



# BURLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY'S STRATEGIC PLAN

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>		Page
1.	Introduction	2
2.	Setting the Context	2
3.	The Library's Mission, Values and Long Term Vision	4
4.	The Library's Focus for the Next Three Years: "Building for Tomorrow"	5
5.	Objectives, Desired Outcomes and Strategies	6
6.	Conclusion	11

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following individuals participated in the preparation of the Burlington Public Library Strategic Plan.

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Burlington Public Library is pleased to introduce "*Building for Tomorrow: Burlington Public Library's Strategic Plan 2001- 2004.*"

As our bold new title suggests, our impetus for the next three years will be on "building" our facilities, technology infrastructure, human resources capacity and services to meet the demands of tomorrow.

During the strategic planning process, we visualized Burlington Public Library ten years from now. We see our Libraries as warm and welcoming gathering places where all feel welcome and well served. We see a learning organization with the competencies and flexibility to adapt to your current and future needs. We see the Burlington community looking to us as their first source for quality information, regardless of format. To help realize this vision, three major new initiatives, the *Building for Tomorrow* projects will focus our energies and creativity over the next three years:

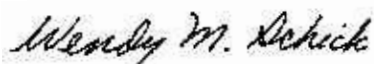
- The renewal of Central Library
- The possible expansion and/or relocation of the Tyandaga Branch Library
- The replacement of our aging library automation system

Other key areas of focus include securing the funding for the *Building for Tomorrow* projects; maintaining high quality services and public support during the projects; and continuing to participate with the City of Burlington in the community planning process. As we build for the future, customer service excellence and satisfaction will continue to be our top priority.

*Burlington Public Library's Strategic Plan 2001- 2004* was developed by a team of staff and Library Board members in consultation with the Burlington community. The Library gratefully acknowledges the valuable input provided by our customers and stakeholders. All comments were reviewed and taken into careful consideration during the plan's final development. It is because we have heard from our community first-hand that our services are very important to them today, and will continue to be very important to them tomorrow, that we are able to move forward with confidence and enthusiasm to meet the future.



Ron Ness, Chair  
Burlington Public Library Board



Wendy M. Schick, City Librarian  
Burlington Public Library



# BURLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY'S STRATEGIC PLAN

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Planning Process for Burlington Public Library's Strategic Plan

Burlington Public Library's strategic plan provides the Library with clear objectives and strategies for moving ahead. Building on the work conducted previously and recognizing the significant growth and change in our community, the Library has developed a new strategic plan to focus our efforts.

The strategic planning process was led by the Strategic Planning Team consisting of the members of the Burlington Public Library Board and the Library's Management staff with the support of a facilitator, Susan Wright of The Randolph Group.

The plan reflects the work of the Strategic Planning Team that began in May and was completed in September 2001. It incorporates some suggested changes from the stakeholder and public consultations which took place in August and September 2001.



## 2. SETTING THE CONTEXT

To set the context for this Plan, we have reviewed the progress in implementing *Gateway to 2001*, our previous strategic plan, and summarized some of the key trends influencing libraries in general, and the Burlington Public Library specifically.

### 2.1 Gateway to 2001

*Gateway to 2001*, the Library's most recent strategic plan, developed in 1999, identified four major areas of effort: services, facilities, income generation and the Library's human resources capacity. Progress has occurred in all of these areas. It is intended that our new strategic plan, *Building for Tomorrow*, build on and complete the work of *Gateway to 2001*.

