



# Huron County Library Strategic Plan



Final Report

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## INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Huron County Library Strategic Plan is a long-range plan for library services in the County. The Huron County Library Board as well as County Council and lower-tier municipalities will use it to guide decision-making for future library services.

The Plan identifies:

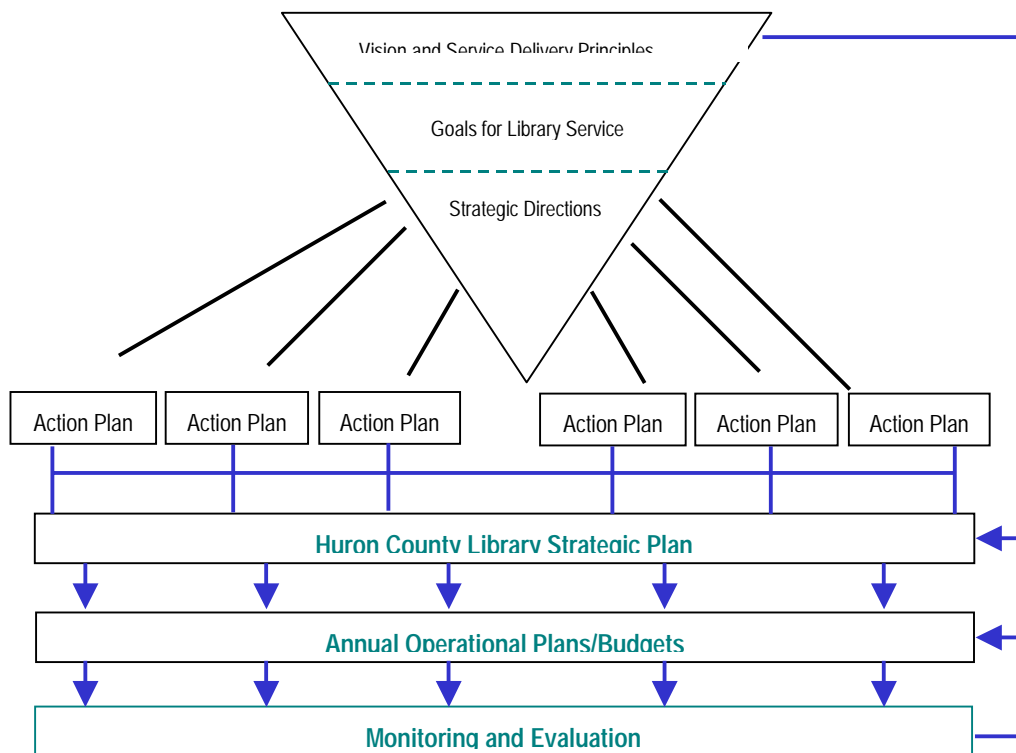
- ◆ A Vision that describes the purpose and role of the library in the County and Service Delivery Principles that describe a preferred approach to library service delivery;
- ◆ Goals and Strategic Directions that define future initiatives consistent with the Vision and Service Delivery Principles; and
- ◆ Action Plans that identify the tasks that must be undertaken to realize the Goals.

The key components of the Strategic Plan are described in the next section of the report.

### OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The structure of the Strategic Plan and its relationship to annual operational plans and monitoring is outlined in Figure One.

**Figure One**



As indicated in Figure One, the Strategic Plan is intended to provide direction for the future of library services in Huron County. The Strategic Plan is a management tool. It will be the foundation for annual operational plans and provide direction for setting budgets, allocating resources and setting priorities on an annual basis. The operational plans will identify detailed tasks, timelines, staff responsibilities and outcomes. They will allow staff and Council to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Strategic Plan. In addition, the Strategic Plan has identified a number of actions plans many of which involve further planning and research studies. These studies will provide additional information to guide the future development of the Huron County Library.

The Strategic Plan does not deal with all aspects of library service in Huron County. Instead, it focuses on key areas where change will be required to respond to challenges and opportunities. If certain aspects of current operations or services are not discussed in this Plan, it is because they were not identified as areas requiring further investigation and action at this time. This is not to imply these areas are unimportant. Indeed, they may emerge as major issues when the Plan is updated in the coming years.

## STUDY PROCESS

The strategic plan was prepared in five phases:

- ◆ **Phase One: Situation Audit** – describes current library operations and services;
- ◆ **Phase Two: Environmental Scan** – describes trends affecting library service delivery in Huron County, isolates threats to current library services and identifies opportunities for service enhancement and challenges to be addressed in the Strategic Plan,
- ◆ **Phase Three: Vision/Goals/Strategic Directions** – identifies a Vision, goals and strategic directions for the Strategic Plan;
- ◆ **Phase Four: Preparation of Action Plans** – outlines how the goals and strategic directions will be realized; and
- ◆ **Phase Five: Implementation and Monitoring** – identifies priorities and responsibilities for updating the Strategic Plan.

Phases One and Two of the strategic planning process were completed by the consultant. Detailed information is available in Appendix A. Selected information from Phase One and Two is included in the Planning Context chapter of this report. The Vision, Goals, Strategic Directions and Action Plans were identified in a series of workshops with the Steering Committee facilitated by the consultant. Steering Committee members were the CEO of the Library, the Chief Administrative Officer and the Planning Director, and the Southern Ontario Library Service consultant responsible for county libraries. The consultant developed the implementation and monitoring process.

## THE PLANNING CONTEXT

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes a number of key considerations affecting the Strategic Plan. We have briefly noted population characteristics, a profile of the existing library system, and trends that will affect library services in the future. We have also summarized the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) prepared by the Steering Committee for the Huron County Library. Additional information is available in the Strategic Plan background report.

### POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Overall population in the County is expected to continue to grow at a slow pace. Projections adopted for the study indicate a population in the order of 68,000 by 2005, which would be a 15% increase over the 1991 population of 59,000. Population growth will be concentrated in existing urban areas and along the lakeshore.

The socio-economic profile of the community will continue to demonstrate an older population with somewhat lower levels of education and income than is average for Ontario. Agriculture and manufacturing will be more dominant employment sectors in Huron County than elsewhere in the Province, however, growth in service sector, self-employment and female participation in the labour force consistent with Ontario wide trends is anticipated.

On balance, these trends indicate continued demand for library services related primarily to population growth. Economic factors associated with a knowledge-based economy may be less prevalent in Huron County but will still contribute to increased demands for information with implications for the Library.

### PROFILE OF THE EXISTING LIBRARY SYSTEM

The Huron County Library is a three-tier system that functions as a department of the County of Huron. The three-tier library system consists of three levels of Branch libraries. Branch I libraries are located in Clinton, Exeter, Goderich, Seaforth and Wingham. These branches are open at least 30 hours per week and offer a full range of materials and services. Branch II libraries are located in Bayfield, Blyth, Brussels, Hensall, Kirkton and Zurich. These branches are open at least 15 hours per week and offer a computer catalogue of library holdings, some reference services, audio-visual materials and programs, as well as a wide selection of books. Branch III libraries are located in Auburn, Bluevale, Centralia, Fordwich and Gorrie. These branches are focused on meeting the needs of the local surrounding community. Resources are limited, however material can be requested from other branches. These branches are open 10 hours per week and contain a small collection of novels, paperbacks and children's books.

The following is a summary list of library services and programs available through the Huron County Public Library. Not all programs and services are available at all branches.

**Figure Two: Overview of Library Services**

**Print materials include:**

- ◆ Novels and informational books
- ◆ Books in other languages
- ◆ Best sellers and paperbacks
- ◆ Encyclopaedias and reference books
- ◆ Newspapers and magazines
- ◆ Children's books

**Other services include:**

- ◆ Interlibrary loan
- ◆ Computer catalogue
- ◆ Books by mail for residents unable to visit a library
- ◆ Preschool story-hour and other programs
- ◆ Internet access for the public

**Audio-visual materials include:**

- ◆ Talking books for the print-handicapped
- ◆ Music cassettes, compact discs, video cassettes
- ◆ Microfilm historical materials
- ◆ Books on cassette, read-along kits

**Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)**

Following are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with library services in Huron County as identified by the Steering Committee.

