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To: Chair and Members of the Board
From: Paul Takala, Chief Librarian/CEO
Subject: Report on Major Accomplishments of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE PLAN AND PROCESS

FREEDOM TO DISCOVER

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Introduction

This document summarizes key accomplishments and developments of HPL's 2018 to 2021 Strategic Plan. The development of the plan included a successful community survey, extensive consultations and research into trends impacting Hamilton and public libraries more broadly. The plan was built on top of previous plans and was a continuation of HPL's ongoing commitment to continual renewal and innovation. One theme that clearly emerged from the process was a commitment to systematically reducing barriers and ensuring HPL is truly welcoming to all in our community.

About the Plan and Process

The full plan, as well as key inputs and processes that the Library Board followed, are documented here: <https://www.hpl.ca/articles/strategic-priorities-2018-2021>. The three strategic priorities of the Library Board are interrelated so the accomplishments will not be divided by priority. *Community Beacon* speaks to the end goal of what HPL strives to realize for the communities we serve and work with. *Relevant and Responsive* challenges HPL to continually adapt our programs, processes and delivery methods to ensure we are meeting current needs and aspirations. A *Learning and Innovative Organization* speaks to the critical importance of being an employer that creates engaged employees and supports their ongoing development.

RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC



Responding to the Pandemic

The global COVID-19 pandemic that emerged in early 2020 had profound impacts on all aspects of library operations. Various service innovations and developments will be covered in the most relevant sections of this report. Here, however, we will highlight accomplishments specifically relevant to our work on helping the emergency response in 2020 and 2021 as this report focuses on updates for the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan.

Pandemic Planning and Leadership – HPL was well prepared when the COVID-19 pandemic arrived. After the 2003 SARS outbreak, HPL developed a comprehensive Pandemic Plan. That plan was updated annually. In early 2020, before the public health emergency was declared, HPL's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) began to update and review the plan, while reaching out to Public Health for advice on what HPL could do to assist with community response to COVID-19. At the time, it was indicated that we were the only City agency to reach out proactively to Public Health. Once the Public Health emergency was declared, HPL began sharing information with other public libraries in Ontario and Canada. Our planning documents were added to the [Key Reports page](#)ⁱ on our website. While the pandemic has created tremendous uncertainty and upheaval, early in the pandemic the Library Board approved key working assumptions that provided clear direction for the Library. In short, our plan has been to provide as much Library service as we safely can and make it our highest priority to support the emergency response.

In March 2021, 63 Library staff were seconded to the City to support the community vaccination effort. Staff returned to HPL over the summer and enabled the expansion of Library service hours. In Q4, 20 HPL staff were again seconded to support the vaccination effort.



From September to December 2021 HPL hosted 89 pop-up vaccination sites at multiple branches that administered 5,522 doses. These were hosted in partnership with public health and we worked closely with partners of the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) to host vaccination sites at Barton branch.

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) – Early in the pandemic, the City EOC reached out to inquire if HPL could assist with delivery of emergency supplies. We supported this request and during the first months of the pandemic our courier drivers and vans worked to deliver supplies. We also had staff supporting community vaccination efforts.

Since March 2020, HPL has focused its organizational assets to position the Library as a constructive force during the public health emergency by assisting individuals and the community make it through this crisis successfully. In Q1 of 2021, when many Libraries closed, HPL remained open to provide residents with critical digital access in order to support completing their taxes, critical tasks, and allowing them to remain in touch with family and friends, thereby supporting their mental health.

HPL was approached by the City Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to see if we could assist residents in printing proof of vaccination. We embraced this request and purchased lamination machines for all locations. Between October and December staff laminated a total of **56,968 proofs of vaccination**. Many residents have commented how great this service has been, including many who are not regular users of HPL.

FINANCE AND FACILITIES



Financial Management

The Hamilton Public Library works closely with the City of Hamilton to ensure effective management of the funds we receive. The Library Boards' Audit Committee annually oversees the audit and approval of the financial statements. HPL has a long track record of internally shifting resources to priority areas to ensure we are responsive to changing needs, while also adhering to budget direction. One of the main mechanisms for doing this is reviewing all vacancies to ensure our workforce is balanced for present work demands. The use of technological innovation has enabled HPL to empower library members to conveniently self-service most transactions with HPL. This both improves customer service and frees up staff to perform higher value work.

Budget Summary During Strategic Planning Period

Year	Council Direction	Library Budget	Total FTE
2018	1.5%	1.8%	300
2019	No direction	2.4%	299
2020	2.0%	2.0%	299
2021	2.0%	1.5%	291

Facility Renewal

HPL has been very successful at providing Hamiltonians with Library spaces of which they can be proud. The Library's [Facility Master Plan](#)ⁱⁱ, last updated in 2019, has provided a long-term realistic blueprint for ensuring HPL has a path to ensure we maintain high quality accessible spaces. Three new spaces were opened during this strategic plan; Binbrook on January 25, 2018, Parkdale on July 13, 2021 and Greensville on September 9, 2021.