### 2.2 Trends Affecting Burlington Public Library

A number of powerful trends are substantially changing the demands on libraries in Canada:<sup>1</sup>

- **Changing expectations**
  - Increasing demands for library services due to growth in lifelong learning, aging society, knowledge economy, small business and home-based businesses
  - Growing expectations to meet school needs due to changes in the educational system
  - Growing expectations by customers for service and convenience
  - Growing disparity in society between the "information rich" and the "information poor"
- **Growth of other providers**
  - Emergence of super bookstores
  - Growth of virtual libraries and online content

<sup>1</sup>Trends were drawn from a variety of sources including: Burlington Public Library Environmental Scan (Feb. 2001); Ontario Public Library Strategic Plan Planning Forum Report (July 2000); Ontario Public Library Strategic Plan Survey by Market Probe Canada (Nov. 2000); the Burlington Central Library Needs Assessment (Sept. 2000); the results of the City of Burlington Quality of Services Survey (March 2001); and the City of Burlington's Best Planning Estimates (May 2000)

- **Impacts of technology**
    - Ability of libraries to keep pace with changes in technology
    - Potential role libraries can play in providing training; facilitating electronic information access; being an information broker; playing a key role in the emergence of the “smart community”
    - Significant investment required in infrastructure, technology and staff
  - **Growing emphasis on new service delivery approaches:**
    - Potential for shared service delivery with the City of Burlington in the future (and/or other public and private information providers)
  - **Changing and mixed perceptions of the role of the public library** (e.g. to what extent libraries should focus on books vs. technology)
- ! **Growing Population**
- Burlington's population is expected to grow from 135,976 (1996 census) to 184,500 by 2021<sup>2</sup>, an additional 48,500 people, primarily in the northeast area of the City
- **Changes in Burlington Public Library usage**
    - 21% increase in the number of people entering the Tansley Woods and Central Libraries since 1995
    - Increased circulation and significant increases in the use of electronic resources during this period
    - Reduced registrations and reference queries, as people make more use of electronic resources

<sup>2</sup>The recently approved Alton Community plan is not reflected in these numbers

- ! **High use of Burlington Public Library relative to 6 other libraries of similar size and communities**
- First in the number of registered borrowers as a per cent of population
  - First in circulation of materials
  - Lowest in cost per circulation
  - 86% of respondents to the City survey used the library in the past year
- **High satisfaction with the library**
    - 77% of respondents to the City survey indicated that the Library provided either excellent or good service
  - **Significant plans to develop library facilities including:**
    - Renewal of the Central Library, including a significant renovation and expansion of the existing space
    - Determination of the size and location of the Tyandaga and New Appleby Branch libraries as well as the need for additional space in the north-east area
- ! **Ongoing fiscal challenges including:**
- Annual increases in the costs of library materials
  - Growing competition for sponsorship and fundraising dollars
  - Growing trend in the public sector towards a user-based approach to financing services
  - Competing demands on municipal funding sources.



# BURLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY'S STRATEGIC PLAN

## 3. THE LIBRARY'S MISSION, VALUES AND LONG TERM VISION

### The Burlington Public Library Mission Statement

*The Burlington Public Library  
enriches, informs and educates the  
Burlington community.*

### VALUES

The values of the Library include:

- **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 basic principles of intellectual freedom and of 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.
- **Quality of Services** — We value excellence in our customer services and collections.
- **Respect and Dignity** — We treat all people with respect and dignity.
- **Work Environment** — We believe in providing a safe and positive work environment that provides staff challenging opportunities to grow and develop, and to contribute.

### LONG TERM VISION

The Strategic Planning Team has a vision of the Library ten years from now. The Burlington Public Library of the future will be known for these features:

- **A Community Gathering Place:** There will be more community gatherings in the Burlington Public Library, more comfortable facilities and library locations will be strategically located to take advantage of synergies with other community facilities. Facilities will be 'fun' places, where customers want to linger.
- **Multiple Generations will feel Welcomed and Well-served:** The Burlington Public Library will be a child's place of discovery where imaginations are stimulated and the joy of reading is nurtured. Teens will see the Burlington Public Library as a great place to meet, to learn and to explore the Net. Adults as well as the growing number of seniors will benefit from collections and services targetted at their changing needs.
- **Convenient Accessible Customer Services:** The Burlington Public Library will offer convenient hours and will enable around the clock access through its virtual web services.
- **The First Place to Look for Quality Information:** The Burlington Public Library will be the first place people go to (virtually or physically) for information that is current, reliable and of high quality. The Burlington Public Library will also play a key role in sustaining the community's memory of its unique local history and culture.
- **A Balance of "High Tech" and "High Touch" Services:** The Burlington Public Library will be a leader in the integration of people and technology. Integrated search technologies will enable easy access to the vast array of resources on the Internet and in the library. The Burlington Public Library will balance technology-based services with the personal service (i.e. "high touch") that is valued by its customers.