**Strengths and Weaknesses**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The County libraries act as a focal point for knowledge and recreational reading in the community</li> <li>◆ The libraries have a distinct image and a strong presence in the community. They are seen as the primary source for recreational reading and information. This image is a solid foundation that can be built upon in the future to provide improved or expanded services.</li> <li>◆ Libraries create a sense of place and attachment. They provide a focal point in many communities for social interaction.</li> <li>◆ The libraries provide appropriate access in both urban and rural areas of the County</li> <li>◆ Library staff are helpful, friendly and knowledgeable and create a positive image for the municipality in their dealings with residents</li> <li>◆ There is strong community support for the library – both among the general public and County Council</li> <li>◆ The libraries provide a good collection of traditional resources</li> <li>◆ The library system allows for the sharing of materials and resources within the County. This rotating of resources allows for a higher level of service and greater efficiency in the use of materials.</li> <li>◆ The libraries are an accepted and effective part of the County municipal structure</li> <li>◆ All libraries have computer access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Both users and staff may have a traditional view of the library and consequently there may be some resistance to change. This may frustrate attempts to adopt new or improved services</li> <li>◆ In an effort to provide good access to library services throughout the County, resources may be spread too thin and this may undermine the quality of service</li> <li>◆ There are problems with providing well trained and qualified staff at all libraries because of the number of service points in the library system</li> <li>◆ The library is seen as a soft or non-essential service. This may adversely affect financial support among taxpayers and Councillors who place a priority on hard services</li> <li>◆ Many library buildings are out-dated and inadequate</li> <li>◆ At many libraries the hours of operation are limited and consequently the library may not be open at times that are convenient for users and this may limit use.</li> <li>◆ The library is not optimizing its technological capabilities.</li> </ul>

**Opportunities and Threats**

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Information is an increasingly important part of day-to-day living and increasingly critical to the economy. The library is in a unique position to respond to these increasingly important information requirements</li> <li>◆ The growth of home based business will place increasing demands on the library</li> <li>◆ The library in Huron County can respond to needs that in other municipalities might be served at least in part by others, such as major bookstores or a university library</li> <li>◆ The library has a unique role to play as the “net navigator” in helping residents to access and effectively use the Internet. The role of the library as an Internet trainer will expand</li> <li>◆ Given the role that the library can play in training and helping to navigate the net, there will be opportunities to attract new users to the library</li> <li>◆ With the changes in information technology, there is an opportunity for the library to reassess its role and refine the services it will provide to the community</li> <li>◆ The library can increasingly form effective partnerships with other information and service providers, such as government offices. Contracts may be increasingly available to provide government services through the library</li> <li>◆ Improved technologies for access to the library may result in fewer branches and other opportunities to share resources and link County library branches in a manner that is more cost effective</li> <li>◆ Increased opportunities will be available to link the Huron County Library to a growing and more sophisticated provincial library system</li> <li>◆ A stronger connection can be made between the library and its contribution to the economy; the ability of the library to contribute to broader municipal objectives such as economic development will be enhanced.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Libraries will be affected by diminishing resources and increasing competition with hard services for available municipal financial support</li> <li>◆ Some segments of the community may increasingly look to other information providers, such as the Internet, to meet their needs</li> <li>◆ To the extent that the library must compete with other information providers, library use and support may be adversely impacted. In both cases, this may place added pressure on library funding</li> <li>◆ Increased use of the Internet from home and a growing supply of information accessible from the net (e.g. government documents) may decrease use and support for the library</li> <li>◆ Other providers, such as government offices, may increase their role as direct information providers to the community</li> <li>◆ There may be a need to limit the number of library branches due to financial pressures and to provide the types of services that will be demanded in the future.</li> </ul>

The SWOT identifies key considerations to be addressed in the Strategic Plan.

## LIBRARY SERVICE TRENDS

The following is a brief summary of some of the more important trends affecting library service delivery in the Province of Ontario. These are Province wide trends that will affect communities to differing degrees. Nonetheless, they point to significant change in library services and they are relevant to Huron County's Strategic Plan. These trends were considered by the Steering Committee and helped to shape the Strategic Directions and Action Plans in this document.

- ◆ The demand for traditional library services will continue to grow in response to population growth and an aging and better-educated population. In addition, increased self-employment and home-based employment and a continuing need to upgrade occupational skills and competencies in a knowledge-based economy indicate expanded demand for information services. These trends, which may be somewhat less pronounced in Huron County due to the socio-economic profile of the community, point to an expanded demand for more sophisticated library services.
- ◆ Increased demand, the need to provide a wider range of services (including electronic information) and the need for operating efficiencies will result in larger libraries with skilled staff and longer operating hours. While a move to electronic information has raised the issue of whether the virtual library will replace library buildings, to date there is little evidence to suggest this will be the case. Residents still value the library as a focal point in their community and many highly valued services are linked to the physical location. However, small libraries with limited materials, operating on a restricted schedule without trained staff will not meet the needs of future users and will not provide cost-effective service.
- ◆ While growth in the demand for information-based services and recreational reading can be anticipated, the role of the public library in meeting these needs is less clear. With as many as 60% of Ontario residents having access to the Internet at home, and every indication this proportion will continue to increase rapidly, the information consumer has alternatives. Similarly, advances in e-publishing may provide an alternative to traditional library services. The public library will need to keep pace with these changes and provide the technological infrastructure and the skilled staff to offer desired services. If libraries accomplish this, they have the opportunity to redefine roles and services in a manner that can increase their use, relevance and support. Failure to embrace these changes may result in declining levels of use and community support.
- ◆ While public libraries continue to command high levels of public support among Ontario residents, recent research<sup>1</sup> indicates a changing perception of the library's role as a public institution. About 50% of residents view the library as one of many information suppliers and attach no particular significance to the library as a public institution. Residents are split in their opinion of whether the library will be more or less important in the future, but the younger respondents and heavy Internet users are more likely to suggest libraries will be less important. These developments have critical implications for library services in the near future. Libraries must retain their traditional market while reaching out to new users with competitive, high quality services that will attract the next generation of library users.
- ◆ To expand the available range and quality of services and potentially secure new sources of revenue, public libraries will increasingly facilitate the provision of government and community services. Partnerships with the public and private sector will be increasingly important. Public libraries in Ontario will increasingly pursue collective initiatives and will join with boards of education, university and other publicly funded libraries to purchase materials and provide services.
- ◆ Growing demands for financial and service accountability and legislative requirements and initiatives of senior levels of government will require libraries to adopt more sophisticated planning and management techniques. Strategic planning, business plans and performance measures will be common and staff will be increasingly skilled in the use of these management techniques.

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<sup>1</sup> Ontario Public Library Strategic Plan Survey. MarketProbe Canada. November 2000.

## VISION AND SERVICE DELIVERY PRINCIPLES

The Vision describes a preferred future for the Huron County Library. This future will be realized with full regard for the realities that surround the public library in Huron County. These realities both define the constraints that affect the library in Huron County and the essential values of a public library system. They are reflected in the Strategic Plan's Service Delivery Principles. These principles will guide the delivery of library services and the library's relationship with the community. The principles are specific to Huron County and define the context within which the library operates. It is within this context that the Vision will be achieved.

### A VISION FOR THE HURON COUNTY LIBRARY

The Huron County Library contributes to the quality of life in Huron County by providing an opportunity for accessing information, life long learning and recreational reading.

### HURON COUNTY LIBRARY - SERVICE DELIVERY PRINCIPLES

- ◆ **Quality and Financial Accountability** – the Huron County Library will provide state of the art services within the financial means of the municipality
- ◆ **Service** - the Huron County Library will focus on the needs of the residents of Huron County
- ◆ **Efficiency** – the Huron County Library will deliver services in the most efficient manner possible
- ◆ **Accountability** – the Huron County Library will demonstrate its contribution to the County and its ability to meet the needs of residents
- ◆ **Access** – the Huron County Library is committed to making its services accessible to all County residents



## GOALS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The **Goals** in the Strategic Plan describe what the Huron County Library must do to achieve its Vision. The Strategic Plan identifies four goals that address the core areas of future library development in Huron County. These are: (1) Infrastructure (2) Human Resources (3) Management of Library Service Delivery, and (4) Funding and Finance.

**Strategic Directions** are identified for each Goal. They provide more specific statements of how the Goals will be realized. A limited number of Strategic Directions have been identified which isolate the core components of an overall strategy to achieve the goal. The Plan includes 12 Strategic Directions in support of the Goals.

The Goals and Strategic Directions are summarized in Figure Three and described on the following pages.

In addition to the Goals and Strategic Directions, the Plan identifies a number of **Action Plans**. The Action Plans are specific tasks that will be undertaken by the Huron County Library to pursue each of the Strategic Directions.

**Figure Three**  
**Goals and Strategic Directions**

**Vision**

The Huron County Library contributes to the quality of life in Huron County by providing an opportunity for accessing information, life long learning and recreational reading.

Infrastructure	Human Resources	Management of Library Service Delivery	Funding and Finance
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Goal</b>
To ensure the Huron County Library has the infrastructure to deliver a full range of services as efficiently and effectively as possible.	To ensure staff are appropriately deployed and capable of delivering required library services.	To manage library service delivery effectively.	To ensure adequate funding is available to support library service delivery.
<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Strategic Direction</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To develop a facility model that defines the number and type of service points required to efficiently and effectively deliver library services in Huron County.</li> <li>◆ To ensure capital conservation and upgrading strategies are in place for all new and existing facilities.</li> <li>◆ To improve residents access to Huron County Library resources through better use of technology</li> <li>◆ To provide access to a wider range of electronic information.</li> <li>◆ To train users to access information from electronic sources.</li> <li>◆ To maintain and develop the library collections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To provide appropriate and ongoing training and professional development opportunities for staff.</li> <li>◆ To ensure staff are deployed in the most efficient and effective manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To ensure that Huron County Library services are evaluated on a regular basis and ongoing procedures are in place to manage service delivery</li> <li>◆ To pursue service delivery partnerships that are cost effective and contribute to enhanced or improved services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To investigate approaches for increasing revenue to support library service delivery.</li> <li>◆ To demonstrate regularly the benefits of investment in library services</li> </ul>

## Goals and Strategic Directions

### INFRASTRUCTURE

#### OUR FUTURE:

The necessary Infrastructure – facilities, collections and technology – must be in place to deliver quality library services in Huron County. While library services will be delivered from facilities located in Huron County, much of the information residents require in the future will be best provided in electronic format. Increasingly, residents will be able to access library services without visiting our facilities. To meet the needs of the future, libraries will provide improved electronic information resources, an expanded range of services and greater access. Providing enhanced services in a cost effective manner will require new approaches to the design and development of our libraries and possibly fewer service points. Existing and new libraries must be updated and maintained to adequately serve all County residents. Huron County residents will access the universe of information and ideas through their public library. The technological infrastructure will be in place to allow our residents to fully participate in province wide initiatives to expand access to digital information.

