



Date: June 16, 2021
To: Chair and Members of the Library Board
From: Paul Takala, Chief Librarian/CEO
Subject: **Midyear Progress Report on 2021 Goals**

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INTRODUCTION

In December 2020 the Library Board approved our [Multi-Year Business Plan & Goals for 2021](#). As part of the annual goal setting process, staff prepare a mid-year progress report to provide an update to the Board on our progress. The first part of this report summarizes progress made in each area identified in the plan. At the end of the report are several appendices that were included in the plan and provide context for HPL’s approach.

MID-YEAR UPDATE ON 2021 GOAL

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN – TO SUPPORT THE RECOVERY

In 2018 the Library Board adopted its current [Strategic Plan](#). That plan was built on the success of previous plans. During the pandemic, HPL has had to rapidly adapt its service model to current circumstances. In 2021 we will commence the development of our next plan, which will focus on increasing HPL’s relevance and positive impact in the years ahead

In March 2021 the Library Board approved the [Strategic Plan Timelines and Process](#). That report advised us that because we are still in a pandemic, we would need to be flexible in terms of timelines. We can begin to work on the plan but responding to the pandemic needs to be given a higher priority. So far in 2021 we have been under high levels of restrictions. As restrictions get relaxed and we have staff return to HPL we will be in a better position to advance the plan. Staff will report back to the Library Board in the fall with updated timelines.

RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Since March 2020, HPL focused its organizational assets to position the Library as a constructive force during the public health emergency by helping individuals and the community get through this crisis successfully. As HPL focuses on our emergency response we are laying the foundation for our organization’s role in the post-COVID recovery period. ... In 2021 we will build on this solid foundation to provide as much support as we can to the community, provided we can do it safely, being mindful of available resources.

In addition to providing essential library service to members including computer access, access to physical and digital collections, HPL staff have been making a significant contribution to the City’s vaccination program. We had 63 staff seconded to Public Health starting in March. At the May

Board meeting the Board approved a plan for a partial return of staff in early July. We will continue to consult with the Library Board as we move to restore Library service.

OPERATING BUDGET

We will continue to ensure operating funds are used effectively to maximize our impact and relevance to the community. We will work within the 2021 operating budget while we plan for the 2022-2024 budgets that meet the City of Hamilton's budget targets as closely as possible. As we continue to strive to expand our impact by using existing resources, we will identify cost effective, high-impact programs for City Council to consider. While we have restrictions in place, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, HPL will use the gapping of vacant library positions and other cost saving measures to ensure we play our part in helping the City of Hamilton overcome fiscal challenges facing all levels of government during the pandemic.

2021 Operating Budget was submitted and approved at 1.5%, below Council direction. We expect another larger than normal surplus in 2021 (est. \$3.8m) as pandemic service restrictions continue and staff secondments to help with the vaccine distribution continue – both of which are resulting in lower than usual staffing-related expenses.

REVENUE DIVERSIFICATION

We will continue providing the Board with an annual report that highlights alternative sources of funding we received in the previous year. This will include fees, donations and special grant funding. We will continue to focus on ways we can supplement our funding consistent with our vision and values as an organization. In the medium-term HPL will be focused on contributing to the economic recovery of residents and the City and helping create a more inclusive prosperity. We will work with the broader Canadian library community and allies to advocate for a fairer and more sustainable funding system in Canada and Ontario for municipalities like the City of Hamilton.

METRICS AND BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

HPL's robust metrics reporting system continues to inform the Library's decision making. In 2020 as HPL began its phased reopening, it shifted to a weekly dashboard from a monthly. This has helped HPL management confirm effective resource deployment and is looking at patterns of usage on a frequent basis. As 2021 unfolds the weekly dashboard has been monitored closely.

In 2020 HPL rapidly shifted to a cloud-based customer support system called FreshDesk to provide support for AskHPL. With new visibility, AskHPL Information Services allowed us to better understand, plan and improve the service. In 2021/22 we will be building on FreshDesk by implementing a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System to better manage our partnerships and program development effectively.