- **A High Profile in the Community:** The Burlington Public Library will have an active and high profile in the community, working in partnership with different sectors in the community to make Burlington “*a place to belong.*”
- **A Flexible, Respected and Sustainable Organization:** The Burlington Public Library will be a learning organization that has the competencies and flexibility to continuously adapt. It will have the necessary funding support to sustain its services into the future.

The Strategic Planning Team believes that if the Burlington Public Library is to achieve this vision, it must address a number of strategic issues over the longer term including:

- Expanding and improving library facilities
- Implementing the necessary technologies to support library service delivery
- Targeting and strengthening public services to meet changing customer needs
- Developing the organization and its staff
- Pursuing strategic partnerships
- Increasing the Library's profile in the community
- Securing the necessary funding to support all of the above.

#### 4. THE LIBRARY'S FOCUS FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS: “BUILDING FOR TOMORROW”

The Strategic Planning Team believes that the Library must focus on a number of key areas over the next three years if it is to build its capacity to work towards the long- term vision and address the key strategic issues.

Over the next three years we will be focusing on three major initiatives that will ensure we are keeping pace with the needs of our growing community. The three *Building for Tomorrow* projects are:

- The renewal of the Central Library
- The development of a plan for the Tyandaga Branch Library including possible expansion/relocation
- The replacement of our aging library automation system

These three major projects will focus our energies on creating warm, welcoming gathering places and establishing the library as the first place to look for quality information. As we build for the future, commitment to customer service excellence and satisfaction continue to be a top priority.

Other key focus areas for the next three years are:

- Securing funding for the three *Building for Tomorrow* projects
- Maintaining high quality services and public support during the *Building for Tomorrow* projects
- Cooperating with the City of Burlington in the community planning process to ensure that long term facility needs are addressed

# BURLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY'S STRATEGIC PLAN

## 5. OBJECTIVES, DESIRED OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES

In the section below we outline objectives, desired outcomes and strategies in five key areas:

- Facilities
- Technology
- Services
- Organizational Development & Staff Training
- Funding, Profile and Partnerships

For the purposes of this plan we are using the following definitions:

- **Objectives** outline the overall desired long-term results
- **Desired Outcomes** outline what the Library is planning to achieve over the next 3 years
- **Strategies** outline the general means by which these outcomes will be addressed over the three years of this plan
- **Long Term Strategies** describe other areas which the Library believes will need attention to prepare for the future (i.e. beyond the three year period of this plan)

## FACILITIES

### Objective

*Have our facilities serve as community gathering places that are viewed as welcoming, inclusive, safe, comfortable and accessible.*

### Desired Outcomes (2001-2004)

- Renewal of the Central Library
- Completion of plans for the Tyandaga Branch Library (including possible expansion/relocation)
- Plan developed for the lease expiration at the current location of the New Appleby Branch Library

### Strategies (2001-2004)

- Complete the renewal of Central Library (including developing the building programme, the financial and phasing plan, seeking budget approval from City Council, incorporating the barrier-free design principles, etc.)
- Complete current Tyandaga Branch feasibility study and take appropriate action to expand and/or relocate if warranted
- Ensure a consistent visual identity and image (e.g. design guidelines and signage) is incorporated into any facility development plans
- Participate in the update of the City of Burlington's "Major Facilities Study" to ensure library facilities are included in long term infrastructure plans

### Long Term Strategies

- Monitor the outcomes of the Alton Secondary Plan to support future planning for expanded facilities and service in north-east Burlington
- Develop and recommend a plan for the preferred location and size of the New Appleby Branch Library



## TECHNOLOGY

### Objective

*Provide effective external and internal electronic service delivery and support.*

