

strategic plan 2026-2027



Burlington Public Library is bringing people together.

Reverence for the Land

Burlington as we know it today is rich in history and modern traditions of many First Nations, the Métis, and Urban Indigenous residents from across Turtle Island who now call this place home.

Burlington Public Library acknowledges the Treaty Lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation as well as the Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat and Anishinabek peoples, which is mutually covered by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy, the Ojibway and other allied Nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Through our collections, programs, and partnerships, Burlington Public Library seeks to amplify Indigenous voices and perspectives, providing opportunities for our community to engage in dialogue, education, and healing. We invite everyone to reflect on their relationship with our natural surroundings and to take meaningful steps to foster respect and understanding.

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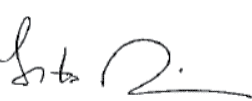
A message from the CEO and Board Chair

We are excited to share Burlington Public Library’s 2026–2027 Strategic Plan. It builds on the foundation of our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan which guided us through some important milestones—eliminating daily late fines, relocating our New Appleby Branch, and adopting a system-wide data strategy to guide decisions.

This new plan—created with input from you, our community—builds on the strong foundation of our previous strategy. Our mission, vision, and values remaining at the heart of everything we do.

The Library creates sparks of positive change by empowering each person who walks through our doors to grow, connect, and contribute to the wider community. When someone benefits from the Library—whether by learning a new skill, finding a great book, or meeting a new neighbour—they can share that benefit with the people around them. A parent who attends a program may bring what they’ve learned to their family. A newcomer who finds support at the Library may help another newcomer feel welcome. A young person inspired by a book may introduce new ideas to their friends. Each positive experience has the potential to multiply, as people carry what they gain at the Library into their workplaces, schools, neighbourhoods, and beyond.

By fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment, the Library acts as a catalyst for community well-being. This strategic plan’s focus on connection, learning, and civic engagement means that every interaction at the Library can set off a chain reaction—helping individuals and the entire community thrive.



Lita Barrie, CEO



Jason Manayathu, Board Chair

With thanks to the Burlington Public Library Board, Senior Leadership Team, staff, and community members for their contributions to this strategic plan.



Creating our Strategic Plan

This strategic plan builds on progress we’ve made and responds to challenges Burlington residents continue to face—polarization, isolation, and affordability. This plan maps out how we’ll fuel discovery, cultivate compassion, and champion civic engagement, creating a more informed and connected community for all. Here’s how we decided what to focus on:

- **We built on progress** from our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, updating our priorities to reflect where we are now.
- **We analyzed data** to understand what’s most important to our community and where we have room to grow.
- **We listened to the community**, reviewing more than 500 comments on our draft plan.

Our priorities for the next two years

1.

Enhance community well-being, helping people feel connected, accepted, and empowered to achieve their goals.
2.

Inspire discovery with collections, services, and spaces that reflect our evolving community.
3.

Nurture a workforce culture driven by our organizational values.

Our 2026-2027 Strategic Plan includes new goals and objectives under each of our three priorities. It maps out where we want to be and how we’ll get there.



Our mission, vision, and values continue to guide everything we do

- MISSION

To inspire imagination, collaboration, and compassion to support an informed and literate society.
- VISION

An engaged and sustainable community advanced by curiosity and discovery.
- VALUES

Our values express our fundamental beliefs. They guide how we treat people, make decisions, and plan for the future in all aspects of our work.

- Accountability:** We cultivate a culture of trust, responsibility, and authenticity
- Collaboration:** We are better through collective effort
- Inclusion:** We welcome everyone and encourage respectful sharing
- Innovation:** We embrace creativity and experimentation

- Intellectual Freedom:** We uphold the open exchange of information and ideas
- Learning:** We foster the lifelong pursuit of skills and knowledge so everyone can fulfill their potential
- Love of Reading:** We nurture the joy of reading in people of all ages





1

PRIORITY 1

Enhance community well-being, helping people feel connected, accepted, and empowered to achieve their goals.

Strategy in Action

(Examples of how we'll achieve these goals)

- Offer programs and activities where customers meet and connect with others
- Feature more local events and civic engagement opportunities on our website and in branches
- Simplify access to regional support service organizations with drop in visits at library branches
- Build relationships with community and cultural groups to teach and learn from one another

PRIORITY 1

Goals	Objectives	Indicators	Targets
1.1 BPL helps people with diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences connect with and learn from one another.	1.1.1 Expand learning opportunities that foster intellectual freedom, critical thinking, and civic engagement	1.1.1a Percentage of BPL staff that have completed Toronto Metropolitan University's Canadian Democracy @ Work training	85% completion rate
	1.1.2 Increase awareness and use of BPL resources among equity deserving groups through purposeful outreach	1.1.1b Number of customers taking part in BPL programs that focus on information literacy and critical thinking	50% more attendees
	1.1.3 Foster a library atmosphere where customers can easily connect with one another through engaging, self-led activities and interactive displays	1.1.2a Number of Customer Satisfaction Survey respondents that self-report as a member of an equity-deserving group and actively use BPL services	25% more users
		1.1.2b Total attendance at outreach sessions focused on equity-deserving groups	10% more participants
1.2 BPL empowers people to be catalysts for change, creating a ripple effect of positive action throughout the community.	1.1.3 Launch and evaluation of a pilot program for self-guided activities designed to increase spontaneous social interaction in branches		Complete pilot
	1.2.1 Support local businesses and organizations to succeed and contribute to the Burlington community	1.2.1 Launch of a learning and networking program for small businesses and not-for-profit organizations	Launch program
1.3 Customers can rely on BPL for access to resources, services, and programs that help them thrive.	1.2.2 Help people discover local events, services, and civic engagement opportunities	1.2.2 Number of outbound clicks from BPL website and eNewsletter to community and civic engagement opportunities	3,200 yearly clicks
	1.3.1 Offer each age group a broad and relevant range of learning, skill-building, and social programs	1.3.1 Total program attendance for each age group (early years, school years, teen, adult)	10% more attendees
		1.3.2a Complete collaboration agreements with all support service collaborators	100% completion rate
		1.3.2b Total number of customer interactions with support service organizations at BPL branches	10% more interactions
	1.3.2 Strengthen resource-sharing collaborations with support service organizations (e.g. job search, housing, Indigenous resources, newcomer settlement) to expand the scope and reach of these services		