FACILITY RENEWAL

In early 2019 the 5th version of the *Facilities Master Plan*ⁱ was approved by the Library Board. HPL has made great progress at bringing all facilities up to current library and accessibility standards. We will continue to incorporate future capital maintenance costs into our Facilities Master Plan and long-term planning.

Carlisle - We appreciate the generous donation of the TD Bank building in Carlisle. In 2020 a capital budget was approved by the Board and designs for the renovation have now been completed. Pre-qualification screening of prospective bidders screening has been completed and the work is currently out for tender with a closing time of later this June. Construction is now

expected to commence late summer for completion in Spring/Summer 2022. An expected opening of the new location is mid-2022. Some additions to project scope have been included in the final design including a new roof and enhanced landscaping. Pre-qualification of bidders process took longer than expected due to the high level of interest from bidders.

Greenville - Construction is complete and we are now in the fit-up period getting the branch ready for operations later this summer or early fall. That includes fitting up the branch for the Rural Extended Access model which will be in use at the branch once pandemic circumstances allow. Furniture has been installed and shelving installation is in progress. We are also working on a relocation plan to move out of our existing Greenville branch.

Mount Hope - In September 2019 the Library Board approved use of \$75,000 from Library Reserves to undertake a feasibility study for a new or renovated branch that would address accessibility issues and provide for long-term sustainability at that location. The original plan to undertake the feasibility study in conjunction with the City may need to be revised as City plans for the site may change. We will most likely be proceeding with our own stand-alone feasibility study for a new, replacement, or renovated branch on the same site as the existing Mount Hope location.

Parkdale - Construction is now complete and we have use of the space. Branch fit-up is nearly complete with expected opening to the public this summer as pandemic restrictions allow. The partnership with Indwell enables HPL to offer service in the Parkdale neighbourhood while avoiding a large capital cost. In 2020, capital budget funding of \$250,000 was approved and 50% of the operating budget enhancement was also approved (\$145,000) with the remaining 50% (\$144,000) identified as an operating budget enhancement in 2021.

Valley Park - We are projecting substantial construction completion in October 2021 with a fit up period to follow that with a projected opening to the public in Q1 2022. Call for artists is currently open for public art that will be installed on Marsden side of the new Community Rooms. This major project includes a new 11,500 sq. ft. library and renovations to City Recreation space. In the interim, we are operating out of a nearby temporary location at 1050 Paramount Dr while construction takes place. Construction is expected to last well into 2021 and we may be in a position to move in late in the year provided we stay on track. We would like to thank the Heritage Green Community Trust for their generous contribution of \$1.25 million to the project that has allowed us to incorporate two (2) 1,500 sq. ft. community rooms that can be combined together into one large space.

LIBRARY SERVICE HOURS

START OF 2021 SERVICE HOURS

Location	M	T	W	T	F	S
Group 1						
Central Red Hill						
Barton Sherwood	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am –
Concession Terryberry	– 9 pm	– 9 pm	– 9 pm	– 9 pm	– 6 pm	5 pm
Dundas Turner Park						
Kenilworth Waterdown						
Group 2	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am	10 am –
	– 6 pm	– 6 pm	– 6 pm	– 6 pm	– 6 pm	5 pm

Ancaster Binbrook Locke Saltfleet	Stoney Creek Valley Park Westdale						
Group 3							
Bookmobile Carlisle Freelton	Greenville Lynden Mount Hope	-	10 am – 6 pm	10 am – 6 pm	10 am – 6 pm	10 am – 6 pm	10 am – 5 pm

MID-YEAR UPDATE ON LIBRARY SERVICES HOURS

Location	T	W	T	F	S
Hours March to June All Locations	1pm – 6pm	1pm – 6pm	1pm – 6pm	1pm – 6pm	1pm – 5pm
New Base Hours Starting July 6, 2021	10am – 6pm	10am – 6 pm	10am – 6pm	10am– 6 pm	10am – 5pm

The decision to support Public Health by facilitating 63 staff to be seconded to support the vaccination effort lead to a decrease in service hours from the March to June period. That decision was followed by a provincial stay-at-home-order that limited our ability to provide service. Building back our service hours in the second half of the year will be addressed through our regular reports on our COVID-19 response plan. We will work closely with the Board to ensure we provide as much service as we safely can.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO QUALITY LIBRARY COLLECTIONS, RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS

Community Collections via Extension Services - Working with Detention Center staff and our print vendor Whitehots the library has arranged a new paperback library collection at Barton Detention Center. The collection includes both new and popular fiction and nonfiction collections.

