



In Touch with Our Community

Burlington Public Library's Strategic Plan 2007 – 2011

Approved by Burlington Public Library Board

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In Touch with Our Community

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A. INTRODUCTION

This strategic plan entitled “*In Touch with our Community*” provides direction for the development of the Library and its services over the four-year period from 2007 to 2011. The title of our plan “*In Touch with Our Community*” speaks to our commitment to be in touch with our customers, our changing community, and emerging trends in library service.

The plan has been developed by the Strategic Planning Team, composed of the Burlington Public Library Board, Senior Management Team and the Coordinator, Strategic Planning & Projects with input from the community and staff, since the spring of 2007. In addition to conducting a random survey of the community in late 2006 (Ipsos Reid survey of 1,001 residents of Burlington) we conducted focus groups with a number of stakeholders earlier this year including: new residents and young families; youth; small business; City of Burlington Council and senior City staff; library staff; and representatives of a broad range of community organizations.

Over the past 6 years, the Burlington Public Library’s strategic initiatives have been guided by the *Building for Tomorrow* Strategic Plan, including the original plan and two subsequent updates. Significant progress has been made relative to the identified strategic objectives and priorities including, for example: the completion of the renovation and expansion of Central Library and its opening in September 2005; the opening of the revitalized and expanded Brant Hills Library in June 2005; enhancement of the Library’s programming and special events; and implementation of significant information technology enhancements.

This new plan builds on the investment the community has made in its library system and positions the Library to continue to be responsive and in touch with the changing Burlington community.

B. OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Our vision, mission and values are the cornerstones of our strategic plan. While specific strategies may change and evolve, we are committed to staying true to our long-term vision, mission and values.

Long Term Vision

Our vision articulates what we are aiming towards and how we hope to be seen by our community in the future.

Burlington Public Library: Long Term Vision
<p>Burlington Public Library (BPL) of the future is a bustling, dynamic place that is staffed by a warm, welcoming, enlightened, courageous, and pro-active team. It holds all the resources for individuals in the community to grow and expand in a supportive and genuine way. It is a destination for all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds. It provides an inspirational space for learning, research, entertainment, gathering and quiet reflection.</p> <p>In the future, BPL acts as a catalyst for community improvement and is responsive to the diversity within our community. Library administration and processes work seamlessly and invisibly. Customers' needs are foremost. The Library promotes partnerships and works continuously to improve its services. Burlington Public Library of the future is innovative and accountable as it embraces new trends and ideas.</p>

Mission Statement

Our mission statement articulates our purpose or *raison d'être*. We know that the primary reason we are here is to enrich the lives of the people of Burlington and to play our role in making Burlington a vibrant, safe, and inclusive community.

Burlington Public Library: Mission
Enriching Burlington through literacy, learning, and community connections.
<small>Revised July 2, 2008</small>

There are some unique ways in which the Library Board and staff can add value to our community:

- Supporting the development of **literacy***—particularly among children, youth and individuals for whom English is not their first language
- Enabling **learning** throughout the lives of our citizens by providing materials, online resources and services that address people's information and learning needs
- Supporting **community connections** by providing a focal point where individuals, families and groups can gather, connect, work, learn and have fun together. Our library will play an increasingly important role in connecting newcomers to our community by providing accessible, safe and welcoming places for people to meet and to access local and global information.

* UNESCO (United Nation's Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization) is currently advocating a new (plural) definition of literacy: *Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.*

Values

In this fast changing world our values keep us anchored and guide our ongoing planning and decision-making:

Burlington Public Library: Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessibility — We strive to provide barrier-free facilities, resources and programs that are accessible to all.• Accountability — We are accountable to our community for the services we provide.• Creativity and Innovation — We encourage and support creative approaches and innovative solutions in all aspects of library service.• Information and Literacy — We believe in the importance of an informed and literate community.• Intellectual Freedom — We subscribe to the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom and the open exchange of information.• Life Long Learning — We believe in providing resources and services that contribute to life long learning.• Love of Reading — We nurture the joy of reading in people of all ages.• Positive Work Environment — We believe in providing a safe and positive work environment that provides staff challenging opportunities to grow and develop, and to contribute.• Quality of Services — We value excellence in our customer services and collections.• Respect and Dignity — We treat all people with respect and dignity.

C. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The following strategic objectives will guide our work over the planning period of 2007 to mid 2011:

- 1** *Meet changing community needs by developing innovative and responsive collections, services and programs*
- 2** *Make the library more welcoming and accessible.*
- 3** *Contribute to the Burlington Community through proactive outreach and engagement with Community Partners*
- 4** *Enhance understanding of BPL and what it has to offer*
- 5** *Strengthen our people and organization*

Specific strategies under each objective are outlined on the following pages. The top priority strategies (based on a Board/Senior Management priority-setting process) are:

Top Priority Strategies 2007-2011*

- 4.1. Broaden and enhance the profile of the Library through increased marketing of BPL services**
- 1.1 Develop new services for youth, newcomers, small business and non-profit organizations**
- 2.1 Make the Library experience more customer-friendly and less intimidating**
- 2.2 Support access to information and services “anytime, anywhere” through technology-enabled enhancements**
- 2.4 Develop a plan for north-east Burlington**

**These priorities are highlighted on the following pages*

Strategic Objective**1. Meet changing community needs by developing innovative and responsive collections, services and programs**

Burlington is undergoing a transformation from a suburban to an urban municipality. Continued population growth and change, especially in the northern part of the City, is creating new demands for service.

We recognize the need to continue to be responsive to our changing community and to enhance our services for key groups who will help to shape Burlington's future including youth, newcomers, small business and non-profit organizations.

Strategies**1.1 Develop new services for youth, newcomers, small business and non-profit organizations**

1.1.1 Youth:

- a) Increase teen programming and events
- b) Increase teen volunteer opportunities e.g. reading buddy programs for children
- c) Enhance outreach to "at risk" youth in group homes
- d) Enhance outreach to teen parents
- e) Enhance outreach to "at risk" youth through a homework help program

1.1.2 Newcomers:

- a) Develop programming and outreach initiatives that are responsive to the needs of newcomers to Canada
- b) Conduct targeted marketing to new residents of Burlington

1.1.3 Small Business and Non-Profit Organizations:

- a) Investigate and select new electronic databases targeted to small business and non-profit organizations
- b) Promote electronic databases targeted to small business and non-profit organizations
- c) Enhance the current online book club to include business books
- d) Develop small business workshops in conjunction with Halton Region Business Centre
- e) Create a business web page

1.2 Improve our collections, programs and services so that they reflect changing community needs

1.2.1 Statistics and Demographics

- a) Update environmental scan and situational audit annually, including a scan of other area program providers
- b) Review and update branch profiles annually
- c) Develop a schedule for ongoing community consultation

1.2.2 Collections

- a) Develop a process to ensure that our collections continue to reflect changing community needs
- b) Improve efficiencies in getting materials to customers faster (Acquisitions, Cataloguing, and Processing)

1.2.3 Programs

- Review new programs and feedback to ensure programming remains current and responsive to our customers

1.2.4 Services

- Develop and implement up to three innovative and responsive services through the life of the plan that meet changing community needs

1.3 Continue to ensure that existing collections, services and programs are effective

1.3.1 Continue to evaluate existing collections, services and programs

1.3.2 Increase funding for programming

1.3.3 Increase funding for collections

**Strategic
Objective**

2. Make the library more welcoming and accessible.

If we are to play a pivotal role in enhancing the lives of our citizens, we need to ensure that we are a welcoming, accessible resource in our community. We know from talking with our customers that some people find the Library an intimidating place and some people find it hard to get to the Library given their busy hectic lives. Over the next four years we need to ensure that our citizens can access our services and find them warm and welcoming.