HPL Facility Projects Completed 2018-2021

Year	Location	Summary	Project Cost
2018	Binbrook	New 6,000-sq. ft building by Invizij Architects Soft opening January 25; grand opening April 14. 2019 Library Building Award, Ontario Library Association, Binbrook Library Project	\$3,600,000
	Dundas	Major renovation of the 13,712-square-foot branch opened March 5. 2019 Award of Merit, City of Hamilton Urban Design and Architecture Awards, Dundas Library	\$2,900,000
	Lynden	Extended Access Model completed	\$15,000
2019	Locke ⁱⁱⁱ	Renovation of 1,600 sq. ft 1925 branch by McCallum Sather. 2020 Heritage Recognition Award, Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee, Locke Library	\$600,000
	Westdale	Renovation of information desk, self-check area, shelving, flooring, paint and finishes. Completed and reopened July 6, 2019	\$80,000

2020	Central	Lifecycle window replacement. Project partially funded by Library (\$300,000). Windows from the 2nd floor up to and including the 6th floor along with mechanical tower were replaced as part of a lifecycle renewal.	\$3,776,000
2021	Greensville	Built in partnership with the HWDSB and the City Department of Recreation. New 3,400 sq. ft attached to large community room and kitchen. Opened September 9.	\$3,675,000
	Parkdale	Leasehold Improvements to long-term leased space in partnership with Indwell. 2021 Best Overall North American Project, Passive House US, Parkdale Library & Indwell McQuesten Lofts project- First passive housing designed library in Canada. Opened on July 13.	\$250,000
	System-wide	LED Lighting Upgrades - Project to re-lamp interior lighting systems with energy-efficient LEDs at various Library branches to reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions. Lights over the Central Library atrium staircase were also replaced.	\$255,000

HPL Facilities in Progress 2018-2021

Year	Location	Summary	Project Cost
2019	Mount Hope	The Library Board approved funding for a Feasibility Study. COVID and trying to align with the City's direction in Mount Hope caused some delay. Feasibility Study work commenced in February of 2022.	\$75,000
2021	Central	Sorter Replacement - New 25 bin sorter at Central. Will act as the hub for all movement of materials. Installation is complete with final modifications and training underway.	\$500,000
2022	Carlisle	Thanks to the TD Bank donation, a major renovation is underway. Project to be completed in 2022.	\$2,050,000
	Valley Park	Thanks to the Heritage Green Community Trust for their generous donation of \$1.25 million towards two community rooms. Exterior mural competition completed in 2021. Project to be completed in 2022.	\$9,700,000

**EXPANDING
OUR REACH
REDUCING
BARRIERS**



Expanding our Reach – Reducing Barriers

The 2017 community survey conducted as part of the development of the Strategic Plan identified over 1,000 residents that did not use HPL or had not used HPL for years. The comments those residents made in their survey responses helped us identify several barriers from using the Library. One of the key takeaways from that exercise was how library late fees and fines had caused many people to stop using HPL out of fear of financial consequences. This barrier was removed in April 2021 when we officially went fine free for all members. We also learned that adult residents that have some higher education were very satisfied and comfortable with HPL and its services. Adult residents without higher education were much less likely to have a positive view of HPL. In effort to create a positive view, the Library embarked on several new initiatives including lending devices, WiFi improvements, and working to standardize hours across the system.

Customer Experience Task Force – To take action in advancing the priority of reducing barriers, an internal staff Customer Experience Task Force was established in 2018. The work of that group led to several recommendations that helped simplify how Library accounts are managed and advanced the reduction of barriers, including fines.

Fine Free - During the pandemic we temporarily ceased fines and fees and stopped using a Collections Agency. We permanently eliminated fines and fees on youth accounts in June 2020 and formally transitioned from a fines and fees model to a pay it forward model for both youth and adults in April 2021. The library will continue to explore ways to continue to remove barriers for members to access services and collections at the library.

Library Hours Expansion – Prior to the onset of the pandemic, HPL continued to build on a phased plan to add library service hours that was approved by the Board in May of 2017.

In 2018 the following changes were implemented: expanded hours at Binbrook, a change in Lynden hours based on community feedback, Terryberry open on Sundays, Westdale open on Fridays. We also started to open most locations normally closed on Fridays to open when both School boards were closed for PA (Professional Activity) days.