Borrow by Mail - The library is working on a pilot for senior members to be able to access holds through the postal service. Over 500 Members received mail outs promoting the service. Over 160 checkouts are a direct result of the new borrow by mail program.

eContent Updates - Over 3000 magazines are now available for library members online and via the OverDrive Libby App. Unlimited magazine loans are available as they do not count as part of the 20 ebook/eaudio loans on OverDrive. Digital loans from any HPL platform are in addition to the 50 physical loan limit of materials accessed at locations. Magazines are loaded on average 2-3 weeks prior to their shelf date.

Internet Archives: Open Library - Working with the Internet Archives (IA) the library has launched its Open Library collection. Future projects include providing access to a low vision collection and growing our archival content on IA. HPL has donated approximately 650 books, on British and American theatre of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, to the Internet Archive for digitization, preservation and controlled digital lending via the Open Library. The collection contains histories of theatrical development, histories of particular types of theatre such as vaudeville and burlesque, play-scripts from the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, theatre criticism, and biographies of

thesians and others connected with the stage, and books on the technical aspects of theatrical production.

Local History and Archives (LHA) - In preparation for the move of the CHCH studios from downtown Hamilton to its new home in Flamborough, HPL has acquired additional historical broadcast tapes. The addition of this material to the existing CHCH archive in LH&A ensures that the materials are preserved and accessible for years to come. HPL continues to work in collaboration with CHCH to digitize historical local news and sports footage, making it available to HPL customers at no charge for research, private study and education.

Learning at HPL - To help educators and parents HPL has launched a Learning at Home page bringing together online resources in one spot. Resources include [monthly literacy caledars](#) and [SRC literacy booklets](#).

Discover at Home - We provide offline options for learners of all ages and educators to use in the classroom and at home. Resources like activities, practice tests and flashcards are highlighted virtually in class visits and online on school holidays.

Reading Programs - The library continued to celebrate readers, reading and writing this year in many ways. We continue to host a Writer-In-Residence in partnership with McMaster and celebrate writers with the Power of the Pen and Short Works Prizes. Annual reading program celebrations virtually will include Summer Reading Club, Hamilton Reads and Telling Tales festivals. We are planning a breadth of poetry and reading programs for this summer and Fall.

Digital Literacy - Navigating the digital landscape is even more important as people's lives moved online during the pandemic. The library has launched several technology certificates and learning opportunities including: Cisco Learning Academy, TEDx and coding workshops which will continue to develop into 2021.

Google IT Support Certificate Scholarship - Working with Google, HPL provides free continuing education opportunities to 100 Hamiltonians, over two years, to obtain an IT support certificate to prepare them for an entry level technology career. Talks are underway with Google about the potential of continuing to offer the program in 2021.

Computers for Success Canada - Eight minority targeting internship positions were made possible through a Government of Canada grant managed by Computers for Success Canada. The internship will provide youth graduates of the Google IT support certificate the opportunity to apply their acquired experience.

City School by Mohawk - HPL continues to grow its partnership with Mohawk College to offer a wider selection of free college credit programs. City School was delivering programs at Hamilton Central Library and Red Hill Branch but has moved to virtual programming in 2020. For 2021, the library and City School will continue to provide other wrap around services to students such as device and internet access, in-person help with technology and basic technology training to assist students making a smooth transition to online learning. HPL is also participating on the Stewardship Committee for City School Challenge 2025 initiative. The initiative is building demand-driven workforce development in Hamilton. It aims to bridge the gap between employers' needs and people's education to support access to meaningful employment, reduce poverty, and enhance opportunity. The committee champions the initiative to build momentum and advance collective priorities as well as recruiting people and ideas for insights and collaboration.

Red Book- AIRS Resource Database Innovation Award - In May Red Book won the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) Resource Database Innovation Award. This award is in recognition for our newly redesigned Red Book Community Information website <https://redbook.hpl.ca/>. Red Book is filled with social service and organizational contacts for Hamilton residents and professionals.

