



Date: November 23, 2022
To: Chair and Members of the Library Board
From: Paul Takala, Chief Librarian/CEO
Tony Del Monaco, Director of Finance & Facilities
Subject: **Hamilton Public Library 2023 Multiyear Business Plan**

Purpose Statement	2
Outcome/Mandates(s).....	2
Our Future Hamilton and the City Strategic Plan	3
Long-Term Trends	4
Initiatives in 2023	4
Supporting Hamilton’s EDAP	4
Supporting Public Health	5
New Strategic Plan	5
Operating Budget & Sound Fiscal Management	6
Metrics and Business Intelligence.....	6
Library Service Hours – Expanding Access	6
Facility Excellence	8
Library Collections	9
Supporting Students and Lifelong Learning	10
Digital Access and Inclusion	10
Extending our Reach	11
Partnerships and Community Building	12
Inclusion, Culture and History	13
Setting our Staff for Success	14
Major Initiatives for 2024 to 2026	16

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.

CORE ACTIVITIES BUILT AROUND OUR VALUES



- Intellectual Freedom is rooted in Human Rights
- HPL'S Mission – *Freedom to Discover*
- Libraries have not changed our purpose, but we have adapted to changing needs

OECD'S PROGRAM FOR THE INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF ADULT COMPETENCIES (PIAAC)

1. LITERACY
2. NUMERACY
3. PROBLEM SOLVING IN A TECH RICH ENVIRONMENT

OUTCOME/MANDATES(S)

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

1. **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.
2. **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.

3. 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 the library’s 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 serve our communities more effectively.

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.

OUR FUTURE HAMILTON AND THE CITY STRATEGIC PLAN

As the Hamilton Public Library continues to provide and develop Library services responsive to community needs, we look to ensure our work aligns with the City’s vision and priorities. In particular, the six (6) core themes identified by the positive long-term vision articulated in the Our Future Hamilton (OFH) community vision help inform our actions. We work to model participation in OFH, advance the priorities in our own work as we also promote awareness of them. Also, while our mission and values are necessarily focused on our role as a public library, the City’s Strategic Plan, and the City’s Cultural Pillarsⁱ align very well with our work. As the City adopts



new strategies and initiatives, HPL will review and adapt for our context to ensure we maintain alignment with those broader goals.

LONG-TERM TRENDS

In March 2022, the Library Board updated their long-term planning assumptions. Those assumptions that help inform our business plan are included in the document *Meeting Community and Resident Needs - 2022*ⁱⁱ. The trends are listed below, explanatory text and further context are captured in the document itself.

1. Disruptive Change & Resilience

With more disruptive changes ahead, libraries will need to continue to focus on enhancing their ability to adapt. The health of our organization will be dependent upon HPL remaining relevant and vital to the lives of residents and to the communities we work with.

2. Role of Public Library and the Importance of Partnerships

Public libraries are uniquely positioned to contribute to the **health, education, prosperity, and social cohesion** of the communities we serve. To accomplish this, HPL will need to work in partnership with others to coordinate efforts to achieve positive change that address structural obstacles that prevent people from realizing their full potential.

3. Funding Constraints

There will be significant competition for funding. Operating budgets will continue to be constrained and accessing sufficient capital funding to maintain all our facilities will be an ongoing challenge.

4. Increasing Importance of Digital Content

The trends toward the increasing importance of digital content and growing competition from the private sector to provide access to it will continue. The circulation of physical books will remain a core service and unique local content held and made accessible by HPL will become increasingly important.

5. Challenge of Network Security & Complex Intellectual Property Landscape

Network security, privacy and intellectual property issues will become more challenging and complex. With content we control we have an opportunity to model best practices that facilitate effective sharing that creates the maximum benefit to society.

INITIATIVES IN 2023

SUPPORTING HAMILTON'S EDAP

Hamilton Public Library looks at the COVID-19 public health crisis as a turning pointⁱⁱⁱ. As an organization, our ability to adapt to changes brought on by the pandemic were critical to maintaining our effectiveness. HPL will continue to work with the City and other partners to support the economic recovery process.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated and made more visible some of the challenges that many residents face trying to navigate life, education, and work in our community. The City of Hamilton's *2021-2025 Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP)*^{iv} identified six (6) priorities to grow our economy and help ensure we can create a more inclusive prosperity. As HPL developed our post-pandemic plan, we looked at what work we could do, consistent with our mission, mandate,

and operations to advance the EDAP priorities. The table below illustrates how HPL is taking action to advance four (4) of the priorities.

