



# Where Ideas Thrive



**Strategic Plan 2016-2020**

## **Mission**

Engaging Burlington in building 21<sup>st</sup> century literacies, lifelong learning, and community connections.

## **Vision**

A vibrant community alive with ideas and inspired by the joy of discovery.

## **Values**

Our values express our fundamental beliefs; they keep us anchored and guide our ongoing planning and decision-making.

### **Accountability**

The Library belongs to everyone in the community. We are accountable in all that we do.

### **Creativity and Innovation**

We encourage and support creative approaches and innovative solutions in all aspects of library service.

### **Dignity and Respect**

Everyone is welcome. We treat all people with dignity and respect.

### **Excellence**

We value excellence in our services and collections and continuous improvement in our delivery. We empower staff to embrace challenging opportunities and to thrive.

### **Intellectual Freedom**

We subscribe to the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom and the open exchange of information and ideas.

### **Lifelong Learning**

We provide services and resources that contribute to continuous learning.

### **Love of Reading**

We nurture the joy of reading in people of all ages.



## Strategic Priorities

### Inspire Exploration

We are at the threshold of an exciting new age—the Imagination Age—where creative thinking and imagination, together with technology, drive innovation, create economic value, and influence our culture. Learning, playing, discovering, and dreaming are essential to understanding and navigating our changing world. The Library is a place in our community where ideas can turn into innovations, where innovations can turn into solutions, and where solutions can drive progress.

#### What we heard

*I would visit the library more if... “It offered more programs that interested me.”*

*“Residents rely greatly on the library for the programming.”*

*“I enjoy the atmosphere [of the] library but wish there were more reasons to go... like meeting like-minded people to create or discuss.”*

*“Libraries are integral to the community, but the technology is constantly changing. Libraries are crossing the gap between user’s knowledge and what is new.”*

#### Over the next four years, the library will:

- Find new ways to be relevant to local residents.
- Reflect the community; be responsive to community needs and shifting demographics.
- Balance traditional and new services and collections.

#### What will this look like?

- More people using our physical and virtual spaces and collections.
- Library programs align with community needs.
- More relevant partnership agreements.
- More people are fulfilled by their library experiences.

#### This is how we’ll get there

##### 1. Provide welcoming creative spaces.

- Extend the open hours of our Ideaworks Studio.
- Provide relevant hardware and software in our creative spaces.
- Develop and implement a partnership plan to provide more maker programming system-wide.

##### 2. Create welcoming virtual spaces.

- Enhance the library’s catalogue by offering other languages and audio accessibility.
- Implement an enriched mobile application.



- Integrate community content into the library catalogue.

### 3. Enhance programs.

- Provide opportunities for community members to co-organize and facilitate programs through library partnerships.

*See also Increase Access—Improve customer access*

- Establish a system-wide programming strategy.
- Build system-wide capacity for needed library services and programs.

*See also Improve Awareness—Foster greater library presence in the community*

### 4. Develop staff to have diverse skills.

- Build staff competencies in technology.
- Encourage a work culture of continuous experimentation and play.

*See also Increase Access—Improve and maintain virtual spaces and technology*

## Improve Awareness

Futurists predict that as we evolve out of the Information Age, imagination will be the most valued skill in our modern society, along with other 21st century skills and literacies. As a community-based idea incubator and creativity hub, the public library is in the vanguard of transformative changes taking place around the world and in our city, yet many people have an outdated perception of what it provides. With the Library's help, Burlington residents will discover the vast resources, services, and programs available to them—offering ways to better manage their everyday life.

### What we heard

*"Please continue to encourage new membership by promoting the library to people who are unaware of how easy it is to access everything the library has to offer, and it's free!"*

*"The library offers great services. More publicity would probably generate more community awareness and use."*

*"If people don't know it [the library] is there, they don't consider it as part of their daily lives."*

### Over the next four years the library will:

- Expand our reach into the community to enhance awareness of BPL and what it has to offer.
- Increase participation in programs and use of library services and spaces.
- Offer more programs and activities in the community.
- Build capacity in the Marketing Communications Department to support promotion of increased programs, awareness building, and marketing campaigns

### What will this look like?

- More active users and cardholders.
- Increased program offerings and attendance.



- Increased community engagement.
- Launch a large scale public awareness/marketing campaign.

### This is how we'll get there

#### 1. Create and carry out a comprehensive marketing strategy.

- Research to create service point profiles for each library location using Environics data and community-led data.
- Build a new strategic marketing plan that includes a large-scale public awareness campaign.
- Increase capacity to deliver an effective comprehensive marketing strategy.
- Educate all staff to promote and advocate for the Library.
- Implement the strategic marketing plan.