Researcher in Residence - Kaitlin Wynia Baluk joined HPL as a Researcher-in-Residence. This position is a joint initiative between HPL and McMaster University that is rooted in the idea that public libraries and universities have much to gain in partnering. Kaitlin has recently received her PhD in Health and Society from McMaster's Faculty of Social Science. Over the course of the next year, Kaitlin will be seeking to both understand the research questions and needs of public libraries, how universities can help answer these questions and address these needs, and likewise, to help facilitate partnerships with McMaster.

George Geczy- Order of Hamilton Award - George Geczy received the Order of Hamilton Award as recognition for his contribution to the Hamilton Public Library. George was board member for 18 years from 2001-2019. An [article](#) in the Bay Observer highlighted George and his wonderful work.

Kathryn Deiter- Kim Brooks Memorial Lifelong Learning Award - Kathryn Deiter received the Kim Brooks Memorial Lifelong Learning Award at the Leaders in Literacy Awards for her consistent advocacy for lifelong learning, both within her former role at Hamilton Public Library (HPL) and as a part of her larger community. At HPL, she founded the Learning Institute, a portal for HPL staff that includes a plethora of learning opportunities related to working in our organization.

Indwell and Parkdale - HPL joined a virtual ribbon cutting for the new Indwell project where our Parkdale Branch is located on May 6th. HPL staff added approximately 2000 adult and 850 children's items to the freshly installed shelves at Parkdale. Over half the materials for Parkdale are new items.

New York Times Ads- Partnership with Kitchener Public Library - HPL partnered with the Kitchener Public Library on a series of ads in the New York Times. Ads for eBooks, eAudio Books, Learning, Newspapers & Magazines, and Movies ran weekly from April 3, 2021 to May 1, 2021.

Reciprocal Borrow Agreements - We are excited to have Burlington, Mississauga, Ottawa, and London Public Libraries join our Reciprocal Lending Agreement through Overdrive. HPL Members have enjoyed additional access to eBooks and eAudio from our partner libraries and have checked out close to 40,000 titles in the last 12 months.

EXPANDING OUR REACH AND REDUCING BARRIERS

Virtual Branch - HPL's virtual branch continues to be updated with new content daily. Members have access to newspapers and magazines from around the world in various languages. Movies, eBook and eAudio content as well as research databases to support learning and pleasure reading, watching and listening for all ages. Content is accessible both online and for download. The virtual branch now also offers a chat service for members during the library's open hours. Members can connect directly with a team member who can help access the services, collections, provide research support and with community connections.

Fine Free - The library transitioned from a fines and fees model to a pay it forward model for youth and adults in April. The library will continue to explore ways to continue to remove barriers for members to access services and collections at the library.

Library Membership Growth - Staff will continue to look for ways to ensure that we are able to increase the number of residents that benefit from our services. Currently we have over 152,000 active customers (people who have a library card and have used the library in the last 2 years). That represents 26.3% of the City's population. Our goal is to reach 35% by 2025. One area of emphasis is ensuring students have active cards and are using HPL to advance their studies.

Lending Devices and Data - Access to the internet and basic technology represents a challenge to a lot of people and families especially as more services and learning moves online. Working with partners such as City School by Mohawk, Boys and Girls Club and other local organizations, the library will ensure that these devices and services reach the most people in need. Initially, HPL acquired 30 iPads with data plans and is making them available to members to borrow for 28 days through partners or branch recommendations. Eight devices have already been checked out to students to enable them to virtually participate in Mohawk City School online courses. Remaining devices are available for loan to members who would be identified by branches to benefit from such a service or accommodation. HPL acquired 70 additional iPads in May. The iPads will be available for loan to any members as part of HPL collections for a short-term loan that can be renewed up to three times. The addition of this service is intended to assist individuals who need internet access for longer than the limited times available at the branch to assist in reducing barriers to access to technology.