Strategies

2.1 Make the Library experience more customer-friendly and less intimidating

- 2.1.1 Ensure customer service excellence and the elimination of "intimidation factors" by creating a Customer Service Team and strategy
- 2.1.2 Use "Plain English" communication standard for all communication pieces

2.2 Support access to information and services "anytime, anywhere" through technology – enabled enhancements

- 2.2.1 Investigate the feasibility of extending virtual library services and implement the recommendations. Virtual services include, but are not limited to:
 - Electronic notification of Events, New Books, Services, Policy Changes, General Notices
 - Online registration for cards, program room bookings, courses
 - Online forms, such as customer feedback comment forms

2.3 Develop the long-term service delivery model including facility standards (e.g. amenities, hours)

- 2.3.1 Revise and implement a multi-faceted model for future service delivery of public library services including hours of service

2.4 Develop a plan to expand library services for north-east Burlington

2.4.1 Develop and implement action plans for services in the northeast following consultation with the City

2.5 Determine future directions for the Aldershot and New Appleby Branches

2.5.1 Develop and implement action plans to address lease expiration/renewal at New Appleby branch (2008)

2.5.2 Develop and implement action plans to address lease expiration/renewal at Aldershot branch (2009)

**Strategic
Objective**

3. Contribute to the Burlington community through proactive outreach and engagement with community partners

We believe that we can leverage the benefits of public investment in our services by working closely with others in our community. We recognize that by reaching out and working closely with the City and other community partners we can contribute to achieve our collective goals as a community. The community partners we consulted during the development of this plan were appreciative of the Library's past outreach and partnership efforts, and encouraged us to continue to extend our work in this area.

Strategies

3.1 Explore and pursue the opportunities for future facility and service partnerships including increased synergies with City departments and other community services

3.1.1 Continue to build relationships with City departments and other community service providers

3.1.2 Develop a targeted outreach strategy

3.2 Support the Burlington-McMaster partnership

3.2.1 Monitor the development of the partnership and develop an action plan at the appropriate time

**Strategic
Objective**

4. Enhance understanding of BPL and what it has to offer

During our community consultations, we heard that many people are unaware of the breadth and depth of resources available at the Library and through the Library's website. Through our focus groups, we learned that customers are often surprised to find the Library is much more than books. We recognize the need to articulate and communicate our story more effectively in the years ahead.

Strategies

4.1 Broaden and enhance the profile of the Library through increased marketing of BPL services

- 4.1.1 Review the Library's current marketing and communication mandate and resources; develop recommendations and implement action plans
- 4.1.2 Develop a 4-year marketing strategy
- 4.1.3 Develop a Web based marketing plan and incorporate into the 4-year marketing strategy
- 4.1.4 Implement the approved Library Brand
- 4.1.5 Develop a training plan ensuring all staff, Board Members and volunteers act as Library ambassadors

**Strategic
Objective**

5. Strengthen our people and organization

We know that if we are to achieve all of our other strategic objectives we need to have a strong organization that is flexible, skilled, innovative and accountable. Like other library systems we need to address growing human resource challenges related to retirement, recruitment, retention and training of our staff. We also recognize the need to play our role in supporting the City's priorities including excellence in government, financial management and environmental stewardship.

Strategies

5.1 Develop a multi-year plan for staff development, wellness and succession

- 5.1.1 Develop a health and wellness plan for staff
- 5.1.2 Continue to support and develop a long term staff development and management succession plan

5.2 Implement a comprehensive skills development program for technology and electronic resources

- 5.2.1 Develop a skills assessment tool and training program for library staff

5.3 Develop a strategy to enhance Board governance, succession and development

- 5.3.1 Develop a suggested board profile and competencies
- 5.3.2 Develop a strategy for ongoing board evaluation and development
- 5.3.3 Develop a strategy for improved governance practices

5.4 Implement a continuous improvement process (including ongoing customer input and feedback)

- 5.4.1 Explore opportunities to improve library operations and processes
- 5.4.2 Review and improve the effectiveness of the library's current customer input and feedback processes