In September 2019 the Board approved Ancaster, Saltfleet and Sherwood moving their morning opening times from 10 am to 9 pm. That was implemented as a test to see if other locations could follow suit and possible impacts. Unfortunately, Q1 of the following year saw the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic thereby disrupting Library Service.

After the initial pandemic lockdown of 2020 when HPL was forced to close all our physical locations, HPL moved to expand service hours as much as restrictions and staff capacity would allow. Prioritization of assisting emergency response to the pandemic in 2021 caused HPL to scale back Library service, as 63 staff were seconded to support public health. During the pandemic HPL moved to more standardized hours around the system and in late 2021 developed a post-pandemic service hour plan to add over 300 hours a week to service.



Library Membership Growth

This plan challenged staff to look for ways to increase the number of residents that benefit from our services. At the end of 2021 we have over 138,000 active members (people who have a library card and have used the library in the last 2 years). That represents 24% of the City's population. After seeing growth in active membership in 2019, the pandemic disruption has led to a decline in active members. This modest decline became visible in 2021 as the pandemic continued into its second year.

Virtual Branch - HPL's virtual branch has remained a key access point for members and is 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 have supported 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 community connections.

Lending Devices and Data - Access to internet and basic technology represents a challenge to many people and families especially as more services and learning move online. Working with partners such as City School by Mohawk, the Boys and Girls Club and other local organizations, the library will ensure that these devices and services reach people most 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. During the pilot, eight devices were checked out to students that enabled them to virtually participate in Mohawk City School online courses. HPL acquired 70 additional iPads in May 2021. 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 require internet access for longer than the limited times available at the branch to assist in reducing barriers to accessing technology.

Wi-Fi Improvements - HPL undertook a study of existing HPL Wi-Fi coverage and quality of the service to improve the service and add new features such as single sign on, push

notification, new items arrival, hold item notification, COVID 6 feet distancing alert, etc. The library completed 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 cellular solutions to increase the external Wi-Fi coverage range while exploring broader connectivity opportunities.

In May 2021 HPL was successful in obtaining a \$50,000 grant from the Healthy Communities Grant Fund to cover a significant portion of the outdoor WiFi device purchase and installation.

Public Computers - The library has been 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 200 new devices and the rest of the 400+ devices in 2023.

**EXPANDING ACCESS
TO QUALITY
LIBRARY
COLLECTIONS,
RESOURCES
AND
PROGRAMS**



Expanding Access to Collections, Resources, Programs

The pandemic highlighted how HPL provides access to members, even when physical locations are closed. A key change to HPL's approach was implementing the new Working with Us Policy to create a solid foundation as we move forward with new partnerships that help HPL expand collections, resources and programs. Library service changes like Borrow by Mail, Borrow Around the



Bay, and eContent updates provided more services to members when getting to the library is difficult. Key partnerships to provide access to and support for resources and services like Open Library, NPower professional skills training and Augmented Reality went beyond our library branches and positioned HPL as a leader in access when access is limited.

Community Collections via Extension Services - Working with Detention Center (**Barton Jail**) 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. Additional materials from our Red Hill branch including 13 boxes of multilingual books were donated mid- December 2021.

Print-to-Go – Allowing members to [print wirelessly](#) started in April 2018. In October 2020 we expanded this program to allow members to send prints remotely using a home computer or personal device, eliminating the need to log on to our computers and allowing prints to be available for print upon arrival at the library branch.

Events and Room Booking Management - The library launched Communico, an events and room booking management system, in January 2019. Communico allows members to search an [events calendar](#) for locations across the system and register for events from their own device. Additionally, organizations across the City can book meeting rooms for meetings and events.

Borrow by Mail - The library started a pilot in February 2021 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.

Grab and Go Bags

In March 2019 we launched [Grab and Go bags](#) across the system. These are bags that contain materials for all ages. The bags contain staff-selected materials members can grab off the shelf and check out without having to browse the shelves. The bags serve as a time-saver for families who only have a limited amount of time to spend selecting materials. During the pandemic Grab and Go bags helped add to our takeout model.



Friendly Calling- In April 2020, early in the pandemic, staff made calls to senior library members to connect with them while the library and many other organizations were closed.

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 limits of materials accessed at locations. Magazines are loaded on average 2-3 weeks prior to their shelf date.

AskHPL- In May 2020 the AskHPL service was transitioned to newer software powered by FreshWorks. This transition allowed HPL members to connect with Staff early in the pandemic while we were closed due to lockdown restrictions. The service continues today in order to allow members access through an [online form](#), a chat icon on our webpage <https://www.hpl.ca/>, or by phone at 905.546.3200.