Wi-Fi Improvements - HPL is reviewing existing HPL Wi-Fi coverage and quality of the service to improve the service and add new features like push notification, new items arrival, hold item notification, COVID 6 feet distancing alert, etc. The library is undertaking a few pilot initiatives to test numerous Wi-Fi solutions to improve free internet access and provide quality Wi-Fi service to Hamilton residents in and around HPL branches. The library is also working in collaboration with the City of Hamilton's Chief Digital Officer to investigate solar-powered cellular solutions to increase the external Wi-Fi coverage range while exploring broader opportunities for connectivity. In May HPL was successful in obtaining a \$100,000 grant from the Healthy Communities Grant Fund to cover a significant portion of the outdoor WiFi device purchase and installation.

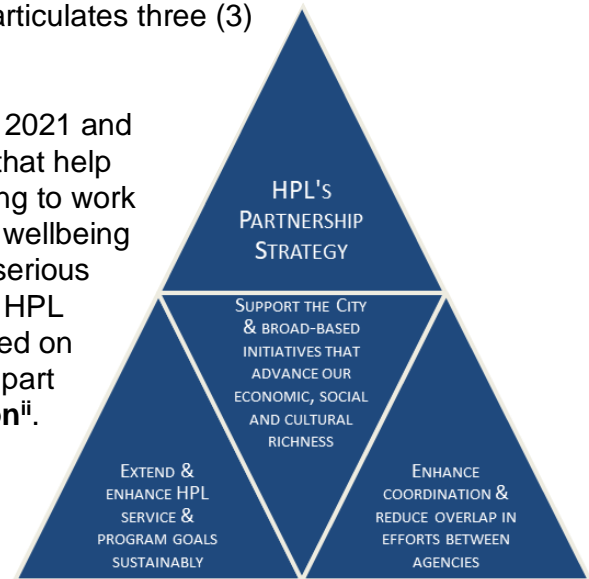
Public Computers - The library is upgrading all public computers, including monitors, privacy screens and updated Windows 10 and office software. With half the public computer inventory in use due to physical distancing, it provides an opportunity for the library to stagger the replacement over a few years starting with 250 new devices in 2020 and 2021 and the rest of the 400+ devices in 2022.

ADVANCING COMMUNITY PRIORITIES THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

The Hamilton Public Library Working with Us Policy articulates three (3) core reasons we engage in partnerships.

HPL has a long history of successful partnerships. In 2021 and beyond we will be looking to engage in partnerships that help people get through these difficult times. We are looking to work with others to support educational success, personal wellbeing and economic prosperity. With such great need and serious financial challenges facing governments at all levels, HPL wants to work with other organizations that are focused on working together to make meaningful impacts. A key part of our strategy is our work on the **Red Book Hamilton**ⁱⁱ.

The site includes comprehensive and up-to-date governmental and non-governmental information about services and supports available to Hamilton residents. To further the impact of this work, HPL is making the data in the Red Book available for free to support things like: Specialized resource lists for target groups, providing the underlying data for the *Chalmers App*ⁱⁱⁱ to support people experiencing homelessness.



The *Our Future Hamilton (OFH)*^{iv} initiative articulated a positive long-term community vision for our City. The six (6) core themes identified in that vision resonate with HPL's vision and program. In the last several years HPL has participated in OFH events. HPL looks forward to advancing this initiative post pandemic.

ADVANCING CULTURE AND INCLUSION

Urban Indigenous Strategy - We look forward to continued work with UIS as we work towards the Calls to Action in both the UIS and Truth and Reconciliation. The library has initiated work on a 5-year work plan with UIS. As a response to Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action, HPL has continued to implement Indigenous Subject Headings in the catalogue. A next step in this initiative has been to label new Indigenous language materials being added to the collection.

Civic Museums and City Parks and Recreation - In addition to working with the Museum teams at the City on the Library Card partnership, the library is partnering with Hamilton Civic Museums and Hamilton Parks on an Augmented Reality (AR) program in recognition of Hamilton 175. Working with community member Wayne MacPhail, the partners will launch this initiative early summer through September 2021. The project offers an introduction to what's possible. Through AR technology users will experience a virtual tour of a historical place that they might otherwise not have the opportunity to experience. AR technology allows users to use digital devices to experience a layered, computer-generated enhancement to their real-world perception. It blends digital components into the real world as a user becomes immersed in a new view of reality. The project is designed to engage the community through urban exploration, historical research, and celebrate the City's 175-year anniversary by using AR technology to bring past buildings and artifacts to life in the present day. This will launch HPL's AR program and the next level of community engagement. The library also continues to work with a group of citizens who support the city as they plan for the future of the City's Culture and Tourism Division regarding a City of Hamilton Museum as directed by City Council.

