

PROPOSED

2005 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

THE HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

A SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2005 - 2007

MISSION

The Hamilton Public Library unites people and ideas in a warm and welcoming environment. The library's staff, collections, and access to global electronic resources help to enrich the lives of individuals. The library actively champions literacy, access to information and the joy of reading.

VALUES

Intellectual Freedom

We provide individuals with access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity, and intellectual activity.

Inclusiveness

We work with our diverse communities to encourage library use.

Innovation

We anticipate and respond to the changing needs of our communities.

Respect

We listen and respond to diverse opinions, foster understanding and protect the dignity of individuals.

Accountability

We ensure that library services are vital and relevant to our community and to people's lives.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

Library branches and the Central Library will be places for neighbours to get together, for ideas to be shared, for events to take place and for people to spend time together. "I'll meet you at the library" will be a phrase that people use with pride. Hamilton Public Library branches will be social forces within their communities and good partners to community organizations. The Hamilton Public Library will support community development and will assist people as they broaden their horizons.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2: SUPPORT DIVERSE NEEDS

The Hamilton Public Library system will serve people in ways that are relevant to their unique circumstances. The library will align services to recognize the fact that Hamilton residents come from a wide variety of experiences and backgrounds. The library will have conversations with those we serve and those we could serve in order to ensure that the Hamilton Public Library is a source for relevant information, community joy and hope.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY # 3: CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND ENERGIZE OUR ORGANIZATION

The Hamilton Public Library will work with current and future staff members to harness energies and opportunities, to identify emerging trends, and to ensure that the library's workforce continues to acquire the training and personal growth necessary to support the changing needs of those we serve. As an organization, the Hamilton Public Library commits itself to a work environment where staff are acknowledged and contributions are recognized.

INTRODUCTION

A strategic plan should provide clear direction. At the same time, strategic plans should not dictate activities which might seem reasonable when the plan was written but which become less relevant after the plan is approved.

The Hamilton Public Library Board has set three clear strategic priorities for 2005 – 2007. Staff of the Hamilton Public Library are encouraged to advance these strategic goals, within their resources, when opportunities arise. The Board will receive regular reports on the activities that staff have pursued.

The three strategic goals of the Hamilton Public Library Board could be distilled to a single simple thought. The Hamilton Public Library Board wants the residents of this City to be proud of their library system. The Hamilton Public Library Board believes staff are proud of working for the Hamilton Public Library system and care about the quality of our services.

The Board understands that even simple goals require buildings that are clean and exciting. People require services that reflect their realities and staff who have the training and the tools to be successful.

There are some huge projects in this strategic plan. The Facilities Master Plan, which the Board hopes to approve in 2005, will have an impact on our services for the next decade. The Facilities Master Plan comes at the right time. The Hamilton Public Library system is about to build new branches and to renovate others. The Board and staff will articulate their expectations for these buildings, ensuring that our buildings align with strategic priorities.

The Hamilton Public Library is a strong partner in the myhamilton.ca portal initiative. The portal is due to be launched in the late summer, 2005. We hope and expect that this technology will improve library services during the course of our strategic plan.

The Hamilton Public Library Board is aware of enormous changes that affect the ways that people use library services. Marketing and marketing research are keys to our success. Some of our simple goals, such as staying relevant and meaningful, can only be accomplished by knowing what works in other libraries and what will work in Hamilton, given the needs of those we serve.

George Geczy
Board Chair

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

Library branches and the Central Library will be places for neighbours to get together, for ideas to be shared, for events to take place and for people to spend time together. "I'll meet you at the library" will be a phrase that people use with pride. Hamilton Public Library branches will be social forces within their communities and good partners to community organizations. The Hamilton Public Library will support community development and will assist people as they broaden their horizons.

THE LIBRARY AS MEETING PLACE

We need to ensure that our physical and virtual library spaces are recognized as the social heart of their communities.

Initiatives

The Library Board is working on a Ten Year Facilities Master Plan to guide the development of library facilities. The Board will ensure that its plan for the renewal and development of library services will enable library locations to be meeting places that engage their communities. The plan will balance such issues as sustainability with changing expectations.

The Board's vision for the Central Library, as set out in the 2004 "Information Central: Your Marketplace of Ideas" report will be implemented over the next few years.

The building programs for the South Mountain and Ancaster branches will highlight the Board's vision for quality library services.

THE LIBRARY AS COMMUNITY PARTNER

The Hamilton Public Library has a superb network of partnerships. The library system will work with local partners whenever such alliances help to advance strategic goals. Areas where we expect to make an impact through partnerships include Downtown renewal, early learning, the provision of employment and career information, the provision of technological services, and services to New Canadians.

The Hamilton Public Library supports the trend, found across North America, to partner with other library systems in order to accomplish common goals.