5.5 Develop a strategy to support improved environmental stewardship

- 5.5.1 Review current environmental practices at BPL and recommend a more comprehensive approach to being "green."
- 5.5.2 Develop a strategy to ensure that Bibliographic Services will be a paperless department

5.6 Ensure fiscal sustainability and clear accountability to the community

- 5.6.1 In conjunction with the City of Burlington, prepare for changes in Public Sector Accounting Standards (PSAB) by implementing the Tangible Capital Asset (TCA) program to recognize and value Library assets
- 5.6.2 Continue to monitor our performance and report on key performance measures to the community
- 5.6.3 Implement new accounting system, ACCPAC

D. APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & COMMUNICATION

This plan provides a blueprint for the work of the Burlington Public Library over 2007-2011. The plan will “come to life” through its implementation planning which will identify the specific actions that need to be taken in order to accomplish the objectives laid out in the strategic plan.

Reports to the Board regarding any decision items will include a section heading, “Relationship to the Strategic Plan” — similar in format as used by the City. The Library’s capital and operational budgeting processes will in turn be linked to the Implementation Plan.

Management will report to the Board:

- Semi-annually on strategic plan progress and results (January and June)
- Quarterly on strategic plan implementation issues (e.g. variations or exceptions to planned progress) but monthly on any major exceptions

The following key groups of performance indicators will be used to monitor the Library’s progress under the various action plans:

- Membership (e.g. number of registered borrowers in total, number or new registrants annually, etc)
- Usage (as measured in multiple ways e.g. annually: circulation, information requests, holds, visits, program attendance, etc.)
- Awareness (as measured by occasional surveys and focus groups)
- Satisfaction (as measured by review of comments and occasional surveys)
- Community connections (as measured by partnerships and outreach activities)

It should be noted that the monthly service statistics are being reviewed in order to provide better reporting of our progress. The Library will summarize its progress in an annual report to the community.

Additionally, the changing external environment will be monitored annually, with the first report scheduled for January 2009, and if conditions warrant, specific strategies may need to be revised or updated. In this way, this will become a “living document.”

E. SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Burlington Public Library's Strategic Plan 2007-2011

Mission
Enriching Burlington through literacy, learning, and community connections.

Values									
Accessibility	Accountability	Creativity and Innovation	Information and Literacy	Intellectual Freedom	Life Long Learning	Love of Reading	Positive Work Environment	Quality of Services	Respect and Dignity

Strategic Directions				
1. Meet changing community needs by developing innovative and responsive collections, services and programs	2. Make the library more welcoming and accessible.	3. Contribute to the Burlington Community through proactive outreach and engagement with Community Partners	4. Enhance understanding of BPL and what it has to offer	5. Strengthen our people and organization
1.1 Develop new services for youth, newcomers, small business and non-profit organizations 1.2 Improve our collections, programs and services so that they reflect changing community needs 1.3 Continue to ensure that existing collections, services and programs are effective	2.1 Make the Library experience more customer-friendly and less intimidating 2.2 Support access to information and services "anytime, anywhere" through technology – enabled enhancements 2.3 Develop a long-term service delivery model including facility standards (e.g. amenities, hours, including extended Sunday hours) 2.4 Develop a Plan for north-east Burlington 2.5 Determine future directions for the Aldershot and New Appleby branches	3.1 Explore and pursue the opportunities for future facility and service partnerships including increased synergies with City departments and other community services 3.2 Support the Burlington-McMaster partnership	4.1 Broaden and enhance the profile of the Library through increased marketing of BPL services	5.1 Develop a multi-year plan for staff development, wellness and succession 5.2 Implement a comprehensive skills development program for technology and electronic resources 5.3 Develop a strategy for ongoing Board Succession and development 5.4 Implement a continuous improvement process (including ongoing customer input and feedback) 5.5 Develop a strategy to support improved environmental stewardship 5.6 Ensure fiscal sustainability and clear accountability to the community

Priorities are highlighted