CityLAB - HPL is collaborating with Hamilton-area post-secondary faculty and students on a CityLAB initiative to consider how to engage members who choose or do not have access to programs online.

McMaster University and McMaster Library - HPL partners with McMaster in multiple ways, including in the annual Writer in Residence and recently added Researcher in Residence. HPL is a key partner in two national research initiatives led by McMaster Researchers, one explores the effectiveness of digital literacy programs and services in the public library and the other is exploring strategies to keep seniors socially engaged and developing.

Community Research Platform - In collaboration with the Faculty of Social Sciences at McMaster University, HPL is developing a conceptual community research platform to support current and future Community-Based Participatory Research initiatives. The platform will formalize the partnership and support these initiatives, providing McMaster faculty and researchers with access to the community via the Library; in turn, the Library benefits from the scholarship to inform decision-making about our programs and services and to contribute to demonstrating the Library’s social impact.

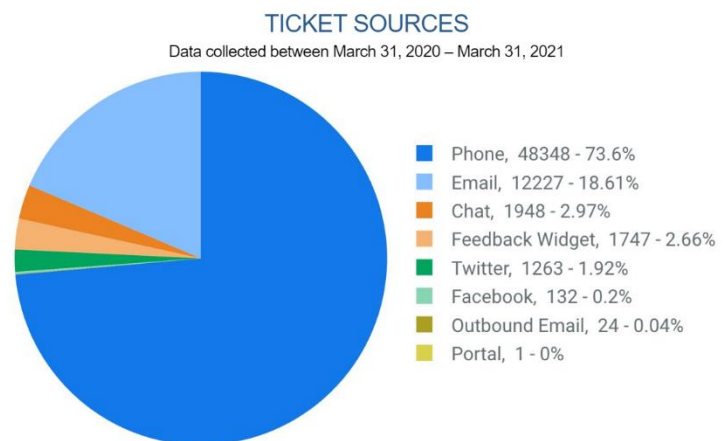
Junior Librarian in Residence - We welcomed our new (first!) Junior Librarian in Residence, Ainara, a local Grade 6 student and book enthusiast with a passion for promoting stories by BIPOC authors and featuring BIPOC characters. Her residency will run from January through December 2021, in which time she’ll be working on several activities including developing book lists, taking over HPL’s social media for a day, and co-hosting a program. We hope to have this as a recurring position for K-8 students in our community.

SETTING UP OUR STAFF FOR SUCCESS

Serving communities that are facing rapid change requires that we develop responsive staff training. Our committed staff will be equipped to meet this challenge because we will continue into 2021 to create adaptable training to meet theirs and the community’s needs.

HPL’s management and staff have been continuing the work on our internal staff development programs and added several to address specific pandemic challenges:

- Roll-out of MS Teams for collaborative and remote work, and supporting online programs.
- Adoption of FreshDesk and FreshCaller for AskHPL Information Services. Over 160 Staff have been trained and use FreshDesk or FreshCaller to answer over 65,000 tickets to date.



As we continue to respond to meet the needs of the “new normal” our staff development will have to respond. HPL will continue to employ new technology and process improvements to meet community needs and increase our internal capacity without expanding our overall staffing complement.

Gender Identity and Expression Protocol Training City of Hamilton - We are hoping to have half of the system trained by the end of 2021 (excluding library pages who will be participating in a modified version of this training in 2022).

Workplace Mental Health Leadership Certificate - HPL is certifying managers and coordinators with the goal to have all staff at those job levels certified by the end of 2022.