#### 2. Foster a greater library presence in the community.

- Build capacity to deliver services, programs, and outreach to the community.  
*See Inspire Exploration—Enhance programs; Advance Governance—Integrate the Community-led Service Model; Advance Governance—Advocate for the Library*

## Increase Access

Local residents value having a safe, comfortable, and friendly place to go where they can explore ideas, pursue knowledge, practice skills, and connect with others. To this end, the Library commits to continuous improvement of the library experience.

### What we heard

*I would visit the library more if... "It had longer hours."*

*"Lots of family activities are held during work/school hours and not enough of them in the evenings or on weekends..."*

*"Most of the books I want have long reserve lists, especially the ebooks, so I often buy them on my iPad as I don't want to wait."*

### Over the next four years the library will:

- Improve customer access to the library.
- Implement welcoming, people-first design in our spaces and places.
- Generate new and optimize existing facility partnerships.

### What will this look like?

- More people using our physical and virtual spaces and collections.
- Strategies in place to implement recommendations from community and consultant reports.



## This is how we'll get there

### 1. Improve customer access.

- Establish a balanced collection of traditional and emerging materials.
- Investigate optimized library open hours through community consultation and advocate for support and funding to implement.
- Increase capacity for weekend programming.

### 2. Improve and maintain physical spaces.

- Refresh Kilbride Branch.
- Refresh the Central Branch Circulation Desk.
- Create a long-term Facilities Master Plan for existing spaces.
- Explore a potential relocation of New Appleby Branch.
- Conduct a Strategic Infrastructure Review of Central & Tansley Woods to prioritize space changes and expansions required for future-ready library spaces.
- Implement the Central Building Envelope Study recommendations and Capital Renewal Plan.
- Continuously evolve public spaces to embrace library trends.

### 3. Improve and maintain virtual spaces and technology.

- Revisit Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and evaluate related technologies.
- Enhance the library's catalogue by offering other languages and audio accessibility.  
*See also Inspire Exploration—Create welcoming virtual spaces*
- Implement an improved mobile app.  
*See also Inspire Exploration—Create welcoming virtual spaces*
- Continuously evolve virtual spaces to embrace library trends (ongoing)

## Advance Governance

Our world is dynamic and increasingly complex, as are the Library's roles and responsibilities as a leading public institution.

BPL has a solid reputation of stewardship excellence and good governance, and recognizes that in increasing community engagement and collaboration, our accountability to stakeholders must evolve in unprecedented ways.

### What we heard

*"The library is seen as a backbone organization that can be built upon for other initiatives."*

*"You are the 'crown jewel' in Burlington. We must ensure you are protected and maintained."*

*"We love the library! It's an absolutely essential part of the community and I strongly support additional funding for extended hours and new programs."*



**Over the next four years the library will:**

- Renew our commitment to establish best practices in non-profit governance, risk management, and succession planning.
- Develop and support staff for success in a rapidly changing work environment.
- Promote the value and economic impact of library services to our community and funders.
- Align with Burlington’s cultural partners in community-centred management.
- Increase operations transparency.
- Pursue environmental efficiencies.

**What will this look like?**

- Policies in place to support best practices.
- Library staff on community agencies, service clubs, and boards.
- Engaged staff with clear development goals.
- Environmental initiatives that result in energy, waste, and consumable savings.

**This is how we’ll get there**

**1. Demonstrate excellence in stewardship.**

- Revisit and renew the Risk Management Plan and develop a Risk Management Lens.
- Provide risk management training for management staff.
- Implement new performance measures reporting system.
- Develop a Business Continuity Plan.

**2. Strengthen staff skills and training.**

- Develop ongoing staff curriculum, training, and mentorship for continuous learning.
  - Expand strategies for hiring staff with more diversified skills and experiences.
- See also Inspire Exploration—Develop staff to have diverse skills*

**3. Advocate for the Library.**

- Present and promote the Library’s Economic Impact Study.
- Library Board to lobby City Council for funds to increase capacity for an evolving community.  
*See also Inspire Exploration—Enhance programs; Improve Awareness—Increase capacity to deliver an effective comprehensive marketing strategy; Increase Access—Improve and maintain physical spaces*
- Encourage Library leaders to join local groups, community organizations, and business associations.
- Foster closer ties with the City of Burlington by participating in the City Cultural Action Plan and other City initiatives.
- Find opportunities to support the City of Burlington’s Economic Vision 2025 related to fostering Innovation & Entrepreneurship.



**4. Integrate the Community-led Service Model.**

- Incorporate a community-led lens into the training for BPL staff, Board and Advocacy Committee members, and volunteers.  
*See also Inspire Exploration—Enhance programs*
- Send managers out into the community to build local relationships.  
*See also Advance Governance—Advocate for the library; Improve Awareness—Foster a greater library presence in the community*

**5. Review and update library policies.**

- Conduct scheduled Board policy review.
- Implement an Operational Policy Audit.
- Develop an Operational Manual and a revision schedule.

**6. Support green initiatives.**

- Continue current and find new business practices that are economically viable, socially responsible, and environmentally friendly.