EDAP PRIORITY	HPL ACTION
Facilitating a Skilled and Adaptable Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Expanding Study Hall Access ✓ Learning Partnerships ✓ Online Learning Resources
Enhancing Digital Infrastructure and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New Service Hours Model ✓ Adding IT Service Staff to Larger Branches ✓ Continued Investments in Strong IT Infrastructure
Moving Goods and People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Free Presto Cards for Children (5 To 12) With A Library Card
Revitalizing Priority Areas and Placemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continued Facility Renewal ✓ Opening Central At 8 Am, Indigenous Market Grant for Central

SUPPORTING PUBLIC HEALTH

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 focused on its emergency response, we were laying the foundation for the organization's role in the post-COVID recovery period. In 2023, HPL will continue our strong partnership with Public Health by adapting the Library's program to play a complementary role as new challenges are faced.

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

HPL has commenced work on updating our Strategic Plan focused on increasing our relevance and positive impact. The pandemic has highlighted the obstacles and challenges many people face in our community. As HPL develops our new strategic plan we will continue to work in collaboration with other trusted partners. HPL's programs and services are particularly aligned to:

- Supporting literacy and reading skills in all age groups but especially youth
- Digital access, connectivity, and the skills to function safely and successfully online
- Supporting the integration of newcomers so they can contribute fully to our community success and prosperity
- Providing barrier free access to arts, culture, and music, with an emphasis on nurturing and recognizing local talent
- Improving the knowledge and understanding of local history and the different peoples that have made Hamilton home
- Reducing social isolation for all with a special emphasis on older adults

Understanding more fully the needs of the people we serve requires an ongoing commitment. A comprehensive community survey to be completed in Q4 of 2022 will help inform the Library Board of residents' experiences with HPL. As in 2017, the last time HPL conducted the community survey, there will be a focus on gathering feedback from residents that do not currently use Library services.

It is important we understand the barriers to access and make changes that systematically reduce them. The Library Board looks forward to completing analysis of the survey results and finalizing the plan in Q1 2023.

OPERATING BUDGET & SOUND FISCAL MANAGEMENT

We will continue to ensure operating funds are used effectively to maximize our impact and relevance to the community. We will work within our 2023 operating budget while we plan for the 2024-2026 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 the Library Board to consider. During the COVID-19 pandemic many positions were vacated and remained vacant due to service restrictions. HPL will continue to 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.

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 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 systems 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. During the pandemic, to respond to changing circumstances, HPL shifted to a weekly activity dashboard from a monthly one to better monitor capacity and impacts of changes. We also shifted to a cloud-based customer support system called FreshDesk to provide support for our online and phone channels. That system is much more effective at capturing timely metrics on volumes and types of inquiries, helping HPL better manage staff workloads.

- **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 formalizes the partnership and supports 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. This work includes a Researcher in Residence position at HPL.

LIBRARY SERVICE HOURS – EXPANDING ACCESS

Providing residents, in all parts of the City, with an accessible base of consistent service will continue to be built on in 2023. In 2022, Library service hours were expanded system wide aimed at making our open hours more consistent across the system. The revamp in hours also eliminated any closed weekdays that some branches were still operating under. In 2022 we also re-introduced Sunday service hours and after-hours Study Halls which run from regular closing time to midnight on Mondays to Thursdays.

In 2023, as we continue to fill positions and build our team, we will continue to execute our service strategy that is aimed at expanding access. We will continue to rollout Sunday service hours. Study Halls will continue to roll out to Central and the regional branches as well. Opening Central an hour earlier each weekday (8am) is also planned for 2023. Some highlights of post COVID-19 service:

- Over 300 hours a week have been added, not including the evening Study Hall hours.
- ***After Hours Study Halls** – Some residents lack quiet study space at home. To cost effectively support students, HPL keeps some locations open until midnight Monday to Thursday with the assistance of security guards. The space is open for quiet independent study. WiFi, computers, and printers are enabled for self-service use. In 2023 HPL will complete the rollout to include all Regional branches and Central, ensuring residents have access to this service in all parts of the City.
- ****Rural Extended Access** – To reduce the risk of future closures to rural branches, HPL has implemented a remote access model. This model provides residents with 66 hours of service a week. On each open day, Library staff are present during part of the day. During other times residents use their library card and PIN to enter the premises. HPL monitors the locations via video and staff are available to assist using a two-way video phone.