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

Pop Up Programs

From March 2019 to the end of 2021 programs were limited to virtual and often pop- up events throughout the community that could be facilitated outdoors. Programs ranged from pop up shot clinics with the book mobile in late July 2021 to the Pride Health Love event at Westdale and Red Hill on July 15, 2021.



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.

Hamilton Music Archives- The Library partnered with the Hamilton Music Advisory Team in 2018 to develop a Hamilton Music Archive collection. The Hamilton Music Archive celebrates Hamilton's music history. The collection highlights existing holdings including the Hamilton Music Awards archive, the Opera Hamilton fond, LH&A sheet music collections and the music icon from the Love Your City Share Your Stories digital storytelling project. LH&A worked with the Hamilton Music Advisory Team to develop the collection mandate, solicit donations and support for the collection and identify exhibition and promotion opportunities.

LHA: 2SLGBTQ+ community archive - The library is the home of the Michael Johnstone collection. While digitization has been slowed due to COVID-19 staff secondments, work on the collection continues and a public launch is planned for 2023. Both McMaster and a team at the City have been actively working on projects to enhance the collection and create inventories of all the items.

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 calendars](#) 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.

Discovery Space Project- On March 5, 2018 HPL launched the Discovery Space project at 6 branches: Central, Dundas, Red Hill, Sherwood, Turner Park and Waterdown branches.

Discovery Spaces is designed to be self-directed fun, hands-on learning spaces created for families to explore and enjoy STREAM (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Art and Math) activities together. Each Discovery Space has a theme that highlights a STREAM topic, including, but not limited to, items related to Hamilton's history, culture or natural environment. Themes rotate regularly across branches, with new ones always being added.

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.

Memory Café: Dundas, Sherwood, Stoney Creek, Ancaster, Central- HPL launched the program in the fall of 2018, in support from a federal grant. Held weekly at five branches across the system, Memory Café provided a gathering space for people and their care partner to get together, socialize and enjoy relaxing conversations. The gatherings provided a safe, comfortable, supportive space for people to enjoy various activities such as music, art, performances and special speakers.

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.

NorthStar Digital Literacy- NorthStar Digital Literacy has been added to our Digital Literature collections. NorthStar defines the basic skills needed to use a computer and the internet in daily life, employment, and higher education. It addresses the needs of job seekers who may lack the digital literacy skills needed to seek, obtain, and retain employment. It also includes learning resources to support adult learners including classroom curriculum for in person or remote learning. HPL Members obtain the NorthStar Digital Literacy Certificate upon passing assessments.

Google Discovery- Since fall of 2021 Hamilton Public Library has been contributing catalogue data to the Library.Link Network. The Library.Link Network takes our bibliographic records in a traditional MARC format and converts them to a linked data format that is readable on the open web. One implementation of this is HPL's physical collection has now joined the digital collection available through Overdrive that is discoverable through Google Search results via the *Borrow Near You* knowledge pane. In practice, when someone in the Hamilton area searches Google for a book title, the *Borrow Near You* pane will direct the user to our library catalogue. The Library.Link Network tracks these discovery clicks from Google and reports data to us at the beginning of every month. There are many other exciting possibilities with linked data we look forward to exploring in the future.

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.

NPower – HPL partnered with NPower Canada to provide free in-demand digital and professional skills training and connections to career opportunities with some of Canada’s largest employers. Through consultation with a wide range of employers, NPower Canada’s comprehensive curriculum ensures participants are equipped with skills most sought after by industry. [NPower Canada](#) is a charitable organization that launches young adults into meaningful and sustainable careers.

Makerspace Equipment

Between 2018 and 2021 we upgraded our large format printer (LFP) to the newer model at Central and added four more LFPs in branch locations. Broken guitars have been replaced at Central and other branches. All iMacs have been replaced systemwide. Crickets are now available at select locations. An upgraded vinyl printer had been added at Central, as well as a laser-cutter.



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

Public Health Phones- In September 2021, as a part of the “Vax, Print, Laminate” services HPL partnered with Public Health to have phones added to the branches. These phones were used for direct access to the Public Health Line to assist members who did not have a green health card and could not access print.

Augmented Reality Program - The library partnered with Hamilton Museums and Hamilton Parks and Recreation on an Augmented Reality (AR) program in recognition of Hamilton 175. Working with community member Wayne MacPhail, the partners launched this initiative early summer through September 2021. The project offered an introduction to what’s possible. Through AR technology users experience a virtual tour of historical places 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 at [ExperienceCommons](#).



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 2021 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. Documentation about the numerous research partnerships HPL is involved in are available on our [Researcher in Residence](#) webpage.

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.

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



George Geczy

Years Served:
2001-2019

Library Board Chair:
2005, 2007, 2008, 2011,
2012, 2017

Library Board Vice-Chair:
2004, 2006, 2016

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.