**Goal 1:** To ensure the Huron County Library has the infrastructure to deliver a full range of services as efficiently and effectively as possible.

<b>Action Plans</b>	
<b>Tasks</b>	
<b>SD 1.1:</b> To develop a facility model that defines the number and type of service points required to efficiently and effectively deliver library services in Huron County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review current services and use of existing branches and compare to future service standards and best practices.</li> <li>● Review demographic trends and population projections relative to future facility needs.</li> <li>● Identify new approaches to service delivery (e.g., book deposits, satellite branches) in comparable communities and assess their applicability in Huron County.</li> <li>● Identify criteria and standards of services for evaluating facility requirements.</li> <li>● Recommend a facility model for Huron County Library.</li> </ul>
<b>SD 1.2:</b> To ensure capital conservation and upgrading strategies are in place for all new and existing facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop minimum standards for facilities to address physical requirements and service requirements.</li> <li>● Assess existing buildings to identify structural and functional limitations</li> <li>● Explore alternative models for County and local municipality ownership, management and maintenance of facilities.</li> <li>● Prepare a capital conservation strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>SD 1.3:</b> To improve residents access to Huron County Library resources through better use of technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maximize the capabilities of Huron County's automated library system.</li> <li>● Ensure the public library catalogue is available to residents electronically.</li> <li>● Ensure that all libraries in the County are linked and have access to all resources.</li> </ul>
<b>SD 1.4:</b> To provide access to a wider range of electronic information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assess existing electronic resources to document current use and identify gaps.</li> <li>● Evaluate commercially available resources and determine their value to the Huron County library.</li> <li>● Subscribe to relevant commercial databases given available resources.</li> </ul>
<b>SD 1.5:</b> To train users to access information from electronic sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Investigate the needs of library users for training through surveys/questionnaires.</li> <li>● Identify potential partners for offering training.</li> <li>● Offer workshops for users at local library branches.</li> <li>● Prepare a detailed training program for users.</li> </ul>
<b>SD 1.6:</b> To maintain and develop the library collections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prepare a collections development model.</li> </ul>

## Human Resources

### OUR FUTURE

With a changing range of services and increased complexity surrounding the management of these services, the skills of library staff will need to be enhanced. The complexity of library service delivery will demand improved technical, managerial, and communication skills. Training of existing staff and recruitment of sufficient staff with the appropriate skills to serve our residents will be a priority.

It will also be necessary to explore strategies to ensure libraries throughout the County can be adequately staffed. A pool of qualified part-time staff are required to replace full-time, permanent staff when required.

**Goal 2:** To ensure staff are appropriately deployed and capable of delivering required library services.

<b>Action Plans</b>	
	<b>Tasks</b>
<b>SD 2.1:</b> To provide appropriate and ongoing training and professional development opportunities for staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evaluate existing skill levels of staff and prepare a training/skill development program.</li> <li>● Explore co-operative training opportunities with other County Departments, the Boards of Education or others.</li> <li>● Identify training courses available from other sources (e.g. post-secondary institutions, provincial library organizations, etc.).</li> <li>● Establish mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of staff training and regularly monitoring staff skills and capabilities.</li> <li>● Develop a training strategy for staff.</li> </ul>
<b>SD 2.2:</b> To ensure staff are deployed in the most efficient and effective manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure an adequate pool of temporary (call-in) staff is available.</li> <li>● Review current staffing patterns to evaluate workload and required levels of service.</li> <li>● Identify new staff deployment procedures.</li> </ul>

## Management of Library Service Delivery

### OUR FUTURE

There will be a need to continually anticipate and respond to a changing social, economic and organizational context for library services. The library will embrace these changes with improved planning and evaluation skills and procedures. The library will continue to strive for a balance in the range of services available to residents that respects the diversity of needs in the community and the availability of resources.

Huron County Library will increasingly be connected to a network of community agencies and service providers working together to serve the interests of residents. In the future, additional services may be provided in partnership with others. It is recognized, however, that not all partnership opportunities will be advantageous. In addition, the staff time and resources required to form effective partnerships must be balanced against the anticipated benefits. Huron County Library will join with other libraries and public and private interests to pursue joint service delivery where library services are improved, it is financially advantageous and benefits the community.

**Goal 3:** To manage library service delivery effectively.

<b>Action Plans</b>	
	<b>Tasks</b>
<b>SD 3.1:</b> To ensure that Huron County Library services are evaluated on a regular basis and ongoing procedures are in place to manage service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop standards against which to evaluate library services.</li> <li>• Regularly survey library users and non-users to investigate satisfaction, additional service requirements, etc.</li> <li>• Develop performance measures that will be used on an annual basis to monitor and evaluate library service in Huron County.</li> </ul>
<b>SD 3.2:</b> To pursue service delivery partnerships that are cost effective and contribute to enhanced or improved services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify potential partners and evaluate the merit of these partnerships in Huron County.</li> <li>• Monitor partnership opportunities identified provincially or in other jurisdictions.</li> <li>• Partner more effectively with other County departments to maximize opportunities to improve services</li> </ul>

## Funding and Finance

### OUR FUTURE

The Huron County Library is primarily funded by the County<sup>2</sup>. This traditional source of public funding will be enhanced with alternative sources of revenue within the constraints of the Public Libraries Act. By creatively exploring options to generate additional revenue and deliver services in a more cost effective manner, the Huron County Library will attempt to meet the full range of community needs. The Huron County Library will monitor the community's investment in library services to demonstrate the library's benefits.

**Goal 4:** To ensure adequate funding is available to support library service delivery.

<b>Action Plans</b>	
	<b>Tasks</b>
<b>SD 4.1:</b> To investigate approaches for increasing revenue to support library service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify a process to encourage donations to the County library system.</li> <li>● Promote the need for County-wide funding of library services.</li> <li>● Expand the "Friends of the Library " organizations and encourage a role in County-wide library fundraising.</li> <li>● Review fees for selected library services and determine potential to increase fee revenue.</li> <li>● Explore potential to deliver government services on a fee for service basis.</li> </ul>
<b>SD 4.2:</b> To demonstrate regularly the benefits of investment in library services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify performance measures focused on the library contribution to the community.</li> <li>● Prepare documentation annually to report on the benefits of the library.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> The 2002 Library Budget projects that 84% of the anticipated revenue for core library operations will come from the County of Huron.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

### Responsibility for Implementation

Responsibility for implementation of the Strategic Plan will rest with the CEO of the Huron County Library. The initiatives identified in the report will be managed by the CEO in conjunction with library staff. In most cases, staff will undertake these activities, however, external assistance may be required for some tasks. Other County staff may assist with some tasks, such as the building assessment (Strategic Direction 1.2). Consultants may also be required to support staff for a number of the initiatives in the Strategic Plan, including the building assessment of existing facilities (Strategic Direction 1.2), and the identification and refinement of performance measures and design and analysis of customer service surveys (Strategic Direction 3.1). Assistance with some of these tasks may be available from the Southern Ontario Library Service.

### Monitoring and Updating the Plan

The Strategic Plan, once approved by the Board and Council, should be the basis for annual operating plans and budget submissions. The initiatives identified in the Plan should be reflected in these documents and approved by the Board and Council.

The Strategic Plan should be reviewed annually and some components, such as the Action Plans, will be updated annually. In the medium term (3-5 years) it is unlikely the goals and strategic directions will require revision. These identify long-term improvements for library services and should be relevant for a number of years. It is possible that the initiatives associated with some of the Strategic Directions will be completed in this timeframe and the Strategic Direction can be removed from the Plan. It is also possible that new Strategic Directions will be identified and should be added to the Plan. In the next few years, however, the updating of the Strategic Plan should focus on the Action Plans. Tasks completed, partially completed and new tasks should be reviewed annually.

The monitoring and updating of the Strategic Plan should involve library and other senior County staff as well as the Board.

### Strategic Plan Priorities

Figure Four assigns priorities to the twelve Strategic Directions in the Plan. Timeframes are also attached to each priority level. Ideally, all of the Strategic Plan initiatives would be undertaken immediately and completed as soon as possible. This is not possible given staff resources. Consequently, we have suggested a two-year implementation strategy. This should be reviewed after the first year as part of the annual updating of the Strategic Plan.