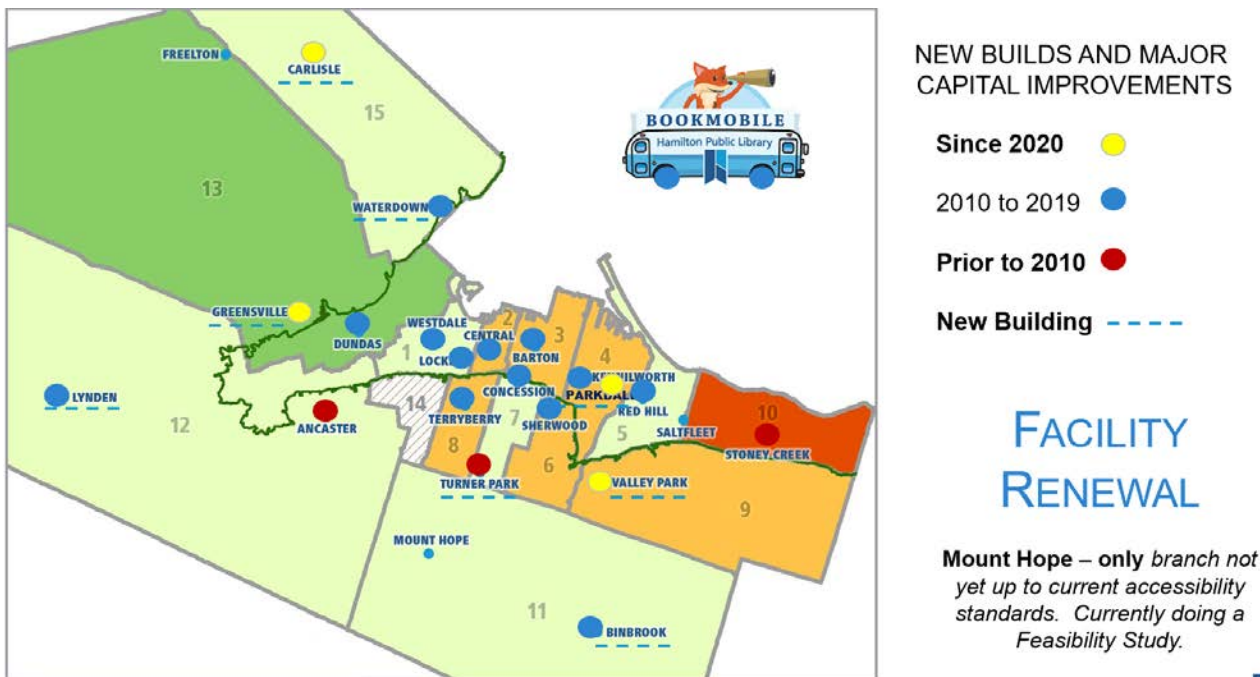
TARGET OPEN HOURS									
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Hrs/Week	2019 Hrs
Central	8-9	8-9	8-9	8-9	8-6	8-5	12-5	76	69
Regional Branches*									
Dundas	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	1-5	65	60
Red Hill	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	1-5	65	60
Terryberry	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	1-5	65	55
Turner Park	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	1-5	65	63
Waterdown	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	1-5	65	55
Valley Park	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	1-5	65	47
Community Branches									
Ancaster	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57	56
Barton	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57	43
Kenilworth	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57	43
Binbrook	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57	51
Concession	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57	43
Sherwood	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57	53
Locke	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57	35
Westdale	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57	56
Parkdale	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57	--
Saltfleet	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57	53
Stoney Creek	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57	35
Rural (Extended Access)**									
Carlisle	8-8	8-8	8-8	8-8	8-5	8-5	---	66	32
Freelton	8-8	8-8	8-8	8-8	8-5	8-5	---	66	60
Greenville	8-8	8-8	8-8	8-8	8-5	8-5	---	66	17
Lynden	8-8	8-8	8-8	8-8	8-5	8-5	---	66	60
Rural (Without Extended Access)									

Mount Hope	1-6	10-3	1-6	10-3	1-6	12-5	---	30	18
Total Hours								1387	1064

In Q3 and Q4 of 2023, HPL will review the impact of the new service hour model, in advance of the 2024 operating budget request. Things that will need to be looked at include the closing of community branches at 7 pm and the number of locations that are open on Sundays.

FACILITY EXCELLENCE

In early 2019 the 5th version of the *Facilities Master Plan*^v was approved by the Library Board. HPL has made great progress towards bringing all facilities up to current library and accessibility standard. 2022 was a remarkably busy year on the Facilities front with major projects reaching completion including the opening of the new Carlisle branch in the former TD bank building and a much-expanded Valley Park library. Below are some priority projects we'll be moving forward with in 2023. Incorporating environmental sustainability into our designs is an important aspect of facility excellence.