Internet Archive Hero Award- Lisa Radha Weaver, Director, Collections and Program Development, along with Kanata Kapoor, Manager, Support Services from Milton Public Library received the 2021 Internet Archive Hero Awards from Internet Archive!

The Internet Archive Hero Award is an annual award that recognizes those who have exhibited leadership in making information available for digital learners all over the world. Previous recipients have included librarian and professor of law Michelle Wu, Phillips Academy, the Biodiversity Heritage Library, and the Grateful Dead.

Learn more about Lisa's and Kanata's achievements at this blog post: <https://bit.ly/3aBUa2u>.

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.

**ADVANCING
COMMUNITY
PRIORITIES, CULTURE
AND INCLUSION
THROUGH
PARTNERSHIPS**



Advancing Community Priorities

Partnerships were a strong focus in this Strategic Plan and will be in the next plan. The pandemic highlighted the increased need to avoid working in isolation, instead choosing to work in groups with partner organizations to better support the community. Recognizing this need, the Library established a new *Working with Us Policy* in June 2021, found at <https://www.hpl.ca/articles/working-us-policy> .

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

1. Extend and enhance HPL services and program goals in sustainable ways.
2. Support the city and broad-based initiatives that advance our economic, social and cultural richness.
3. Enhance coordination and reduce overlap in effort between agencies

HPL has a long history of successful partnerships. One element of our strategy is our work on the **Red Book Hamilton**^{iv}. 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.

The *Our Future Hamilton (OFH)*^v 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

The Library's value of being inclusive is reflected in the work we do to form partnerships with groups and organizations across Hamilton, as well as through work we do within our organization to support staff. We continue to work with Urban Indigenous Strategy on Truth and Reconciliation. Partnerships like those with the Civic Museums foster access for all. Our work implementing a Researcher in Residence and a Junior Librarian in Residence helps create new connections with our community and staff.

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. As of September 2019 Six Nations residents are eligible for a Discovery card.

Civic Museums - In addition to working with the Museum teams at the City on the Library Card partnership, the library 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.

HSR- HPL partnered with HSR in December 2021 to launch a Presto Pass Pilot in 2022 that builds on the decision by Council that will enable children aged six to 12 with a PRESTO card to ride the HSR for free until April 30, 2023. To support this initiative and help all children in the City benefit from this program, HPL is working with HSR, the Hamilton Community Foundation to distribute Free Presto Cards to eligible children with a Library card starting Family Day 2022. That program will be available at all 23 Library locations and bookmobiles. We hope this program will both give children "Freedom to Discover" their City on the HSR and will also encourage children that are not yet members to join HPL.



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. HPL worked with Mohawk Students through CityLab on engaging the community on HPL Wi-Fi access where business analysis students provided a report on Wi-Fi

Mohawk College's Challenge 2025 - As a member of the Stewardship Committee, HPL is collaborating with other leader Hamilton organizations to support Challenge 2025 plans. This is an ambitious five-year workforce-recovery initiative that commits intensified Mohawk College resources to address the ongoing and interconnected issues of poverty, social exclusion, under-education, labour shortages, unemployment and underemployment in the Greater Hamilton Area and across the country.

Art Gallery of Hamilton- As of October 19, 2021 Members were able to enjoy complimentary admission to the Art Gallery of Hamilton (AGH) as part of a new partnership with HPL. There are 24 passes that can be borrowed for a one week rental with an HPL library card. AGH Family Pass allows up to 2 adults and 4 children (up to the age of 17) for day use entry during the AGH's regular operating hours. More details available on www.hpl.ca/agh-pass
BiblioCommons listing: <https://hpl.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S125C703270A>

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.



Park Passes

Since January 2021 the Government of Ontario has provided public libraries with Ontario Park Passes. 24 passes circulate at HPL and are in high demand to allow members to access and the freedom to discover over 100 provincial parks for the day to bike, hike, swim, picnic and make some outdoor memories. Both the Grand River Conservation Area and Hamilton Conservation Area also provide passes for members to use and the library continues to work with new partners to provide more free opportunities for members.

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 a recurring position for K-8 students in our community.



SETTING STAFF UP FOR SUCCESS



Setting Staff Up for Success

HPL's strategic priorities are all relevant to supporting staff to be equipped to meet current and future needs, however, the priority a **Learning and Innovative Organization** stresses this most clearly. Serving individuals and communities that are facing rapidly changing technology and evolving learning needs, means equipping our committed staff to meet this challenge must be a major area of focus.