### Desired Outcomes (2001-2004)

- A new library automation system
- Increased network bandwidth capable of meeting future needs
- A technology infrastructure that supports the needs of both customers and staff
- An enhanced library website

### Strategies (2001-2004)

- Replace the library's automation system and online catalogue
- Provide increased technology training to staff
- Link to the City fibre optic network with City Hall
- Establish life cycle and replacement strategies for all aspects of information technology investment
- Improve web content
- Promote the library's website to raise awareness and profile

### Long Term Strategy

- Continue to monitor changes in technology and update our technology plans as needed

## SERVICES

### Objective

*Provide public library services that anticipate and respond to continuously changing community needs.*

### Desired Outcomes (2001-2004)

- Enhanced library services
- Increased community awareness and use of library resources, collections and services
- Extended amenities (e.g. a café at Central Library)

### Strategies (2001-2004)

- Develop and implement service improvements for the renewed Central Library and Tyandaga Branch Library, if expanded and/or relocated
- Develop and implement a plan to maintain high quality services and ensure the public, staff and other key groups are consulted and kept up-to-date during the renewal of Central Library and expansion and/or relocation of Tyandaga Branch Library, if approved
- Develop a plan for increased programming and outreach to draw more users to the Library
- Increase and enhance current marketing of electronic resources, collections and services

### Long Term Strategy

- Strengthen collections and services for targeted groups including children, youth, seniors, business, and special interest groups

# BURLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY'S STRATEGIC PLAN

## ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF TRAINING

### Objective

*Ensure the organization and its workforce have the competencies and flexibility to meet changing needs and expectations.*

### Desired Outcomes (2001-2004)

- Flexible and competent staffing maintained
- Capacity to cope with evolving needs and staffing changes
- Support for all staff in the delivery of high quality service during the implementation of the *Building for Tomorrow* projects

### Strategies (2001-2004)

- Implement the recommendations of the compensation study
- Complete implementation of Organizational Structure Review (approved in 2000) including further development of a permanent Human Resources function
- Develop and implement strategies for ensuring appropriate staffing in identified priority areas (e.g. Human Resources, Funding Development, Information Technology and web services, serving targeted groups)
- Strengthen Human Resources systems
- Develop and optimize a volunteer component and formalize responsibilities for managing volunteers
- Develop and implement a plan to support all staff as "champions" of excellent customer service, both during the *Building for Tomorrow* projects and beyond

## FUNDING, PROFILE AND PARTNERSHIPS

### Objective

*Ensure that the Library is supported by the community, that Library representatives are visible throughout the community and that the Library has sustainable funding to meet increasing demands and to fund new initiatives.*

### Desired Outcomes (2001-2004)

- Capital and operating funding secured to carry out the Central Library, Tyandaga, organizational development, library automation system and technology projects
- Enhanced identity and image of the Library in the community

### Strategies (2001-2004)

- Develop and implement a funding and revenue generation development plan
- Strengthen marketing and communications
- Increase participation by the Burlington Public Library Board and staff in community organizations such as business organizations and service clubs
- Investigate further administrative and service delivery partnership opportunities with the City and others

### Long Term Strategy

- Monitor Smart Community initiatives

## 6. CONCLUSION

The Strategic Planning Team appreciates the input received from the public and key stakeholders in the development of *Building for Tomorrow: Burlington Public Library's Strategic Plan 2001-2004*. This plan provides a blueprint for the work of the Burlington Public Library over the next three years. The plan will "come to life" through its Implementation Plan, which identifies the specific actions that need to be taken in order to accomplish the goals and objectives laid out in the strategic plan.

Each year the Board and the Library's Management Team will monitor the overall progress relative to the objectives and outcomes. The changing external environment will also be monitored and if conditions warrant, specific strategies may need to be revised or updated. In this way, *Building for Tomorrow: Burlington Public Library's Strategic Plan 2001-2004* will become a "living document" leading us forward in our efforts to fulfill our mission:

***The Burlington Public Library  
Enriches, informs and educates the  
Burlington community.***





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