

## Strategic Plan 2018-2021

### 2021 LETTER FROM THE BOARD

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 has brought a level of disruption to our community that is without precedent. Since the beginning of the pandemic Library staff and the Library Board have been focused on ensuring HPL keeps staff and Library members safe while ensuring we play a positive role in helping Hamilton respond. We are proud of the leadership and innovation that HPL has demonstrated during the crisis. We extend our deep appreciation to Library staff for your resilience during the pandemic. We encourage you to continue to respond effectively to changing circumstances and to work closely with the Library Board to ensure we use the coming year to lay the foundation for a future where HPL's relevance and impact are assured for years to come.

HPL has adapted well to the challenges of the pandemic. We encourage staff to utilize the new resources and technology that are now available to build and refine services and programs. We congratulate staff for a year of tremendous growth in usage of digital content. We encourage you to continue to monitor usage to ensure we are getting value and look for ways to improve member's experiences with these resources. The pandemic will have likely changed some usage patterns that will be lasting in nature. Staff should be proactively looking for these trends and shifting collections budgets allocations where appropriate.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a public health and economic crisis that will require HPL to work in partnership with other allied groups and organizations to ensure the recovery creates a more inclusive and sustainable prosperity. A recent report from the *Canadian Urban Institute (CUI)*<sup>i</sup> 200 days into the pandemic identified several core challenges facing Canadian cities.

These include:

- First, our main streets, local economies and downtowns are severely threatened.
- Second, systemic urban inequality is continuing to deepen.
- Third, the finance and governance arrangements for local governments are broken.

Helping people and the community get through the pandemic will be a critical focus of the coming year. As we get closer to the final stages of the pandemic, HPL will be shifting its focus to supporting the recovery. Challenges to learning, digital access and social isolation are some of the core community challenges that HPL has an important role to play in addressing.

HPL has a long history of successful partnerships. That experience should be utilized to build new strategic partnerships to ensure our programs and services complement the efforts of other trusted partners. We commend staff for the progress they have made with the **Hamilton Red Book**<sup>ii</sup>. HPL has taken on this commitment because we want to ensure there is a comprehensive and up-to-date source of information about services and supports available to residents of Hamilton. Connecting people with resources and supports is a core role of a public library. Actively embracing that role will be important as residents experience challenges during the pandemic and post pandemic recovery period. We also look forward to working with staff to

advance important partnerships advancing reconciliation with Indigenous communities and bringing access to cultural and learning experiences for all Hamiltonians.

The generous and consistent support from the City of Hamilton enables us to realize our mission. We appreciate that support and are mindful that the City of Hamilton, like other municipalities, is facing serious burdens that will strain its ability to provide enough funding. We encourage HPL to continue to work with the broader library community to advocate for increased permanent funding from higher levels of government to offset the burden on local tax payers. The Board will also continue our ongoing practice of working with staff to ensure that the funding we receive is diligently managed and leads to services and programs that have the maximum positive impact on our members.

As HPL strives toward increasing its positive impact we encourage staff to work with each other and management on applying past successful strategies to new opportunities and challenges. This includes continually working towards measuring the value of work and basing service decisions on research and collective impact. It means meeting new priorities by shifting current resources and using technology and process changes to improve how the work is done. It also includes working with academic partners committed to helping us better understand what factors lead to meaningful impacts. We look forward to learning more about the research that HPL is involved with in advancing youth literacy, digital literacy and helping seniors stay socially engaged and healthy. We encourage HPL to continue to support innovative programs like City Labs.

2021 promises to be an exciting year for facility renewal. We look forward to the completion of the Greensville and Parkdale branches in Q1. That will be followed by the Carlisle TD Bank renovation and by the new Valley Park branch later in the year. We also look forward to receiving the Mount Hope feasibility study and finding a path forward for that location.

The Board is proud that HPL is an internationally recognized innovative leader in public library service. We are proud of the work staff have done during current challenges. We encourage you to continue to work together and to support each other. Please continue to follow public health guidance to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread and keep everyone safe, as you also provide as much assistance and service to community members as you safely can. Remember, the work we do during the pandemic will impact our post-pandemic relevance and support.

---

<sup>i</sup> <https://canurb.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-Signpost-200-Sept-28-2020.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://redbook.hpl.ca/redbook>