Prior to the onset of the pandemic in 2020, staff had made progress towards creating several internal Learning Institutes (LI) to help develop staff skills and to prepare committed staff to advancement within HPL. Some LI programs are continuous with content that is regularly updated to reflect current key messages and initiatives within the basic program. Other LI programs are developed specifically to target trends and issues described in the current Multi-Year Business Plan (MYBP) or in response to the introduction of new services or new or evolving technologies and applications. The latter programs are later incorporated in onboarding and other continuous programs.

To provide leadership, coordination and support of the LI's, HPL has two full-time Learning and Development Coordinators in Human Resources. During the pandemic we added a second Health and Safety Coordinator to ensure proactive management of the pandemic and other health and safety issue.

Here is a list of Learning Institutes (LI) that have been developed at HPL:

Customer Service and Inclusion Institute (CSI) - The Customer Service and Inclusion Institute supports excellence in all areas of customer service. It supports employees' understanding of Mission, Vision, and Values and related professional accountabilities. It includes introduction to core customer service strategies and how those strategies support the circulation of library materials and the provision of information services to customers. It includes customer service training that highlights actions serving diversity and inclusion. Additionally, it incorporates strategies for dealing with conflict and maintaining personal safety in difficult interactions. CSI content is wide-ranging, supporting ongoing and current system operations and special projects with the goal of ensuring customer service actions are consistent system wide. This Institute's audience includes all employees. A couple examples of specific training provided by the CSI, include:

- **Customer Service Roadshow:** The Roadshow has been one of HPL's core customer service training programs. All employees participate within their first four months of employment and for refresher sessions when appropriate. Content emphasizes service to library users and to colleagues. It begins with the premise that customer service is not a department: it is how each employee acts to reflect mission, vision, values.
- **Prepare Training®:** The Prepare Training® Foundation Course is a customer service program presented jointly with the Health and Safety Institute to all employees, except Library Pages. With a core philosophy of Respect, Service, and Safety at Work®, the Prepare Training® program is built on values that prioritize respectful interactions, a service-oriented attitude, and maintaining a safe environment for employees and

customers. It develops understanding of how to offer professional respect to all customers and has proven to be effective at giving library employees the skills they need to recognize a crisis in the making and to de-escalate it using verbal, para-verbal and non-verbal communication techniques.

Youth Services Institute - The Youth Services Institute supports youth services at HPL by creating awareness of collections and readers' advisory services to youth at all ages and stages and to their parents. Additionally, it develops specialized programming knowledge and skills related to program development, management and delivery for youth. The Youth Services Institute also supports community outreach to organizations such as schools and events where families are a key audience through modules and practical experience focused on partnerships and participation. The Institute also provides role appropriate onboarding information and activities to HPL leaders including Community Youth Librarians, Collections Librarians and Public Service Managers. Its audience therefore includes Public Service Programmers and employees in leadership roles.

Digital Literacy and Technology Skills Institute - Digital Literacy and Technology Skills Institute programs support the implementation of digital literacy and technology skill development related initiatives and include programs designed to build capacity and support Maker/Creation Innovative Services and Spaces. This Institute's audience includes all employees.

- **Technical Benchmarks and Training Plan:** The Tech Training Program is the Digital Literacy and Technology Skills Steering Committee's response to employees #1 strategic request: more tech training to meet ever-evolving customer expectations for assistance. The Plan outlines basic, intermediate and advanced level requirements that apply to all HPL employees and is providing training designed to ensure all staff have the technology skills they need. This is critical to public service staff, as technology is one area that we are often asked for assistance from customers.

Collections Institute - The Collections Institute supports collections development and management. Additionally, it promotes the ongoing development of related customer service skills including knowledge necessary to effectively assist customer discovery of and engagement with collections through BiblioCommons, displays at locations, hpl.ca, community outreach and social media. A key area of focus is readers' advisory related skills and knowledge that supports employee conversations with customers seeking advice about fiction, non-fiction, and digital offerings of all types. The Collections Institute also ensures awareness of specific services such as Local History and Archives and the Visiting Library Service. This Institute's audience includes all front-line information service employees and employees working in Collections and Technical Services.

Financial and Human Resources Institute - The primary focus of this institute is to provide onboarding activities designed to create awareness of policies and procedures related to Financial Services, Facilities, Human Resources, and selected areas of system importance not covered by other Learning Institutes. Another focus is refresher training projects in the areas identified above.

Health and Safety Institute - The Health and Safety Institute supports the orientation and training recommendations of the Management Team and Joint Health and Safety Committee and ensures that HPL meets all compliance requirements for regulatory training. Additionally, its programs promote ongoing development and use of safe work strategies and builds system-wide awareness of best practices and library policies and procedures. This Institute's audience includes all employees.