We have commented on the assigned priorities below.

**Figure Four  
Implementation Strategy**

Goals	Strategic Direction Priorities		
	High 0 – 6 months	Medium 6 – 18 months	Low 12- 24 months
<p><b>Infrastructure</b> To ensure the Huron County Library has the infrastructure to deliver a full range of services as efficiently and effectively as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To develop a facility model that defines the number and type of service points required to efficiently and effectively deliver library services in Huron County.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To improve residents access to Huron County Library resources through better use of technology.</li> <li>◆ To provide access to a wider range of electronic information.</li> <li>◆ To train users to access information from electronic sources.</li> <li>◆ To maintain and develop the library collections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To ensure capital conservation and upgrading strategies are in place for all new and existing facilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Human Resources</b> To ensure staff are appropriately deployed and capable of delivering required library services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To provide appropriate and ongoing training and professional development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To ensure staff are deployed in the most efficient and effective manner.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Management of Library Service Delivery</b> To manage library service delivery effectively.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To ensure that Huron County Library services are evaluated on a regular basis and ongoing procedures are in place to manage service delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To pursue service delivery partnerships that are cost effective and contribute to enhanced or improved services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Funding and Finance</b> To ensure adequate funding is available to support library service delivery.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To investigate approaches for increasing revenue to support library service delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To demonstrate regularly the benefits of investment in library services.</li> </ul>

**HIGH PRIORITIES**

The high priority Strategic Directions should be acted upon immediately and be fully addressed within the first six months of the Plan's implementation. There are two high priority Strategic Directions: (1) To develop a facility model that defines the number and type of service points to efficiently and effectively deliver library services in Huron County; and, (2) to provide appropriate and ongoing training and professional development.

The facility development model is required to reposition the library system in a manner that is consistent with trends and future needs. Greater efficiencies and consequently a higher level of service with available resources is the objective of this strategy. Given that most other strategies in the Plan will follow from the new facility model, this

should be the first undertaking. When the new facility model is confirmed, human resource, management and funding and financing strategies can be pursued.

The other high priority Strategic Direction addresses staffing. This is an initiative that will extend beyond the first six months of implementation, but should be acted on immediately. Key components of the initiative, such as the evaluation of current skills and the preparation of a training strategy, must be put in place in the short term even if the actual training occurs over a longer period of time. Skilled staff must be available to support enhanced services and these initiatives should not be delayed.

#### **MEDIUM PRIORITIES**

The medium priorities primarily deal with technology, electronic information and collection development under the Infrastructure goal. These initiatives are intended to upgrade and improve services to residents in areas where growing demands are anticipated. These infrastructure improvements, which will allow the Huron County Library to provide better services to the next generation of library users, should be in place within eighteen months. While they could be phased in over a longer period of time, there is a risk of losing library users if these services are delayed.

In addition to the infrastructure improvements, other medium priorities address a staff deployment strategy, evaluation of services and revenue enhancement. In all cases, these should be acted upon as soon as possible, but could be gradually introduced in the medium term.

#### **LOW PRIORITIES**

The low priority Strategic Directions address capital conservation, partnership development and performance measures to demonstrate the value of library services. These are not initiatives that must be put in place to support other Strategic Directions. In addition, they will involve research, time and resources for development. Consequently, they could be delayed to the final stages of the Plan's implementation (12-24 months).



## Appendix A Situation Audit and Environmental Scan

The Situation Audit and Environmental Scan is a Background Report to the Strategic Plan. It was prepared in May 2001.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 Purpose of the Study

The County of Huron Library Strategic Plan is a long-range strategic plan for library services in the County. It will be used by the Huron County Library Board as well as County Council and lower-tier municipalities to guide decision-making for future library services.

The products of the study are as follows:

- ◆ Recommendations to improve current and future operations of the Huron County Library,
- ◆ A Vision that describes the purpose and role of the library in the County and promotes new approaches to library service delivery;
- ◆ A realistic strategy to enhance and improve library service delivery; and
- ◆ A basis for operational plans that can guide decisions concerning capital and operating expenditures and appropriate levels of service throughout the County.

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### 1.2 Study Process

The strategic planning process has been divided into five phases:

- ◆ **Phase One: Situation Audit** – describe current library operations and services;
- ◆ **Phase Two: Environmental Scan** – describe trends affecting library service delivery in Huron County, isolate threats to current library services and identify opportunities for service enhancement and challenges to be addressed in the Strategic Plan,
- ◆ **Phase Three: Vision/Goals/Strategic Directions** – agreement on a Vision, goals and strategic directions for the Strategic Plan;
- ◆ **Phase Four: Preparation of Action Plans** – outline how the County of Huron intends to proceed within each of the strategic directions; and
- ◆ **Phase Five: Implementation and Monitoring** – an approach for updating the Strategic Plan on a regular basis.

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### 1.3 Report Organization

This report includes the Situation Audit and the Trends Analysis for the Environmental Scan. It is organized into the following chapters.

Chapter 1.0	Introduction
Chapter 2.0	Summary of Existing Conditions
Chapter 3.0	Review of Facilities, Services, Organizational Structure and Finances
Chapter 4.0	Library Comparison Data
Chapter 5.0	Trends Affecting Library Service Delivery
Chapter 6.0	The Environmental Scan

Summary of Existing Conditions

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

### 2.1 Population Projections

Growth in the County of Huron is expected to be slow based on previous growth patterns. Between 1991 and 1996 the County population increased by 2%. We have a number of projections from previous studies<sup>1</sup> showing widely divergent future populations. The projection noted below is taken from the County's Ambulance Deployment Strategy. It assumes a 5.5% growth rate which is considerably higher than that experienced in recent years, but consistent with the 1986-1991 period. The authors of the report note this is a "conservatively high" estimate. Based on this estimate, by the year 2005 the County is expected to reach a population of 68,161, an increase of 15.4% from 1991 (Table 2.1). New growth is planned for existing urban areas.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 2.1 Population Projections by Former Municipal Boundaries**

	1991 Population	2005 Population
<b>Huron County</b>	59,065	68,161
<b>Townships</b>		
Ashfield	1,805	2,083
Colborne	2,043	2,358
Goderich	2,560	2,954
Grey	2,000	2,308
Hay	2,182	2,518
Howick	3,461	3,994
Hullett	1,807	2,085
McKillop	1,468	1,694
Morris	1,725	1,991
Stanley	1,546	1,784
Stephen	4,215	4,864
Tuckersmith	3,170	3,658
Turnberry	1,582	1,826
Usborne	1,552	1,791
E. Wawanosh	1,187	1,370
W. Wawanosh	1,389	1,603
<b>Towns</b>		
Clinton	3,187	3,678
Exeter	4,338	5,006
Goderich	7,452	8,660
Seaforth	2,132	2,668
Wingham	3,018	3,483
<b>Villages</b>		
Bayfield	810	935
Blyth	955	1,102
Brussels	1,196	1,380
Hensall	1,238	1,429
Zurich	860	992

<sup>1</sup> Huron County Housing Study, Waste Management Master Plan, Ontario Ministry of Finance.

<sup>2</sup> Huron County Ambulance Services Deployment Strategy, May 2000.

Source: Ambulance Deployment Strategy for the County of Huron Draft Paper.

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## 2.2 Population Characteristics

Between 1991 and 1996 the population increased by only 2%, while the population of the province grew by over 6%. The population is characterized by a significant child and youth population and a large proportion of residents over the age of 65 and is aging more rapidly than the provincial average. Significant population growth occurred in the rural non-farming population of the County (urban population increased by 24% between 1971-1996 while rural farm population declined by 36%). Growth has been concentrated around the lakeshore areas. Between 1991 and 1996 a large proportion of out-migration occurred in the age group 15-29. In-migration occurred for those in their thirties and their children (0-14) and for those aged 55 to 69.<sup>3</sup>

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## 2.3 Age Structure

Between 1991 and 1996 the age structure of Huron County residents remained relatively stable. The County experienced a slight decrease in residents under the age of 19 and slight increases in those 20-54 and over the age of 55. Compared to the Province of Ontario, Huron County has a slightly higher proportion of residents under the age of 19, a smaller proportion of residents between 20 and 55 and a significantly higher proportion of residents over the age of 55.

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**Table 2.2 Age Structure-Huron County and Ontario<sup>4</sup>**

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	Huron County 1991	Huron County 1996	Ontario 1996	Huron County Percent Change
0-19	30%	29.6%	27.1%	-0.4%
20-54	43.8%	44%	51.8%	+0.2%
55+	26.2%	26.4%	21.1%	+0.2%

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<sup>3</sup> Population Growth in Huron County. Fall 2000

<sup>4</sup> 1991 and 1996 Statistics Canada excluding the 2000 projections for Huron County which were extracted from the Financial Post Markets Canadian Demographics for 2000.

## 2.4 Education Levels

Between 1991 and 1996 the County of Huron experienced a rise in the percentage of residents receiving a non-university certificate and in the number of residents attending a post-secondary institution. However compared to the Province of Ontario, the proportion of residents with a university degree/certificate is significantly lower.