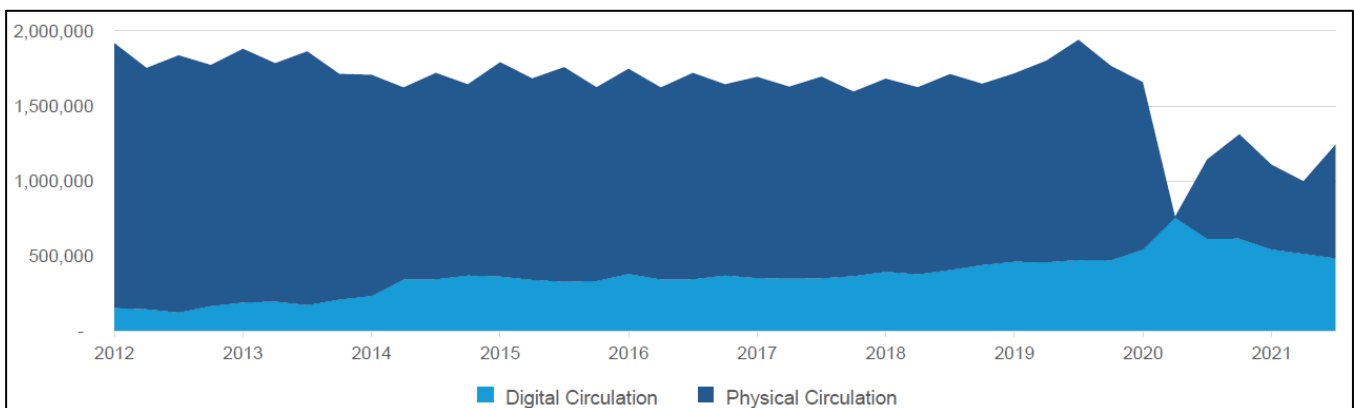
- **Mount Hope** – In 2022 we will be completing a feasibility study looking at feasible options and high-level costing for a renovated Mount Hope branch on the same site of the existing location. In 2023 we will build on this work to advance this renewal project.
- **Central Library Refresh** – The Library Board has approved funding from Library Reserves for several facility projects. At the Central Library on York Blvd., we are planning a major exterior refresh including installation of a new updated logo on the York Blvd. façade, a power wash of the exterior, as well as, investigating decorative lighting options.
- **Improving Operations** – As HPL adapts to changing technology and resident needs, we are continuing to invest in our facilities. At Waterdown, the existing computer lab will be made into a new Makerspace. At Central we are reconfiguring some of the staff space within the building to better support our current operations. Replacement of several public service info desks are planned for 2023.

- **Potential Pier 8 Project** – In 2023 we will be seeking Council support for a detailed feasibility study for a potential branch Library at the Discovery Centre. The location would provide an ideal place for a full-service branch library that could also highlight Local History & Archives exhibits and further advance Truth and Reconciliation initiatives.

LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

The Hamilton Public Library has been a leader in adapting to the shift to digital materials. We also continue to support physical collections, adapting a strategy that helps those who want to shift to digital formats while also monitoring usage to ensure our collections remain relevant to residents. We anticipate a continued shift away from formats like DVDs and CDs, while the physical book will remain a core format for the long-term. Within that shift, patterns of usage differ in parts of the City where residents have less disposable income. While many residents subscribe to personal digital streaming services, for those that do not, DVD usage remains an important entertainment option. In 2023 we will continue to adapt and scale collections that are embraced by members of the community

The following chart illustrates the overall usage of physical and digital materials by quarter since 2012. It shows the growth in digital usage mostly offsetting a modest decline in physical usage. In 2019 we saw a growth in both physical and digital until the onset of the pandemic in 2020. 2021 and 2022 have seen a rebound in usage but not yet back to pre-pandemic levels. In 2023 we are anticipating a continued growth in usage and anticipate sometime in 2023 for activity levels to reach pre-pandemic levels. It is still uncertain what quarter that will happen in.



Collections initiatives that will continue in 2023 include:

- **Borrow by Mail** - The Library is expanding this service for homebound members to be able to access holds through the postal service using the Library Materials Program^{vi} which enables books and other library materials to be mailed via Canada Post at a significant discount.
- **Canadian and Local Authors Promotion** – The launch of Local Author showcase in the summer of 2022 allows members to find over 3000 Hamilton Author titles by searching the catalogue for Hamilton Author. -. These titles are also highlighted with authors from Ontario on a Read Local List via OverDrive/Libby and the Indie Ontario Collection through Biblioboard. With the Local Author program implemented, the collection is anticipated to increase the discoverability of local authors in our community.
- **Reading Programs** - The Library continued to celebrate readers, reading, and writing this year in many ways. We continue to offer book clubs and 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 include Summer Reading Club, Hamilton Reads and Telling Tales festivals.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS AND LIFELONG LEARNING

In the rapidly changing economy and world we live in, there is a greater need than ever to support residents in their personal educational journey. From helping families grow the next generation of readers to creative aging programs keeping seniors connected through artistic expression, HPL will continue to focus on supporting all Hamiltonians with learning resources, programs, and collections. Some examples of activities we will be supporting in 2023:

- **Learning at HPL** - The Library offers 1:1 tutoring via Brainfuse in English and French, this service includes job seeker support with 1:1 resume and cover letter reviews and job and interview coaching. New learning supports and events are updated each month on the Learning at HPL page and via Online Programs.
- **Discover at Home** - We provide offline options for learners of all ages and educators to use in the classroom and at home, with activities, practice tests and flashcards available.
- **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 2022 include NorthStar Online Learning.
- **City School by Mohawk** - HPL continues to grow its partnership with Mohawk College and is looking again to offer in-person free college credit programs at HPL. HPL is also working with Mohawk College and other partners on *City School, Challenge 2025*. The hope is to create an Allied Network of credible partners providing Micro-credential courses in the community. This would help workers gain new skills and provide low barrier paths to more education.
- **Newcomer Services** – The Library continues to offer virtual English Language Learning tutoring as well as weekly English conversations circles and quarterly programs for Newcomer services. We have applied to expand Newcomer Services in the coming years and look forward to working with Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada on new programs and services.
- **Newborn Community Partner Promotion** – McMaster Family Medical, City of Hamilton, and Wesley all distribute a new board book, library card application and early literacy supports to the Hamiltonians they support with newborns as part of the library's commitment to Hamilton being the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

DIGITAL ACCESS AND INCLUSION

In today's world, basic digital access and skills are vital to resident's participation in the economy and their ability to access many government services. During the pandemic, as in-person access to government services became difficult and in many cases were not available, HPL and other libraries saw a large demand from residents for help applying for immigration papers, filing taxes, and accessing other services. HPL's long-term commitment to and investment in digital access for residents has enabled us to provide

- **Wi-Fi Improvements** – Free public access Wi-Fi at all branches is a well-used service. In recent years we have ensured that the internet signal is available outside our branches and during hours outside of normal library service. In 2023 we will continue our review of Wi-Fi coverage and quality of the service. We are working to add new features like push notification which will allow a simpler login process that provides better metrics. 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.

- **Public Computers** – In 2023 the Library will continue upgrading all public computers, including monitors, privacy screens and updated Windows 10 and office software.
- **Printing Services** - HPL's low-cost printing services are popular with students and residents alike. For many years, HPL has used revenue from printing to reinvest in technology and to ensure our printing system is robust. To reduce the cost of collecting lesser amounts of money and to improve barrier free access, HPL offers 10 free black and white prints a day. This current free print offering that is more generous than our pre-pandemic service is much appreciated by residents. When the pandemic called for the Library to minimize interactions and the handling of cash, we expanded free printing and enabled residents to print from their own devices and remotely. In 2023 we will review the status of the program to ensure our balance of free and revenue generation keeps the program sustainable.
- **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. The Library continues to prioritize efforts to provide access to computers and the internet by updating technology and expanding the number of devices and length of time available to members to access technology. The Library launched lending out devices with free internet to members in need. There are over 70 devices available across the system. 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.
- **Attorney General of Ontario** - The Library will continue to support residents that are required to appear in a virtual court session. Working with the Attorney General of Ontario in Hamilton, HPL provides residents without access to the appropriate technology to be able to participate in legal proceeding virtually. This was started during the pandemic and has been of critical assistance to those that otherwise would not be able to participate.
- **Virtual Branch** - HPL's virtual branch continues to be updated with added 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 [including the return of Academic OneFile] to support learning and pleasure reading, watching, and listening for all ages are examples of content that 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.
- **Hybrid Programming** –Hybrid programming will include virtual programs, closed captioning, phone programs as well as in person options based on current regulations and focused on community partnerships as outlined below in Advancing Community Priorities Through Partnerships.

EXTENDING OUR REACH

The Community Survey completed by HPL in 2017 provided input from residents that did not currently use HPL. That survey identified several barriers to using the Library, including fines being a barrier to low-income families. The Community Survey being conducted in late 2022 will help inform HPL's actions in 2023. The Library removed all fines and late fees in April of 2021. While this

has proved successful, in 2023 HPL will continue to look at ways to ensure the small number of residents that have taken advantage of the system in order keep items long overdue. By not returning materials in a timely manner will delay other residents from benefiting from the libraries' collections. The Library will continue to explore ways that limit long overdue without returning to late fees.