Program Institute - The Programming Institute supports adult program development, delivery and management. It promotes the ongoing development of related program and customer service skills including knowledge and skills necessary to develop community-led programs, to effectively assist customer discovery of and registration in scheduled programs and to efficiently complete related back-end activities such as speaker and room booking, event calendaring, statistical processes tracking participation, and ensuring prompt delivery of invoices to Financial Services. The Institute also creates awareness of key strategies linking program content with related print and digital collections. This Institute's primary audience is employees involved in programming at HPL. Selected modules such as Communico Reserve are of wider interest and include employees in job roles that support set up and take down of programs, such as Facilities and Communico Attend includes all Public Service employees. All Programming Institute activities support the Library's Strategic Priorities and the goals of the Multi-year Business Plan.

Impact of the Pandemic on Staff Development

The pandemic impacted staff learning and development in many ways. The restrictions disrupted our normal business operations and required a lot of energy and focus directed towards adapting to rapidly changing circumstances. During the first lockdown in the spring of 2020, most library staff were not permitted in our facilities. To enable HPL to respond to our members, we quickly implemented a new customer support system called FreshDesk. This enabled us to answer emails, phone calls and text messaging remotely by using a computer. While HPL adapted to a mostly online system in order to provide training in 2020 and 2021; it is recognized that the loss of some in-person activities and the desire for direct staff interactions in small groups made certain staff training increasingly challenging. Staff retirements and resignations, along with HPL staff seconded to Public Health, impacted capacity in 2020 and 2021.

As staff focused on managing the pandemic and getting ready for a robust recovery some important groundwork was laid in 2021 to build on and update HPL's Learning Institutes when we emerge from the pandemic.

Ontario Library Association (OLA) Super Conference - With the Super Conference being virtually only in 2021, HPL successfully enabled all HPL staff to attend the conference virtually.

Technology Support in Branches - In October 2021 several new Digital Technology Assistant (DTAs) positions were created to be assigned to larger branch locations to support branch staff with growing digital needs. These new DTAs are scheduled to be in place in 2022.

Emotional Labour Staff Survey – In Q3 and Q4 of 2021 HPL worked with several neighbouring libraries and a researcher at McMaster University, Dr. Diana Singh the Executive Director of The Initiative for Advanced Research on Mental Health and Society (ARMS) to conduct a survey of Library staff on emotional resilience. The report will be issued in early 2022, along with training for staff.

Workplace Mental Health Leadership Certificate – The process to certify managers and coordinators with the goal to expand the training to other staff was put on pause during the pandemic. This program aims to teach empathetic, real-world, and solutions-focused skills to manage performance and promote mental health in various environments and situations. This work is important and will be restarted.

Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) – In 2021 the Senior Leadership Team and Inclusion Committee participated in training exploring the Intercultural Development Continuum. The pilot was very informative, and staff are exploring how this could be rolled out to all staff and Board members.

Gender Identity and Expression Protocol Training City of Hamilton - Approximately half of the system was trained by the end of 2021 (excluding library pages who will be participating in this training in 2022).

Labour Relations – The library has continued to work with the Union by supporting library staff throughout the pandemic by limiting layoffs, providing staff professional development opportunities, and providing new positions. A new collective agreement was ratified May 19, 2020 for the period of January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2024.

Experiential Learning Programs- In 2021 HPL planned the first Librarian Experiential Learning Program (ELP). The Librarian ELP is a professional development program that aims to help Librarian-educated HPL staff currently in paraprofessional positions gain work experience that will help them transition more effectively into Librarian positions in the future. It will also ensure that HPL has a stronger internal pool of candidates for these leadership roles when they become available. Six staff are currently engaged in this program for the next three months and we hope to continue offering this opportunity as needed going forward.

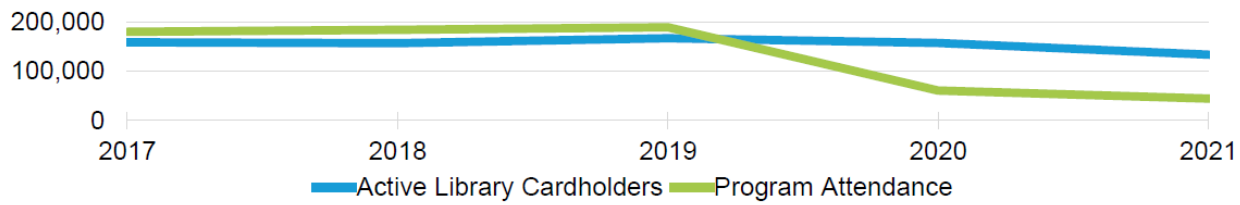
In 2020 HPL started a Library Technician Experiential Learning Program in January 2020 as an opportunity to provide hands-on training and experience to internal staff with appropriate educational requirements but little relevant work experience. These opportunities were temporarily paused as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The program then restarted and currently has 4 staff with Library Technician qualifications enrolled. The participants will gain valuable experience with cataloguing and metadata work in Technical Services, the Red Book Community Database and Local History and Archives. The Library Technician ELP program will prepare staff for future opportunities within the organization and help ensure Hamilton Public Library is set up with strong internal candidates to successfully fill these positions that require unique skillsets.