APPENDIX I – MULTI-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN MANDATE AND PURPOSE STATEMENTS

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Hamilton Public Library (HPL) provides public library service to the residents of Hamilton. Our mission statement “*Freedom to Discover*” expresses our goal as an organization creating places and services where everyone is welcome regardless of background. In the execution of our mission the Library Board has adopted the following core values to shape both how we conduct our business and what services we provide:

- **Intellectual Freedom** – Provide equitable access to and support for knowledge and creativity.
- **Inclusiveness** – Support inclusion by creating trusted services and spaces that welcome everyone.
- **Innovation** – Anticipate and respond to changing needs and technology.
- **Respect** – Support the value and dignity of all individuals.
- **Accountability** – Ensure that library services remain relevant and vital and that resources are managed effectively and ethically.

OUTCOME/MANDATE(S)

In February 2018 the Library Board adopted three strategic priorities that provides direction for the period 2018-2021. Those priorities are:

- **A Community Beacon** - The Hamilton Public Library will be a source of pride in the community. The library system will act as a unifying force by welcoming everyone. Our physical and digital spaces will be inviting and accommodating. We will be a leader in fostering community engagement and participation.
- **Relevant and Responsive** - The Hamilton Public Library will continue to advance core library values as we embrace our evolving role in supporting access and literacy. We will support people in their lifelong learning journey by helping them thrive today as they prepare for tomorrow. We will maintain strong physical collections as we grow digital services. We will be a national library leader, working collaboratively to create policies and agreements that ensure access to intellectual property in all formats.
- **A Learning and Innovative Organization** - The Hamilton Public Library will continuously seek new ways to assist the learning and growth of all individuals. The library will support staff to be engaged in their roles and in the library profession. We will provide staff with opportunities to continually enhance their skills and develop new competencies, so they can meet changing technology and information needs. We will focus on ensuring we reduce barriers to using our services as we promote awareness of the Library in the communities we serve.

As we strive toward increasing our positive impact, the Library Board expects that we will continually work towards measuring our value and basing service decisions on evidence and collective impact. We will meet new priorities by shifting current resources and using technology

and process changes to improve how we do our work. The Board is proud that HPL is an internationally recognized innovative leader. HPL will continue to adopt new technologies and seek out new services and partnerships to more effectively serve our communities.

Although the way public library service is delivered continues to evolve, the core values and mission of the public library remains highly relevant. Nurturing the love of reading, advancing literacy, preserving the past, supporting lifelong learning, reducing social isolation, advancing intellectual freedom, providing equitable access to information, ideas and technology remain core to the mission of the public library.

APPENDIX II – RESPONDING TO COVID-19 AND HPL REOPENING PRINCIPLES

The onset of the public health emergency in March 2020 has resulted in an organization wide effort to ensure that HPL responds effectively to support residents and public health. In the first weeks of the pandemic, staff worked with the Library Board to identify **Working Assumptions for the Rest of 2020**. Those assumptions were first reviewed by the Library Board at the April 15, 2020 meeting^v.

CURRENT WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

In the first weeks of the pandemic, HPL staff and the Library Board developed a number of working assumptions for 2020, to inform our decision making and to communicate to staff and residents how HPL would operate during the pandemic.

1. 1ST PRIORITY SUPPORTING THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

HPL's highest priority during the emergency needs to be supporting the City's and Public Health's response, assisting with relief efforts and preparing to assist with the recovery.

2. SOLIDARITY WITH THE CITY OF HAMILTON

We will follow direction and advice from Public Health and ensure our decisions align with the City of Hamilton's. Doing otherwise would cause confusion and would not support public safety.

3. PANDEMIC WILL NOT BE A BRIEF DISRUPTION, PHASED REOPENING

When we can reopen will depend on how effective mitigation efforts are, the amount of testing that happens and the state of the pandemic in Hamilton and other places. The likely timeline we will be following is a carefully phased reopening from June to September 2020, with enhanced restrictions in place well into 2021. The Ontario Government has released a *Framework for Reopening our Province*^{vi}. The restart of the economy will be gradual, the restart phases will be accessed every two (2) to four weeks (4). After each phase, depending on progress being made, we need to be prepared for a continuation of the existing measures, further relaxing of restrictions, or step back to more restrictions. HPL will follow a similar approach, aligned with steps taken by the City of Hamilton.