- **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 142,000 active customers (people who have a library card and have used the library in the last 2 years). That represents 24% of the City's population. The pandemic has had a negative impact on library membership as shutdowns and service reductions have limited the ability for the public to receive the full benefit from our services. In 2022, as we started to emerge from pandemic restrictions, we started to see active membership climb again. We anticipate this will continue in 2023. Our goal is to reach 35% by 2028. One area of emphasis is ensuring students have active cards and are using HPL to advance their studies.
- **Civic Institutions Projects and Passes** - In addition to working with the Museum teams at the City on the Library Card partnership, the Library is looking forward to working with the Heritage Resource Management Team on the Museums Strategy. The Library has partnered with the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Provincial and Regional Parks to also provide loanable park passes for members. We continue to work to arrange other pass opportunities for members to reduce barriers.
- **Engaging Volunteers** – For many years HPL has actively cultivated programs that enable residents to contribute in meaningful ways to help other residents. Examples of this include the Visiting Library Service (VLS) where residents deliver books and other materials to residents that are homebound. Through the Newcomer Learning Centre volunteers provide new Canadians with regular appointments to practise their English. Both these programs are popular with volunteers because they get to know the individuals they are assisting, and it creates a safe mutual connection for people who otherwise would not know each other. The pandemic created a major disruption to these in-person programs. From 2020 to 2022 we created some virtual volunteer opportunities and in 2023 we will be focused on a gradual restarting of in-person volunteer opportunities. HPL supports high school students obtaining their volunteer hours.

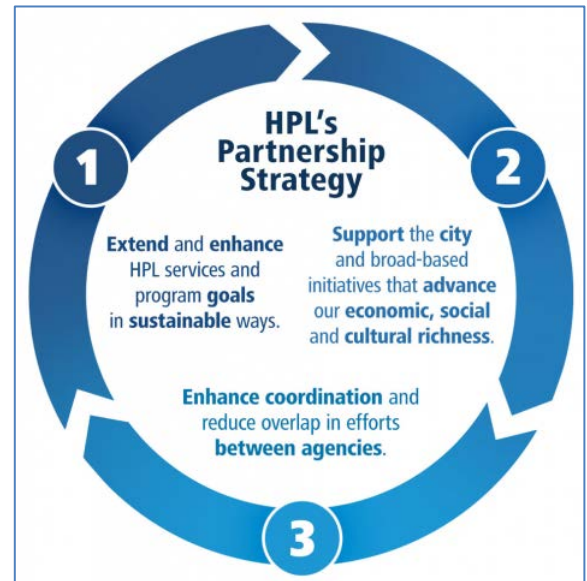
PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

The Hamilton Public Library [Working with Us Partnership and Program Policy](#) articulates three (3) core reasons we engage in partnerships. HPL has a long history of successful partnerships. In 2023 we will continue looking to engage in partnerships that help people access and navigate services. We are looking to work with others to support educational success, access to art and culture, personal wellbeing, and economic prosperity. HPL works 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**^{vii}. HPL now manages the Red Book, a Hamilton community resource database. 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. The site includes both governmental and non-governmental information. 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.

Partnerships have long been interwoven into how HPL works to advance individuals and communities. The pandemic caused a significant interruption in some of the work we do with partners. In 2023, we will continue our engagement with existing and new partners to advance shared objectives. Some of the key partnerships we will work to advance in 2023 include:

- **City’s Xperience Annex** - For the past several years HPL has had a successful partnership with the Xperience Annex which works with youth to understand their needs and create pathways to community services and employment. In 2023 we will continue to work with the City on advancing this partnership and other initiatives that help residents navigate paths to meaningful employment and education.
- **Cable 14 Partnership** – Cable 14 who regularly promote, highlight, and broadcast library programs. This partnership is a creative outreach for members who are not able to visit library branches or attend programs online.
- **Ongoing local community partnerships with BIAs and Farmer’s Markets** - We strive to become a visible presence in the community at Farmer’s Markets across the City promoting library services and programs along with food literacy and are actively engaging Hamiltonians to support local business.
- **Health Promotion Community Use of Space** – The Library continues to work with the City of Hamilton to host COVID-19 Vaccination clinics. We plan to continue to host Flu clinics and continue to offer Warming and Cooling centres when temperature emergencies are called in the city. The Library has also had the opportunity to work with the Aids Network to host space for a harm reduction worker and some pop-up testing information booths at libraries.
- **Public Health Social Worker** – In 2022 a renewed social worker program was developed at HPL in partnership with Public Health. This program advances a few key objectives: connecting residents to services, helping individuals experiencing challenges successful navigate HPL services and finally as a resource to help mentor and coach staff in challenging situations.
- **Parks and Recreation and EarlyON** – the Library continues to work with these City teams to provide shared programming and resources. Most recently Supie programs shared the Library’s literacy booklet and the library distributed EarlyON programming kits to members.
- **Supporting Elections** – The Library was able to host Elections Canada polling stations in 2021 and Provincial polling stations in 2022. In addition, the Library worked with the City and the Engage Hamilton platform to prepare for the 2022 Municipal Election, including hosting a polling station at the Binbrook and Central libraries. In 2023, we will be ready to assist should an election be called.