**Table 2.3 Comparison of Levels of Education-Huron County and Ontario<sup>5</sup>**

	Huron County 1991	Huron County 1996	Percent Change	Ontario 1996
Less than Grade 9	14.6%	12.5%	-2.1%	10%
Grade 9-13 without Certificate	30.9%	30.4%	-0.5%	23%
Grade 9-13 with Certificate	15.4%	14.9%	-0.5%	14.6%
Trade Certificate/Diploma	5%	4.4%	-0.6%	3.5%
Non-University without Certificate	5.2%	5.1%	-0.1%	6.4%
Non-University with Certificate	18%	20.3%	+2.3%	18.1%
University without Degree/Certificate	5.2%	5.6%	+0.4%	9.4%
University with Degree/Certificate	5.8%	6.7%	+0.9%	14.9%

## 2.5 Census Family Income

Between 1991 and 1996 decreases occurred in the proportion of residents with census family incomes below \$29,999 and between \$30,000 and \$69,999. The most noticeable change occurred in the rise in the number of residents with a family income over \$70,000, however, Huron County had a significantly smaller proportion of residents than Ontario in this income range (Table 2.4).

**Table 2.4 Comparison of Census Family Income-Huron County and Ontario<sup>6</sup>**

	Huron County 1991	Huron County 1996	Percent Change	Ontario 1996
Under \$29,999	28.7%	28.3%	-0.4%	25.1%
\$30,000-\$69,999	55.9%	50.7%	-5.2%	44%
Over \$70,000	15.5%	21%	+5.5%	30.9%

### Selected Economic and Employment Indicators – Huron County

The following indicators were extracted from the fact sheets prepared for the Community Evolution Project.

<sup>5</sup> 1991 and 1996 Statistics Canada.

<sup>6</sup> 1991 and 1996 Statistics Canada.

## Employment

- ◆ In 1996, approximately 20% of Huron County workforce was self-employed. This is an increase over 1991 and a level that is three times higher than the Province.
- ◆ Between 1961 and 1991, growth in employment opportunities have been in services, trade, manufacturing and construction.
- ◆ Female participation in the labour force is higher as is part-time employment. Both of these trends are consistent with Ontario trends.
- ◆ Twenty-four percent of the labour force commuted outside of the County for employment in 1996, up from 17% in 1991.

## Business Activity

- ◆ In the period 1991-1998, the greatest growth in the number of businesses in Huron County was in the following sectors: agriculture, manufacturing, and transportation and communications, finance and business and government, education and health. The continued growth of agriculture and manufacturing would not be consistent with trends in Ontario but reflects the long-standing position of these sectors in the Huron County economy.
- ◆ The number of new businesses (excluding farms) has grown by 12% in Huron County in the period 1991-98. Consistent with provincial trends, much of this growth has been in small business (88% of Huron County businesses employ less than 5 people).
- ◆ Consistent with trends elsewhere, the number of farms in Huron County has dropped significantly in the past 45 years, but the average size of farms has increased significantly in this period. In the period 1986-96 there has been an increase in farm operations as partnerships and family corporations and a decline in sole proprietorships.

## Economic Well Being

- ◆ Average incomes for both males and females have increased in the period 1971-96, but Huron County incomes still lag behind provincial averages.
- ◆ The number of low income individuals has increased in Huron County in the period 1981-96, however, low income families have declined in this period.

## Financial Post - Canadian Mosaic Lifestyle Segments – Huron County

The Canadian Mosaic uses census data and the Statistics Canada Family Expenditure Survey to construct clusters or lifestyle segments reflecting consumer behaviour. The segments most often represented in the Huron County population were “Country Bedrock” “Apple Pie and Picket Fences” and “Poodles and Prescriptions”. These segments represented 49.4%, 23.3% and 20.5% of total households respectively (compared to 7.6%, 6.7% and 7.8% for Canada as a whole). A description of each lifestyle segment follows.

**Country Bedrock** – Aged anywhere from 25-65+ with children aged 1-20, and a household income of \$48,000. This group is often only high-school educated, and are often either farmers and fishermen, or employed in blue-collar industries. They are found in rural areas and small towns across English speaking Canada. They live in inexpensive, older, single-detached homes and spend more than average on improving their homes through new additions, furniture, and household textiles. They also spend on recreational vehicles, child-care, infant wear, and long distance telephone services.

**Apple Pie and Picket Fences** – Aged anywhere from 25-65+ with children aged 1-20, and a household income of \$51,000. This group is high school or college-educated, and is often either farmers or employed in blue-collar industries. This Group is most notable for their representation in English-speaking small towns across Ontario and western Canada. They live in inexpensive, older, single-detached homes and spend more than average on improving their homes through new additions, furniture, and household textiles. They also spend on child-care, infant wear and long distance telephone communications.

**Poodles and Prescriptions** – Aged 60+ with few children at home, and a household income of \$43,000. This group of comfortable Seniors earns a significant amount of their income from their investments. They often live in rented apartments or flats, primarily in rural areas across Canada (the exception being a concentration in Montreal). Their spending on prescription drugs and health-care is at approximately four times the national average, but this group is not bedridden. They also spend well above the average on bicycles, packaged travel tours, recreation vehicles, hobbies, and pets.



## 3.0 REVIEW OF HURON COUNTY LIBRARY FACILITIES, SERVICES, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND FINANCES

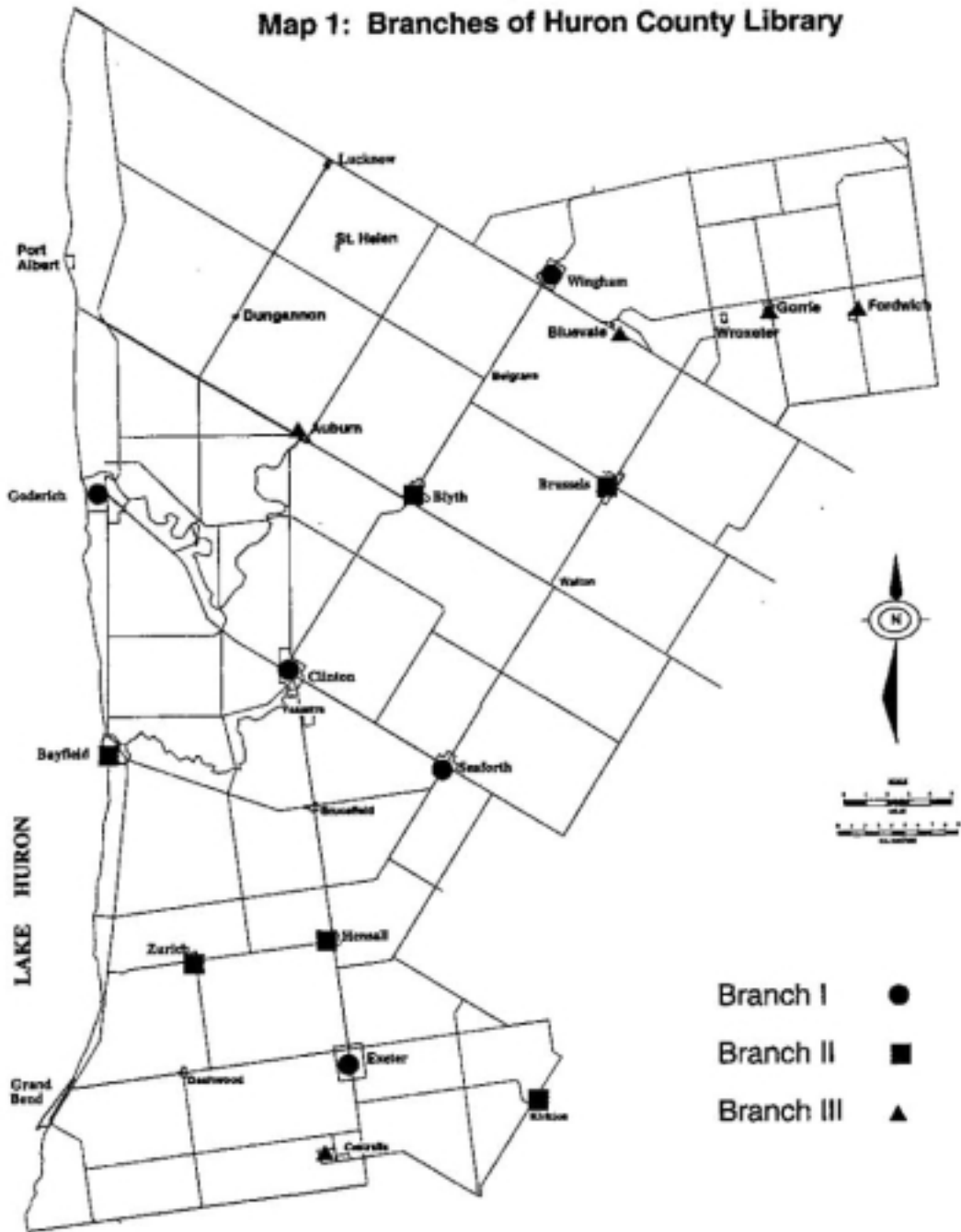
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### 3.1 Facilities

The Huron County Library is a three-tier system that functions as a department of the County of Huron. The three-tier library system consists of three levels of Branch libraries. Branch I libraries are located in Clinton, Exeter, Goderich, Seaforth and Wingham. These branches are open at least 30 hours per week and offer a full range of materials and services. Branch II libraries are located in Bayfield, Blyth, Brussels, Hensall, Kirkton and Zurich. These branches are open at least 15 hours per week and offer a computer catalogue of library holdings, some reference services, audio-visual materials and programs, as well as a wide selection of books. Branch III libraries are located in Auburn, Bluevale, Centralia, Fordwich and Gorrie. These branches are focused on meeting the needs of the local surrounding community. Resources are limited, however material can be requested from other branches. These branches are only open 2-5 hours per week and contain a small collection of novels, paperbacks and children's books. The location of the branches is indicated in Map 1.