Initiatives

The Hamilton Public Library is a strong partner in the myhamilton.ca portal initiative. The potential of portal technology will require major commitments from the library for the duration of this strategic plan.

The library will act as a partner for relevant initiatives that contribute to a revitalization of the City of Hamilton.

The Hamilton Public Library will work with other libraries to explore consortia purchasing of electronic products as well as the potential of conducting research and marketing through partnerships.

The Hamilton Public Library will work with regional library systems and school boards to develop common tools for assisting students to find relevant material through both their school and public libraries.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2

SUPPORT DIVERSE NEEDS

The Hamilton Public Library system will serve people in ways that are relevant to their unique circumstances. The library will align services to recognize the fact that Hamilton residents come from a wide variety of experiences and backgrounds. The library will have conversations with those we serve and those we could serve in order to ensure that the Hamilton Public Library is a source for relevant information, community joy and hope.

THE LIBRARY WILL PROVIDE CUSTOMIZED SERVICES

The Hamilton Public Library has always had a strong reputation as an organization that supports diverse needs. Staff will continue to align library services to reflect our community. The Board is aware that its customers wish to have information provided in formats that they find friendly, in language they can read and with content that is accurate.

Initiatives

The library will improve the collections of materials supporting our newest citizens to ease their transition to life in Canada. The provision of TOEFL and literacy materials, multilingual materials in the language of the most recent immigrant groups will be emphasised..

Library staff will listen and respond to customers as unique individuals. Programs and service delivery will be flexible and adaptable. (e.g. It is possible that the web portal will provide collaboration spaces in more than 30 languages).

We will strengthen our print collections to ensure that materials are relevant to today's customers. The physical condition of the collections will be upgraded through the replacement of standard and classic works, the transfer of materials between locations, and the purchase of new materials to support current interests and curriculum needs. We will continue to remove materials that are no longer relevant to, nor used by, our customers.

THE LIBRARY WILL LISTEN TO ITS COMMUNITY

Knowing the needs of our customers is of prime importance to the Hamilton Public Library. The library system is interested in learning new methods of measuring the impact of service decisions and determining how services can be enhanced. We will use a range of methods to listen to our community and our staff, from focus groups and surveys to public meetings and the analysis of how people use this library system and other library systems.

Initiatives

Library staff will develop and use appropriate ways of consulting with our community about ways we can improve our services.

The Hamilton Public Library will conduct ongoing reviews and adjustments of services, collections, and programs to ensure that location provides an appropriate mix of service.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY # 3

CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND ENERGIZE OUR ORGANIZATION

The Hamilton Public Library will work with current and future staff members to harness energies and opportunities, to identify emerging trends, and to ensure that the library's workforce continues to acquire the training necessary to support the changing needs of those we serve. As an organization, the Hamilton Public Library commits itself to a work environment where staff are acknowledged and contributions are recognized.

HARNESSING OPPORTUNITIES, AND TRENDS

The Hamilton Public Library is committed to using the energy of its staff to improve services.

Initiatives

As an organization, we will create opportunities for staff to share ideas and insights as well as to explore trends in our profession.

We will introduce the use of electronic collaborative tools for the discussion of issues amongst staff.

We will encourage staff to upgrade their skills and knowledge whenever possible.

The Board will consider a replacement for the current staff Education Plan that expires in December, 2005.

We will pilot the use of on-line training resources.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The Library Board is committed to an organizational culture that encourages pride and the provision of quality services.

Initiatives

We will introduce a performance review process that includes an ability for managers and their staff to discuss issues and goals and also to acknowledge staff contributions.

We will work with other libraries on staff renewal issues and will ensure that we have effective recruitment and orientation plans for new staff members.

We will ensure that new staff have the opportunity to introduce new concepts and ideas to our organization and to our services.

We will ensure that all staff have an opportunity to suggest ways we can improve services, particularly methods that correspond to best practices in other library systems.

We will conduct an internal assessment of internal communication vehicles to determine the best delivery method for each type of employee, establishing guidelines for how internal communication needs can best be met.

We will strive to be as an industry leader for acknowledging staff health and wellness issues.

We will investigate RFID technology and, if it proves feasible, develop an implementation plan to use RFID as a means of improving circulation and security functions.

CURRENT CAPITAL PRIORITIES

- *A Ten Year Facilities Master Plan*
- *Implement, over the period of 2005 – 2007 of the recommendations of the Central Library Review.*
- *Hire an architect for the design of the south mountain branch, complete the design processes, and prepare tender documents for potential construction”*
- *Initiate a renovation and expansion of the Ancaster library facility.*
- *Review the possibility of partnering with the Flamborough Twin Pad committee for a potential library branch at Joe Sams Park. The review will include a report on the potential impact on other Flamborough branches as well public consultation.*
- *Recommend, to the library board, a new materials security system/plan.*

REPORT SCHEDULE