INCLUSION, CULTURE AND HISTORY

Inclusion is a core value of the Hamilton Public Library. In 2020 the Library Board updated our Diversity and Inclusion Policy^{viii}. As we work on developing our post-pandemic programs, we are committed to working with others to advance social cohesion. This involves helping residents find

belonging in their community and having relationships with others in the community that have diverse backgrounds and experiences.

In our interconnected, fast changing world, having a better understanding of our different histories and cultures, helps us understand today and makes us better equipped to work for a better future that does not ignore past injustice but learns from it, so we do not repeat the same mistakes. This work is ongoing. In 2023 our major focuses will be on:

- **Local History and Archives (LHA)** – Our LHA department was established in the early 20th Century. Our expansive collection has many unique collections capturing Hamilton history that is not held elsewhere. Digitizing this collection to make it accessible to students and researchers has been an ongoing effort. As technology improves and we gain more experience, HPL is investing in better infrastructure to manage this important work. This includes investing in a Digital Asset Management System (DAMS) that is currently under-investigation for beginning implementation in 2023. This is an important part of our plan to support an acceleration of the digitization of key collections.
- **Internet Archives: Open Library** - Working with the Internet Archives (IA) HPL has launched its Open Library collection. In 2023 we will continue to build the collection.
- **Urban Indigenous Strategy (UIS)** - 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 submitted a 5-year work plan to the UIS and Haudenosaunee Development Institute for their consideration and recommendations.
- **McMaster University and McMaster Library** - HPL partners with McMaster in multiple ways, including in the annual Writer 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.
- **Hamilton Arts Council and Hamilton Music Collective** – The Library has worked to support the new theartycrowd.com launch as a space for whole Hamilton arts community to come together and has had the privilege to support a summer, fall and winter outdoor music concerts series at the Gasworks with Hamilton Music Collective. We look forward to more partnerships opportunities at the Library and in the community.

SETTING 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 2023 to create adaptable training to meet theirs and the community's needs.

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** - In 2022, our goal was to ensure half of our staff, not including Library Pages, had received this training. Despite the City of Hamilton putting the training on hiatus in April 2022, we surpassed this goal by ensuring 60% of our staff completed training, including 85% of our public service staff. Most staff requiring training are Library Pages. In 2023, we hope to extend the training to Library Pages and complete outstanding training for the remainder of Library staff.

- **Identify and Filling Training Gaps** – In Q4 of 2022 HPL conducted a comprehensive training survey of staff to see where they identified gaps in training and their proficiency at handling various kinds of situations. The results of that survey will help inform our training activities for staff.
- **Optimizing Problematic Procedures** - The pandemic has caused HPL, like many other organizations, to adopt new processes and procedures without the normal testing and piloting. In addition to staff training, we are looking at processes and procedures that are overly complex or not well understood. We know from experience that reducing complexity, when done correctly, improves customer service and reduces unnecessary work that does not add value. 2023 will build on the work done in 2022, to ensure we are operating as effectively as possible. In 2023 we will be focused on improving what we already have in place. There will be temporarily less overall focus on employing new technologies to meet emerging needs until we are confident, we are using existing tools as effectively as possible.
- **Emotional Matters** - Emotional Matters, an accessible emotional labour training program, emerged through the partnership with McMaster University and CMHA as a result of a 2021 survey of library workers, including HPL, that identified opportunity for better emotional labour training for front-lines library workers. HPL has adapted the emotional labour training program into an eLearning course and hosted within the Library so it is also accessible to other neighbouring library systems to help staff develop emotional resilience. The course raises awareness of key concepts related to emotional labour and supports the development of skills that will assist our staff in responding to the emotional demands of their jobs. We are hoping to roll out the training to managers by the end of 2022, with a full roll out to all staff by the end of 2023.
- **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. However, with Management Team members focused on leading the return library services and hours in 2022, we hope to accomplish this goal in 2023 instead.
- **Digital Technology Assistants at more Branches** - HPL recognizes the importance of digital technology education in our communities. This has been felt by staff everyday as members needs of technology support keeps increasing. It became even more apparent with the pandemic. As such we want to provide branches with dedicated staff who can support our members and fellow co-workers and build technology skills among all HPL Staff. We continue to attempt to recruit these positions across the system.
- **Orientations for new Staff** - As we continue to build capacity, we also continue to revise and update orientation processes for new staff. We revised our onboarding materials to support trainers, managers, and supervisors as they leverage current technologies to onboard new employees. To date, we have welcomed **75 new staff**, 20 of which were Information Clerks. We will continue to strengthen our team with new recruits towards the end of 2022 and 2023 using a hybrid approach where appropriate, and by providing Health and Safety, legislative, and essential job core training in a consistent, accommodating, and equitable manner.
- **Training related to other initiatives** - Recognizing the importance of training, we continue to support projects that will have a system-wide impact on staff with comprehensive training plans and resources. Some of these system projects include the upgrade of public computers to Windows 10 and the software to manage public computers and enhancements to our system that will make circulating library materials more efficient. We have also provided training support

to refresh staff as services returned in 2022, like cash handling and in-person public programming. We continue to assess and address training needs in 2023.