KEY SUMMARY METRICS 2018-2021



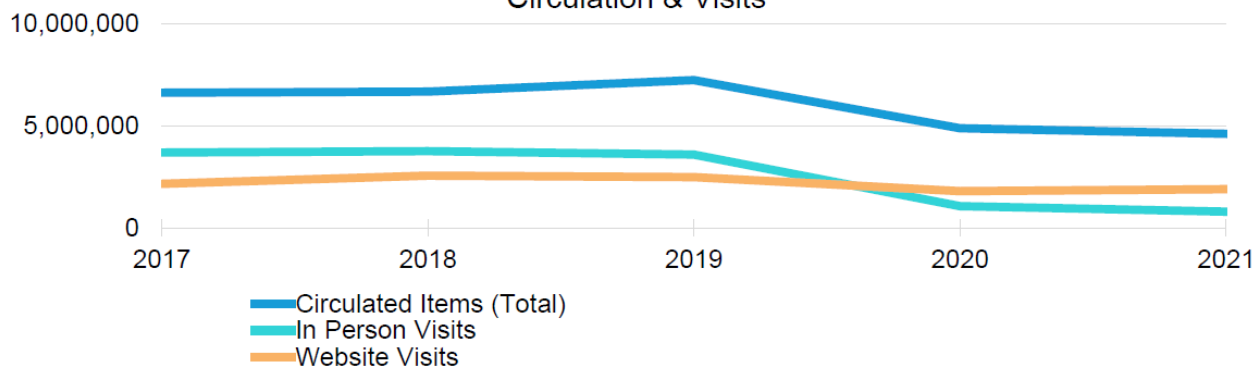
Key Summary Metrics 2018-2021

Cardholders & Program Attendance



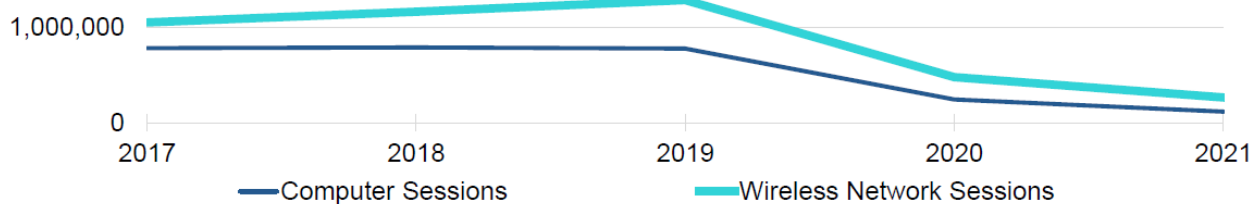
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
New Registered Cardholders	21,981	21,702	32,288	18,097	18,420
Active Library Cardholders	159,345	157,367	167,441	157,992	134,042
Number of Programs	10,327	9,504	10,064	3,768	1,426
Program Attendance	180,389	184,530	189,732	61,238	44,663

Circulation & Visits



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Circulated Items (Physical)	5,186,860	5,039,069	5,355,146	2,344,024	2,578,886
Circulated Items (Digital)	1,430,728	1,628,951	1,874,764	2,532,708	2,023,700
Circulated Items (Total)	6,617,588	6,668,020	7,229,910	4,876,732	4,602,586
In Person Visits	3,680,038	3,753,908	3,592,052	1,061,164	795,498
Website Visits	2,157,345	2,556,125	2,479,758	1,797,770	1,894,910
Catalogue Visits	1,957,264	1,976,517	1,981,475	1,501,997	1,649,820

Computer & WiFi Sessions



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Computer Sessions	779,811	787,781	776,777	242,191	115,260
Wireless Network Sessions	1,048,972	1,162,246	1,284,454	477,105	264,066
Social Media Fans	16,108	18,911	22,177	26,661	28,926

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- i <https://www.hpl.ca/articles/key-reports>
 - ii <https://www.hpl.ca/sites/default/files/19-01-FMP.pdf>
 - iii <https://www.mccallumsather.com/projects/locke-street-library/>
 - iv <https://redbook.hpl.ca/redbook>
 - v <https://www.hamilton.ca/city-initiatives/priority-projects/our-future-hamilton-community-vision>