#### Branch I Libraries

Table 3.1 describes the Branch I libraries located in Clinton, Exeter, Goderich, Seaforth and Wingham. The facilities range in size from 2,000 square feet to 4,100 square feet and operate between 31 and 57 hours per week. Each branch contains a large selection of books, periodicals, newspapers, books on cassette, videos, music cassettes and CD's. The service area varies depending on the Branch. For example the Seaforth branch serves a population of 4,000 while the Goderich library serves 15,000. The number of registered borrowers ranges from just under 2,000 to over 6,500. Circulation for 1999 indicates a wide variation among branches. The Clinton branch had the smallest circulation at 40,534 while the Goderich library had the largest circulation with 99,715, which would be expected as the branch serves the largest population and has the most registered borrowers. Each branch has a Branch Supervisor and at least two Assistants. The number of student page's varied from branch to branch, Wingham and Exeter with three and Clinton with one. The Exeter branch had the highest number of volunteers (23) while Goderich had twelve and Clinton had five. Seaforth and Wingham did not have any volunteers.



### **Branch II Libraries**

Table 3.2 describes Branch II libraries, which are located in Bayfield, Blyth, Brussels, Hensall, Kirkton and Zurich. The Bayfield and Brussels library facilities are located in stand alone structures, both over 1,000 square feet while the remaining branch libraries are located in municipal buildings and community centres. These range in size from 473 square feet to 969 square feet. Branch II libraries operate approximately 15 hours per week with the exception of the Bayfield library that operates for 28 hours per week during the summer months. The collections range in size from 2,200 to 6,350 and include books, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, books on cassette, music cassettes and videos. These branches have computer catalogues of library holdings and offer some reference services, audio-visual materials and programs in addition to a large selection of books. The service areas of Branch II libraries range in population from 400 to 2,900 and have 283 to 1,260 registered borrowers. In 1999 the circulation for these branches was significantly less than Branch I libraries and ranged from 10,368 in Blyth to 17,444 in Bayfield. Each branch has one Branch supervisor as their only staff with the exception of Bayfield, which also has a Branch Assistant and one volunteer.

### **Branch III Libraries**

Table 3.3 describes Branch III libraries, which are located in Auburn, Bluevale, Centralia, Fordwich and Gorrie and are available to serve the needs of the immediate community. These branches are located in rooms in local community centres and only operate between 2 and 5 hours per week. The branch collections contain only books and range in size from 1,200 to 2,200 and their reference resources are limited. These branches serve small populations (between 250-800) and have varied numbers of registered borrowers (89-259). Circulations range from 585 (Bluevale) to 6,384 (Centralia). Staffing consists of one Branch Supervisor.

**Table 3.1 Branch I Information<sup>7</sup>**

Branch I	Facility	Hours Per Week	Collection	Pop. Served	Registered Borrowers	Circulation (1999)	Staff	Volunteers
Clinton	Renovated Stavely building, Carnegie addition. 3,880 sq. ft. on 2 floors. Main floor wheelchair accessible.	32	20,500 books, periodicals & newspapers, books on cassette, readalong kits, music cassettes & CD's, videos, talking books, microfilm.	4,500	2,588	40,534	1 Branch Supervisor 2 Branch Assistants 1 Student Page	5 (43.5 hrs)
Exeter <sup>8</sup>	Carnegie building, 2 floors, 2,022 sq. ft. Book Drop	31	18,300 books, 30 periodicals & newspapers, books on cassette, videos, music cassettes, readalong kits, talking books.	5,700	5,139	42,440	1 Branch Supervisor 3 Branch Assistants 3 Student Page's	23 (132 hrs)
Goderich	Carnegie building, 2 floors, 4,134 sq. ft. book drop, access lift, Program room	57	27,200 books, magazines, newspapers, music cassettes & CD's, readalong kits, videos, books on cassette, talking books, microfilm	15,000	6,538	99,715	1 Branch Supervisor 4 Branch Assistants 2 Student Page's	12 (29 hrs)
Seaforth	Renovated Carnegie library, book drop, elevator, 2 floors wheelchair accessible, 3,272 sq. ft.	32	19,000 books, periodicals, newspapers, books on cassette, music cassettes, videos, readalong kits, talking books.	4,000	2,095	42,129	1 Branch Supervisor 4 Branch Assistants 2 Student Page's	0
Wingham	Renovated, 3,040 sq. ft. book drop, program room	38	20,000 books, magazines, videos, readalong kits, music cassettes, CD's, talking books, microfilm	9,500	1,939	46,876	1 Branch Supervisor 3 Branch Assistants 3 Student Page's	0

<sup>7</sup> Internal staff documents.

<sup>8</sup> These are figures for 1999. The Exeter Branch has been replaced with a new 5,200 sq. ft. facility to open in 2001.

**Table 3.2 Branch II Information<sup>9</sup>**

Branch II	Facility	Hours Per Week	Collection	Pop. Served	Registered Borrowers	Circulation (1999)	Staff	Volunteers
Bayfield	Stand alone frame building 1035 sq. ft.	18 winter 28 summer	4,700 books, magazines, books on cassette, music cassettes, talking books, videos, readalong kits	2,900	1,260	17,444	1 Branch Supervisor 1 Branch Assistant	1 (18 hrs)
Blyth	Room in Blyth Memorial Hall 969 sq. ft.	15	3,450 books, 14 periodical subscriptions, readalong kits, music cassettes, videos.	1,500	916	10,368	1 Branch Supervisor	0
Brussels	Carnegie building, 1,275 sq. ft.	15	5,600 books, periodicals, subscriptions, read along kits, music cassettes, videos	1,600	835	14,536	1 Branch Supervisor	0
Hensall	Renovated room in Town Hall. Book drop, wheelchair accessible, 627 sq. ft.	15	6,350 books, periodicals, newspapers, readalong kits, music cassettes, videos, books on cassette, talking books.	1,500	682	15,947	1 Branch Supervisor	0
Kirkton	Room in Community Centre, wheelchair accessible, book drop, 473 sq. ft.	15	4,000 books, periodicals, readalong kits, music cassettes, videos, books on cassettes, talking books.	400	283	10,646	1 Branch Supervisor	0
Zurich	Room in lower floor of municipal building, book drop, 834 sq. ft.	18	5,700 books, periodicals, newspapers, music cassettes, videos, books on cassette, readalong kits.	1,700	1,175	17,059	1 Branch Supervisor	0

**Table 3.3 Branch III Information<sup>10</sup>**

Branch III	Facility	Hours Per Week	Collection	Pop. Served	Registered Borrowers	Circulation (1999)	Staff (1999)	Volunteers
Auburn	Room in Community Hall, 202 sq. ft.	2	Approx. 2,000 books	250	94	834	1 Branch Supervisor	0
Bluevale	Room in community hall 194 sq. ft.	2	1,300 books	280	89	585	1 Branch Supervisor	0
Centralia	Basement Room in Community Hall	5	Approx. 1,200 books	350	251	6,384	1 Branch Supervisor	0
Fordwich	Basement room in community hall	5	2,200 books	800	364	4,284	1 Branch Supervisor	0
Gorrie	Basement room in Community Hall	4	2,150 books	550	259	2,011	1 Branch Supervisor	0

<sup>9</sup> Internal staff documents.

<sup>10</sup> Internal staff documents.