- **ELPs – Librarian, tech services, youth services in 2022** - As an effective method for career development and equipping staff with relevant and useful skillsets for internal job opportunities, we continue to expand our Experiential Learning Program offerings to respond to new needs. Experiential Learning Programs (ELPs) are internal professional development programs that are supported by coaches or mentors and include practical experience in a particular role. In 2022, we have provided staff with both the Youth Services and Librarian ELP. To date, 18 staff are completing the Youth Services ELP, four staff completed the Tech Services ELP and seven staff have completed the new Librarian ELP. We plan to continue providing ELP programs in 2023 to ensure we have a strong pool of internal candidates to support succession planning.
- **Prepare Training** - We resumed in-person Prepare Training this year. Prepare Training is an important conflict de-escalation training we provide to all public service staff, which during we had not been able to deliver safely during pandemic. Since restrictions have lifted, we are focused on providing existing staff with a refresher course while continuing to train new staff. Up to date, 62 staff have already received Prepare Training, with more scheduled to receive training by the end of 2022. We plan to ensure public staff with overdue Prepare Training and new hires continue to receive training.
- **Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)** - Our commitment to EDI continues as we pilot DiversiPro, an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism (IDEA) consulting firm, that has worked with other public libraries in Ontario to help us gain a better understanding of our cultural and racial awareness and competence. To date, our Senior Leadership, the staff Inclusion Working Group and Library Board have received training. In 2023, we plan to advance IDEA training opportunities to staff throughout the organization by providing the training internally.

MAJOR INITIATIVES FOR 2024 TO 2026

Translating the vision articulated in our new strategic plan into operational activities will be a major focus of the years 2024 to 2026. Ensuring we maximize our impact by shifting existing resources to areas of new demand will remain our focus. Specific initiatives that we anticipate from 2024 to 2026 include the following:

- **Supporting the Recovery** - As our community moves past the pandemic phase of COVID-19, HPL will work with trusted partners to support residents, students, small businesses, and job seekers to move forward in their learning and economic prospects. We will need to monitor changing needs and new challenges facing residents.
- **Expanding Service in a Sustainable Way** - Providing residents, in all parts of the City, with accessible consistent service will continue to be built upon. In late 2023 the Library Board will assess the impact of the 2022 Library service hours were expansion system wide aimed at making our open hours more consistent across the system. We will continue to review the impact of the new service hour model, in advance of future operating budget requests. Items that will need to be considered include the closing of community branches at 7 pm and the number of locations that are open on Sundays.
- **Central Library – Local History & Archives** - The final phase of Central Renovations is the 3rd Floor that includes making Local History & Archives more visible. Planning the scope of that project and its relationship to a potential City of Hamilton Museum will require significant

planning and consultations. The planning process for the LHA renovations will be an ongoing effort.

- **Bookmobile Replacement** - HPL has 2 bookmobiles. A replacement program and forecast needs to be put in place. Consideration should be given to requirements and need for an additional vehicle or potentially other forms of service delivery (i.e., electric vehicles, smaller vehicle, alternative service models).
- **Digital Technology Initiatives** - We will continue to pursue digital technology improvements to streamline our services and enhance service offerings. We will continue to add new and emerging technologies to our services.
- **Planning for Future Facilities** - As HPL begins to finish the major facility renewal that began over 10 years ago, the Library Board will work with the City on longer term plans to address services in areas lacking resources and areas with increasing population growth. We will look for opportunities to expand our services in areas where residents need more support. Targeted building refreshes will be key in making sure our spaces continue to meet or exceed community expectations. As facilities are refreshed and improved on, energy efficiency and environmental sensitivity will be important aspects to consider. We will continue to look for opportunities to ensure environmental sustainability is built into design plans.

ⁱ <https://www.hamilton.ca/city-council/plans-strategies/trust-and-confidence-report/our-commitment-our-community>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.hpl.ca/sites/default/files/MeetingCommunityMemberNeeds2022.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://blog.hypeinnovation.com/how-crisis-driven-innovation-can-help-your-organization>

^{iv} <https://investinhamilton.ca/edap/>

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

^{vi} <https://www.canadapost-postescanada.ca/cpc/en/support/articles/library-materials/overview.page>

^{vii} <https://redbook.hpl.ca/redbook>

^{viii} <https://www.hpl.ca/articles/diversity-and-inclusion-policy>