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PRIORITY 2

Inspire discovery with collections, services, and spaces that reflect our evolving community.

Strategy in Action

(Examples of how we'll achieve these goals)

- Adapt branch layouts to set apart quiet zones from social spaces
- Survey tech program participants and use their feedback to improve our offerings
- Make it easy for customers to find great alternatives while they wait for popular books
- Introduce self-guided tools so more customers can access our Maker services

PRIORITY 2

Goals	Objectives	Indicators	Targets
2.1 Adapt branch layouts to set apart quiet zones from social spaces.	2.1.1 Make sure BPL is ready to grow with the City of Burlington 2.1.2 Adapt branch spaces and services to improve accessibility and better support varied needs for quiet study, social interaction, group work, leisure, and play	2.1.1 Completion of system-wide facility strategy aligned with City of Burlington planning practices, development timelines, and universal design principles 2.1.2 Satisfaction rating for library spaces in Customer Satisfaction Survey	Board-approved strategy >76% rating
2.2 BPL's resources and staff empower customers to participate in our increasingly digital society.	2.2.1 Expand access to Maker equipment and learning opportunities across Library branches with a focus on digital skill building 2.2.2 Provide high quality technology skills programming that meets community learning needs 2.2.3 Support tech-curious customers to explore digital formats for books, magazines, and news as print options become less available	2.2.1 Number of customers using Maker equipment and participating in Maker programs 2.2.2 Participant satisfaction with BPL tech skills programs 2.2.3a Use of BPL's digital magazine and newspaper databases 2.2.3b eBook and eAudiobook circulation	25% more Maker participants >80% rating 5% more use 1% more borrowing
2.3 BPL delivers maximum value for every dollar of its collection budget, leveraging data, staff expertise, and borrowing partnerships.	2.3.1 Leverage staff expertise and technology to connect customers to available and relevant print and digital material from BPL and partner libraries 2.3.2 Adapt audiovisual collection to reflect community needs, technology trends, and changing formats	2.3.1a Borrowing in adult print book collections 2.3.1b Total number of items borrowed by BPL cardholders from 'More to Borrow' partner libraries 2.3.2 Percentage of physical format audio visual budget reallocated to high-demand items	2% more borrowing 3% more borrowing 5% reallocation



3

PRIORITY 3

Nurture a workforce culture driven by our organizational values.

Strategy in Action

(Examples of how we'll achieve these goals)

- Ensure staff training and procedures prioritize human connection
- Reorganize documents in staff intranet to improve searching
- Update our community engagement processes to improve transparency and accountability
- Pilot automation technology in our book reshelving process

PRIORITY 3

Goals	Objectives	Indicators	Targets
3.1 Staff are equipped with the tools and skills to reinforce BPL values in interactions with customers, collaborators, and colleagues.	3.1.1 Develop staff's ability to anticipate competing needs and turn moments of friction into opportunities for shared learning	3.1.1 Percentage of staff that demonstrate knowledge and skills to navigate friction in the workplace	>75% proficiency rating
3.2 BPL provides dependable and consistent service to customers across all core services and locations.	3.2.1 Commit to our role as a connector, empowering customers to access resources and build self-reliance 3.2.2 Ensure staff in all roles can readily access appropriate tools and accurate information to do their job effectively 3.2.3 Improve opportunities for customers to share actionable input and feedback about BPL services	3.2.1a Rating for the question "Overall, the Library has a positive impact on my life" on BPL's annual Customer Satisfaction Survey 3.2.1b Operationalized Service Model with revised framework for each of BPL's five service streams 3.2.2 Score on the Great Place to Work employee survey "Support" category 3.2.3a Implementation of updated community feedback processes 3.2.3b Total number of respondents that complete the BPL Customer Satisfaction Survey annually	>94% rating Service frameworks presented to Board >80% rating Board-endorsed engagement procedure >4,500 respondents
3.3 BPL staff prioritize welcoming, accessible service that puts human connection at the heart of our work.	3.3.1 Free up staff time to connect with customers by making material handling quicker and easier through technology and better processes 3.3.2 Focus staff performance goals and motivation on the tasks that make the biggest positive difference for customers	3.3.1a Efficiency of materials handling tasks at BPL's two high volume branches (Central and Tansley Woods) 3.3.1b Rating for the question "Library staff provide good service" on BPL's annual Customer Satisfaction Survey 3.3.2a Score on the Great Place to Work employee survey "Pride" category 3.3.2b Percentage of staff with documented performance goals explicitly linked to customer impact outcomes	5% quicker >93% rating >85% rating 100% of staff