4. NEW MEASURES IN PLACE FOR REOPENING

When we do reopen, we will need to have in place physical distancing and enhanced cleaning and other measures to ensure we minimize the risk that our spaces become a vector of virus spread. These measures will need to remain in place until well in 2021. Some measures, such as enhanced cleaning, will likely be beneficial to continue after the pandemic threat has passed. With

a limited ability to do in person programming we will need to re-direct some staffing resources.

5. RAPID SHIFT TO ONLINE

After supporting the response to COVID-19, HPL needs to focus on enhancing online services, support and staff development.

6. TAKING CARE OF STAFF AND PROACTIVELY HELPING THE COMMUNITY

Our intention is to minimize staff layoffs during the emergency. We are focused on keeping staff working productively so we can maintain our dedicated staff and ensure as an organization we can stay focused on being a positive force in the emergency response and the recovery. Depending on the duration and other changing circumstances HPL will adjust as needed. We will continue to work closely with the City of Hamilton and CUPE 932 to ensure we minimize negative personal and organizational effects of laying off staff.

7. PIVOTING TO A NEW NORMAL

HPL needs to look at the COVID-19 crisis as a turning point^{vii}. As an organization, our ability to adapt to changes brought on by the pandemic will be critical to maintaining our support after the public health emergency passes. HPL will need to work with the City and other partners to support the economic recovery process.

HPL REOPENS - PRINCIPLES

During the spring the Library Board approved HPL's phased reopening plan that was closely shaped after the City of Hamilton's plan but carefully adapted to apply to HPL's context . The framework is guided by the following principles:

1. PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The health of residents and HPL staff continues to be our highest priority. We will provide opportunities to maintain safe physical distance from others and follow good public health and occupational safety practices when reopening Library facilities and restarting programs and services.

2. UNIVERSAL DESIGN AND FOCUS ON THE VULNERABLE SECTOR

The principles of *Universal Design*^{viii} will inform our approach to ensure our services are provided as barrier free as possible. We will prioritize providing access to technology and learning supports to those most in need.

3. MAINTENANCE OF HPL FACILITIES AND ASSETS

We will consider which facilities and assets require maintenance or other actions to support Library business and operations.

4. COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

We will prioritize the services most valued and needed by the community. We will work with trusted partners to ensure our services complement their efforts. We will strive to provide informed referrals to those seeking information or assistance.

5. ECONOMIC RECOVERY

We will prioritize Library services and activities that contribute to the economic recovery of the City and the community. We will focus on supporting small businesses, job seekers and community members seeking information about supports and services available for them to help with their

recovery. We will provide free online learning opportunities and supports (including technical support) to advance educational and skills advancement.

6. HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND PRODUCTIVITY

We will consider the health, well-being and productivity of employees when determining the most suitable location for them to do their best work. Through all reopening stages, staff will work remotely to support Hamilton residents. We will use specialized teams to maximize productivity and minimize staff exposure to other HPL staff members as we rapidly adapt our service model in response to COVID-19.

7. LEGAL OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

We will consider whether a municipal service or activity supports a legal or regulatory obligation of HPL or the City.

8. RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

We will consider the availability of resources such as staff, physical and financial resources, Personal Protective Equipment and more when making decisions. We assume a tight funding environment for 2020 and 2021 and beyond. Except for non-levy funding, any emergency expenditures we incur in response to COVID-19 will need to be self-funded by savings we accrue through service restrictions. Any loss in fee revenue will need to be offset by cost savings.

ⁱ <https://www.hpl.ca/sites/default/files/19-01-FMP.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://redbook.hpl.ca/redbook>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/chalmers-1.5734230>

^{iv} <https://www.hamilton.ca/city-initiatives/priority-projects/our-future-hamilton-community-vision>

^v

<https://hpl.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/MeetingView.aspx?MeetingID=84&MinutesMeetingID=109&doctype=Agenda>

^{vi} <https://files.ontario.ca/mof-framework-for-reopening-our-province-en-2020-04-27.pdf>

^{vii} <https://blog.hypeinnovation.com/how-crisis-driven-innovation-can-help-your-organization>

^{viii} Universal Design - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_design