### 3.2 Comparison of Huron County Library Branches

Table 3.4 compares the populations served, the number of registered borrowers and the circulation of the library branches. This table is based on branch information provided by staff and found in Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. The size per population was derived by dividing the size of the each facility by the total population it serves. The number of registered borrowers was divided by the total population served as well as the total operating hours per week. The total circulation was divided by the population served and the total number of operating hours per week. This information is provided for each library branch in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4 Comparison of Huron County Branch Libraries**

Library	Size (sq. ft.) per population served	Borrowers		Circulation	
		Per Population Served	Per Hour of Operation Per Week	Per Population Served	Per Hour of Operation Per Week
<b>Branch I</b>					
Clinton	0.86	0.58	81	9	1,267
Exeter	0.35	0.90	166	7.5	1,369
Goderich	0.28	0.44	115	6.6	1,749
Seaforth	0.81	0.52	66	10.5	1,317
Wingham	0.32	0.20	51	4.9	1,234
<b>Branch II</b>					
Bayfield	0.36	0.43	Winter: 70 Summer 45	6	Winter: 969 Summer: 623
Blyth	0.65	0.61	61	6.9	691
Brussels	1.59	0.52	56	9.1	969
Hensall	0.42	0.46	46	10.6	1,063
Kirkton	1.18	0.71	19	26.6	710
Zurich	0.49	0.69	65	10	948
<b>Branch III</b>					
Auburn	0.81	0.38	47	3.3	417
Bluevale	0.69	0.32	45	2.1	293
Centralia	0.87	0.72	50	18.2	1,277
Fordwich	0.44	0.46	73	5.4	857
Gorrie	0.65	0.47	65	3.7	503

The statistics in Table 3.4 demonstrate considerable variation among branches in each category. With the possible exception of size per population served, where 0.6 sq.ft. per capita is sometimes used, there are no standards that can be used to evaluate these statistics. It is likely that the noted variations can be attributed to unique attributes of the market or the facilities and services. Whether meaningful targets using these indicators (and others) can be established for the Huron County Public Library is an issue that should be addressed in the Strategic Plan.

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### **3.3 Comparison of Annual Weekly Statistics**

Table 3.5 describes selected measures of library use for a typical week at each Huron County branch. As with the statistics in Table 3.4, there is considerable variation which can not be explained by the data. The relevance of the variation for the Strategic Plan will be discussed further. The findings in Table 3.5 are discussed below.

#### **Branch I**

According to annual weekly statistics (see Table 3.5) the Goderich Branch has the largest weekly circulation and the largest number of reference questions asked. A significant amount of in-library use occurs at the Wingham and Clinton branches. The Goderich branch has the most email requests while Clinton has the most mail requests. The Goderich library branch also has the highest number of weekly visits, library uses and phone requests, and as previously stated, the largest circulation.

#### **Branch II**

The Hensall library branch has the highest weekly circulation numbers from all Branch II libraries along with the most in-library use. The Zurich branch has the most reference questions, email and phone requests, visits, and library uses. The Bayfield branch has the most mail requests and the largest circulation.

#### **Branch III**

The Auburn branch receives the most reference questions and in-library use while the Centralia branch has the highest weekly circulation and the largest circulation. Out of all the Branch III libraries, the Fordwich branch receives the most visits.

Compared to all three branch levels the Headquarters in Clinton has the highest email and mail requests.

**Table 3.5 Annual Survey Week Statistics<sup>11</sup>**

	Circulation for Week	Reference Questions	In-Library Use	E-mail Requests	Mail Requests	Visits	Phone Requests	Library Uses	Annual Circulation (-bulk loans)
Branch 1									
Clinton	772	114	355	51	28	397	20	496	40,237
Exeter	791	43	96	22	0	500	14	536	42,278
Goderich	2,024	169	306	53	0	1,118	84	1,255	98,211
Seaforth	804	81	137	42	0	459	20	521	40,692
Wingham	862	87	430	34	0	907	6	947	46,129
Branch 2									
Bayfield	314	12	14	12	8	125	9	154	17,094
Blyth	248	16	15	17	6	138	4	165	10,368
Brussels	285	21	132	6	0	152	26	184	14,536
Hensall	333	34	165	15	1	166	19	201	15,947
Kirkton	164	10	72	16	5	65	19	105	10,646
Zurich	329	60	59	24	3	196	27	250	16,639
Branch 3									
Auburn	12	11	21	0	0	11	0	11	834
Bluevale	7	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	497
Centralia	110	3	2	0	1	23	1	25	6,384
Fordwich	95	5	3	0	1	40	1	42	4,284
Gorrie	74	4	5	0	4	27	0	31	2,011
HQ	9	9	1	537	78	13	14	642	964

### 3.4 Library Services and Programs

The following is a summary list of library services and programs available through the Huron County Public Library. As noted in Section 3.1, not all programs and services are available at all branches.

**Print materials include:**

- ◆ Novels and informational books
- ◆ Books in other languages
- ◆ Best sellers and paperbacks
- ◆ Encyclopaedias and reference books
- ◆ Newspapers and magazines
- ◆ Children's books

- ◆ Microfilm historical materials
- ◆ Books on cassette, read-along kits

**Audio-visual materials include:**

- ◆ Talking books for the print-handicapped
- ◆ Music cassettes, compact discs, video cassettes

**Other services include:**

- ◆ Interlibrary loan
- ◆ Internet access
- ◆ Computer catalogue
- ◆ Books by mail for residents unable to visit a library
- ◆ Preschool story-hour and other programs
- ◆ Internet access for the public

<sup>11</sup> Huron County Library Staff.

### 3.5 Huron County Library Circulation

Since 1995 library circulation across the County has decreased. This is consistent with the experience of many Ontario libraries and does not necessarily indicate lower levels of library use or demand. The only branch to experience an increase was Centralia (10.6%). Branch III libraries experienced the greatest decreases, specifically at the Auburn, Cranbrook and Gorrie branches. The largest decreases for Branch I libraries occurred at the Exeter and Wingham branches while the greatest decrease at Branch II libraries occurred at the Blyth and Hensall branches. Circulation information for the year 2000 indicates a continued modest decline in circulation across the entire library system (from a total of 373,429 in 1999 to 361,847 in 2000).

**Table 3.6 Circulation History 1995-1999<sup>12</sup>**

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	% Change
Branch I						
Clinton	44,262	44,744	44,795	41,858	40,534	-9.2%
Exeter	52,919	51,959	50,401	44,556	42,440	-24.7%
Goderich	105,864	106,840	108,975	102,938	99,715	-6.2%
Seaforth	44,109	46,351	45,712	42,239	42,129	-4.7%
Wingham	56,357	54,403	55,342	51,126	46,876	-19.8%
Branch II						
Bayfield	22,835	21,466	21,232	19,262	17,444	-30.9%
Blyth	15,234	13,778	13,633	12,985	10,368	-46.9%
Brussels	16,850	16,780	16,194	15,686	14,536	-15.9%
Hensall	21,288	22,168	19,022	18,050	15,947	-33.5%
Kirkton	11,654	10,955	11,190	11,300	10,646	-9.5%
Zurich	19,130	19,844	19,725	16,538	17,059	-12.1%
Branch III						
Auburn	1,750	1,150	1,150	868	895	-95.5%
Belgrave	Closed					
Bluevale	611	597	640	585	497	-22.9%
Centralia	5,974	5,073	6,071	6,400	6,684	+10.6%
Cranbrook	1,634	1,020	930	746	Closed	-119%
Fordwich	5,502	5,292	5,222	4,776	4,284	-28.4%
Gorrie	4,008	3,027	2,514	2,066	2,011	-99.3%
Walton	1,640	190	Closed			
TOTAL	431,621	425,637	422,748	391,979	372,065	

<sup>12</sup> Huron County Library Staff

### 3.6 Electronic Access

Use of computer technology is an issue of growing importance for all libraries. The Draft Strategic Plan 2000-2002, an earlier initiative by the Huron County Library, outlines the County's desire for a "connected" public library system as access to information via computer technology is essential for such a large geographically dispersed library system. This vision has been pursued through various external initiatives, including:

- ◆ **Community Access Project** - federal initiative to provide public Internet access in rural and remote Canadian communities. To this point the value of the project is approximately \$100,000.
- ◆ **Lattimer Bequest** – Money was bequeathed to the County of Huron from a Morris Township resident and was used to place computers in the Blyth and Brussels branch libraries for reference use, while CD-ROM reference resources will be added.
- ◆ **Human Resources Development Canada** – In partnership with the Canada Employment Centre in Listowel, the County has been able to provide access to employment information from the Brussels, Fordwich and Wingham Branch libraries. The information consists of books, a computer with Internet access along with other employment related software applications (i.e. resume software). The value of this project will be approximately \$30,000 over the next three years.
- ◆ **Gates Library Initiative** – This initiative is a project of Bill Gates and his wife and provides grants to Canadian public libraries serving low-income communities. The grant will cover the purchase of a computer and laser printer, Microsoft software and Internet connection. The value of this project is approximately \$8,600 each for the Brussels, Hensall and Wingham branch libraries.
- ◆ **Network 2000 Project** – A provincial initiative to connect all public libraries in Ontario by 2000. Through this initiative the County has received funding for a high speed Internet connection at the Huron County Library Headquarters which will allow the branch libraries to connect for three main purposes: access to the Internet, resources developed on the County web server and to the library catalogue and computer system for efficient use of library resources. The value of this project has been approximately \$60,000.

Table 3.7 indicates the electronic use per week in 1999 for Branch I and II libraries. In total 261 Internet bookings and 171 hours of use occurred during that particular week. Of the Branch I facilities Clinton and Goderich had the highest number of Internet bookings while Goderich and Wingham had the highest number of hours used per week. Projected bookings and time used annually indicate high use at the Clinton, Goderich and Wingham branches.

