 21, 2014 meeting, the Budget Committee deferred discussion of the report and requested additional information, as stated in the Decision History above.

COMMENTS

Contracted security guard service provides a visible, proactive and preventative presence in a branch, maintaining a safe and welcoming environment, and is an important component of the Board's response to its responsibilities as an employer and as an operator of public spaces. Staff consider these liability and due diligence issues when conducting the annual review of security guard placements and in making decisions about the placement of guards in TPL branches.

Library staff monitor in-branch activity and make decisions on the most effective security measures based on patterns of disruptive behaviour and potentially violent situations; conflict arising from competing use of spaces and equipment; and the need to patrol large and multi-floor public spaces. The incident report statistics (the 2013 annual statistics were appended to the July 28, 2014 Security Guard Services report) are included in the review, but are not the only decision point for deployment of in-branch security guards. In a number of branches, the proactive and visible presence of security guards is important. The desirable outcome of the security measures, including in-branch security guards is a low level of incident statistics relative to the activity levels. However, a low level of incidents doesn't mean that the in-branch presence of security guards can be eliminated. Not unlike community policing, the visible and regular presence of security guards helps create and maintain a safe and welcoming environment.

The Library's goal is to create and maintain a safe and welcoming environment as the norm or standard. When that norm is threatened by patterns of disruptive behaviour and potentially violent behaviour, staff take proactive steps. In many instances, the behaviour exhibited in the branch is a result of external factors related to the location of the branch. In those cases, the regular presence of a security guard is part of the strategy to control and minimize the undesirable behaviour. In some instances, patterns of undesirable and

potentially dangerous behaviour have taken hold and the Library has to make a concerted effort to challenge the behaviour and pull back the situation in the branch from a downward spiral. For example, such a situation developed at a branch several years ago. Staff engaged in a multi-year plan to turn around the situation, focusing on safety and security, facility improvements, community partnerships and support, staff training and programming focused on positive youth engagement. A key component to the success of the turn-around was the security guard, who was hired from the local community and developed a good relationship with youth using the branch. This could not be achieved with a mobile guard who would arrive after an incident and would be seen as an enforcer. As a result of these actions, the number of reported incidents declined by 66% over a three-year period. The Library is currently working to change behaviours at another branch that are creating an unsafe and unwelcoming environment. Again, the presence of in-branch security guards is a key component of the action plan and an ongoing requirement in a busy multi-floor facility.

Other urban public libraries are facing similar challenges and are working to ensure that a safe and welcoming environment isn't threatened by disruptive and potentially violent behaviour. Calgary Public Library recently reported on an external review of security and safety issues at its downtown location. The proactive and enhanced presence of in-branch security guards is a key element of the response to the issues.

Mobile security guard response models

Library staff consider the mobile security guard response model to be inadequate as the sole response to the wide range of security situations that arise in TPL's branches. A security guard service based on mobile security guards provides a reactive approach, in which the security guard arrives in response to a call for assistance. The security guard becomes a presence associated mainly with disruptive or violent behaviour, and is not a proactive presence helping to create and maintain a safe and welcoming environment. A likely outcome of a mobile guard service is that in order to respond appropriately and in a timely manner, mobile guards would be based at those branches with recurring patterns of disruptive and violent situations, effectively becoming an in-branch guard at a higher cost. Library staff looked for other models of mobile security guard response and spoke to the Community Safety Unit at Toronto Community Housing. It was clear that TCH makes use of contracted security guard firms to provide on-site security guards, with TCHC staff (Special Constables and Community Patrol Officers) providing mobile support services for security back-up purposes.

The current schedule of in-branch guard service provides for guard service at 31 locations, most for only part of the day: Toronto Reference Library, North York Central Library; **District libraries:** Agincourt, Albert Campbell, Albion, Barbara Frum, Bloor/Gladstone, Cedarbrae, Fairview, Lillian H. Smith, Malvern, Maria A. Shchuka, Northern District, Richview, S. Walter Stewart, York Woods; **Neighbourhood libraries:** Centennial, Dawes Road, Downsview, Eatonville, Flemingdon Park, Jane/Dundas, Jane/Sheppard, Oakwood Village, Parkdale, Parliament Street, Riverdale, Sanderson, St. James Town, Thorncliffe; and the Computing Centre.

Six mobile security guards model

With six mobile security guards, the estimated response time could vary widely, influenced by location of the guard at the time of a call, the traffic conditions, weather conditions, and congestion due to construction and road repairs. Dividing up the city and branch location into six areas based on clusters of branches would result in a range of 12-18 branches in each area. Staff reviewed travel distances and estimated travel times using Google maps. Under good traffic conditions travel time between branch locations in an area would exceed 30 minutes in many instances.

The projected cost of providing mobile security guard response to the 31 branches that now have some in-house security (other than TRL and NYCL) through mobile (roving) security guard response, has been estimated at \$450,000, based on the cost of six mobile security guards (at a cost of approximately \$75,000 each) distributed as appropriate city-wide.

10-15 minute response time

There are many factors to consider when determining how many mobile guards might be needed to achieve a 10-15 minute response time city-wide: distance between branches, traffic, congestion due to construction and road repairs. Mobile security guards have to obey all traffic rules and signal controls, which limits a speedy response. Another factor in achieving a 10-15 minute response time is back-up if a mobile guard is engaged at another incident and is a factor in determining how the number of branches that a mobile guard has in the area under patrol. In analyzing the request, staff reviewed travel distances and estimated travel times using Google maps. General observations: travel times vary with the time of day; greater distances between branches in the western, eastern and northern edges of the city create smaller numbers of branches within a 10-15 minute travel time target; congestion is a major factor in travel time among the downtown core of branches even though distances aren't great. An estimated 15 mobile guards would be necessary to achieve the 10-15 minutes response time city-wide.

The cost of 15 mobile guards, based on \$75,000 per mobile guard, would be \$1,125,000.

Review of security guard service

The Library has concluded its annual review of security guard service and has achieved cost savings as a result of the review, while maintaining a visible in-branch security guard presence in those locations with identified safety issues. Security guard hours have been reduced at Toronto Reference Library by eliminating the security bag check at the exit. This latter move was made possible by the completion of RFID tagging of the library materials on open shelves and the upgrading of the security gates. The number of branches with in-branch security guards has been reduced, the hours of coverage reduced and the mobile security guard service re-vamped. The mobile security guards will patrol branches on a targeted basis, with more frequent visits to fewer branches. The Library will also provide security guards on an occasional basis to address situations that may be temporary or seasonal in nature. As a result of these changes, the Library can expect to achieve reductions of \$150,000 in security guard costs in 2015. The Library security guard contract ends in July 2015, so the Library will be going to the market for security guard service in spring of 2015, and it is expected that the changes in service would carry forward into a new contract.

CONCLUSION

Contracted security guard service provides a visible, proactive and preventative presence in the branch, maintaining a safe and welcoming environment, and is an important component of the Board's response to its responsibilities as an employer and as an operator of public spaces. Staff consider these liability and due diligence issues when conducting the annual review of security guard placements and in making decisions about the placement of guards in TPL branches.

The continued use of in-branch security guards is the appropriate course of action. The annual review of guard service has been completed and will result in a reduction in the security guard budget for 2015 of \$150,000, which has been integrated into the recommended 2015 operating budget submission.

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SIGNATURE

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Attachment 1: Security Guard Services – Update report to the August 21, 2014 meeting of the Budget Committee.