**Table 3.7 Electronic Annual Weekly Survey 1999<sup>13</sup>**

	# of Internet Bookings	Total Time (Hours)	Projected Bookings	Projected Time (Hours)
Branch 1				
Clinton	61	24	3,179	1,225
Exeter	17	15	909	775
Goderich	59	33	2,863	1,577
Seaforth	18	13	911	658
Wingham	44	33	2,355	1,766
Branch 2				
Bayfield	6	8	327	408
Blyth	13	12	543	481
Brussels	10	10	510	497
Hensall	7	6	335	263
Kirkton	9	8	584	487
Zurich	15	11	759	569
Total	261	171	13,368	8,776

<sup>13</sup> Huron County Library Staff.

Table 3.6 indicates Branch III statistics for 2000. Gorrie had the highest number of independent Internet bookings followed by Centralia. Bluevale had only 6 independent Internet bookings last year. The Centralia branch had the highest number of staff Internet usage.

**Table 3.8 Branch III Internet Statistics for 2000<sup>14</sup>**

Branch	Independent Bookings	Staff Use
Auburn	49	27
Bluevale	6	16
Centralia	72	52
Gorrie	105	35

### Huron Community Access Program

This program is a joint initiative of various local agencies that provides public access to the Internet and helps develop the skills needed to use it effectively. A summary of activity for 1998-99 is found in Table 3.9. The following are the goals of Huron CAP:

- ◆ To provide residents of Huron County with free public access to the Internet
- ◆ To stimulate the development of new electronic learning tools and services
- ◆ To assist local entrepreneurs and job seekers looking for more information on business and job opportunities
- ◆ To provide Internet training facilities for local entrepreneurs, employees, educators, students and others interested in improving their information management and networking skills
- ◆ To establish an Internet presence for community, business and government information related to Huron County.

**Table 3.9 Community Access Program Summary of Activity 1998 and 1999<sup>15</sup>**

Branch	Users 1998	Bookings 1999	Trained 1998	Trained 1999
Bayfield	422	235	93	70
Blyth	293	854	91	199
Brussels	106	280	48	54
Clinton	1,116	1,762	131	160
Exeter	605	713	87	94
Goderich	1,934	2,155	328	387
Hensall	327	488	89	154
Kirkton	339	424	66	16
Seaforth	648	766	74	37
Wingham	732	962	148	138
Zurich	448	461	216	139
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,970</b>	<b>9,100</b>	<b>1,371</b>	<b>1,448</b>

<sup>14</sup> Huron County Library Staff.

<sup>15</sup> County of Huron Library Staff.

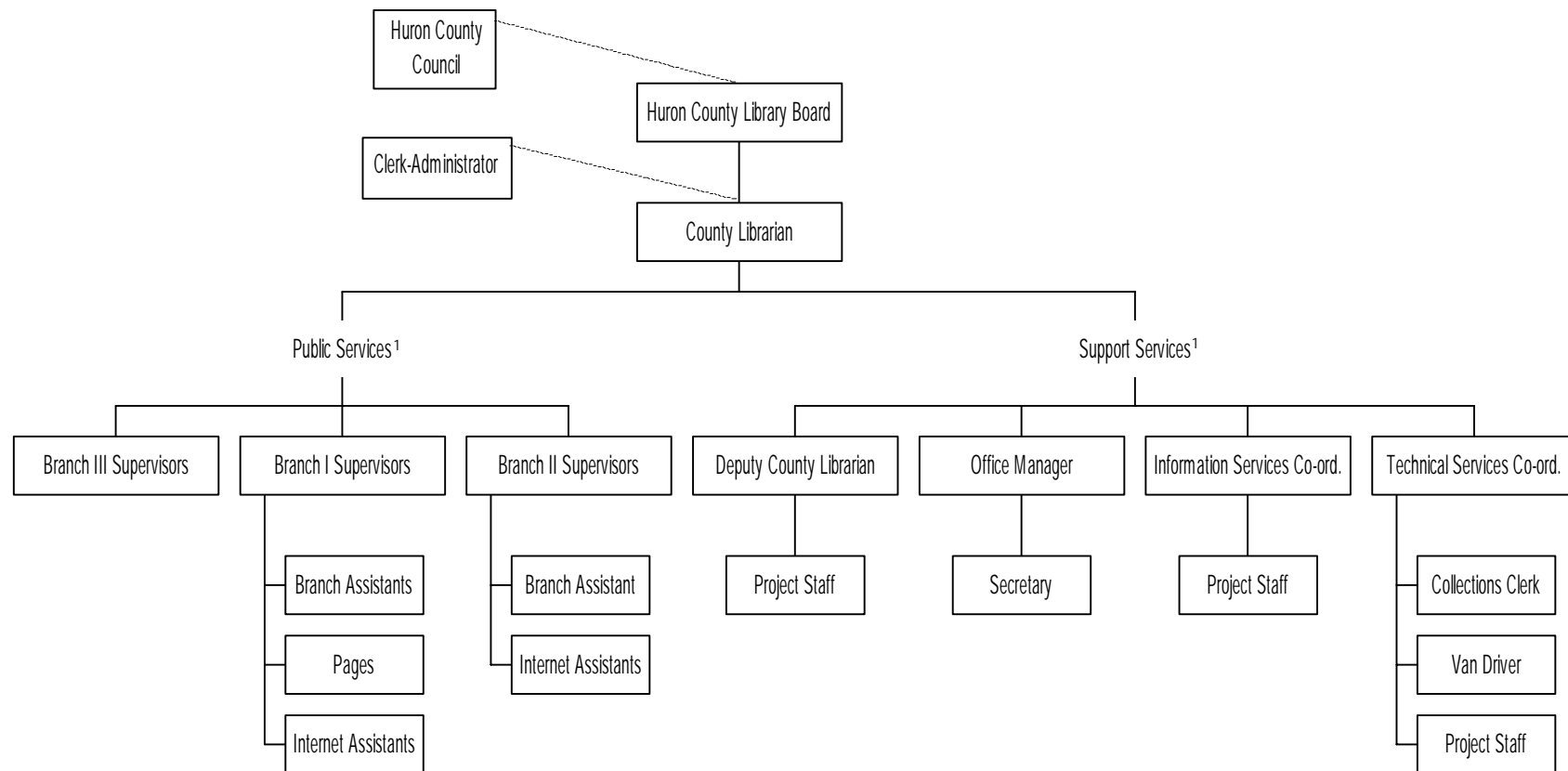
Between 1998 and 1999 an increase of 23.4% occurred in the number of users/bookings and an increase of 5.3% in the number trained. The largest use of this program occurred in Clinton and Goderich.

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### **3.7 Organizational Structure**

The Huron County Library System is governed by a Library Board made up of thirteen members, seven from County Council including the Warden, and six members who are appointed by Council. The Library Board term is three years, concurrent with County Council term. The Library Board is the body responsible for hiring staff, providing materials and operating the library service from each branch. Library buildings are owned by the local municipalities who are responsible for all capital expenses and the costs for maintenance and utilities. Figure 3.10 describes the Huron County Library Organizational Structure.

Figure 3.10 Huron County Library Organizational Chart



<sup>1</sup> Designates service area. This is not a staff position.

### 3.8 Library Budget

The 1999 and 2000 annual budgets for library services are discussed in this section of the report. Revenues and expenditures are shown in Tables 3.11 and 3.12 respectively.

In 2000 grants totalled 11.4% of the total budget, a decrease of 1.6% from the previous year. This decrease is a result of an overall drop in the amount of Municipal, Provincial, and Federal grants to the Huron County Library System. The percentage of earned income decreased slightly between 1999 and 2000 from 6.3% to 6.1%. The amount of County contribution increased between 1999 and 2000, although as a percentage of total revenues, this contribution decreased. The amount of total revenues increased by approximately \$95,000.

**Table 3.11 Revenue 1999-2000**

	1999		2000	
	Actual (\$)	Percent	Budget (\$)	Percent
Province of Ontario	\$153,954	10.7%	\$153,954	10%
Operating/Project/Other Grants				
Government of Canada Grants	\$25,769	1.8%	\$17,465	1.1%
Municipal Grants	\$7,000	0.5%	\$5,000	0.3%
SUBTOTAL GRANTS	\$186,723	13%	\$176,419	11.4%
Earned Income	\$90,366	6.3%	\$93,947	6.1%
Programs, Donations, Fines, Miscellaneous				
SUBTOTAL EARNED INCOME	\$90,366	6.3%	\$93,947	6.1%
Prior Year Surplus	\$33,779	2.3%	\$98,640	6.4%
SUBTOTAL GRANTS/EARNED INCOME/SURPLUS	\$310,868	21.6%	\$369,006	23.9%
County Contribution	\$1,134,712	78.5%	\$1,172,344	76.1%
Total	\$1,445,580	100%	\$1,541,350	100%

Between 1999 and 2000 the cost of wages and benefits increased, although as a percentage of total expenditures, the amount dedicated to wages and benefits decreased. The percent dedicated to purchasing library materials increased by 1.4%, from 17.9% to 21.1% of total expenditures. The percent of Branch Maintenance Grants slightly decreased between 1999 and 2000. The percentages dedicated to administration and office costs, equipment, and program and professional development all slightly decreased between 1999 and 2000. Total expenditures increased by approximately \$95,000.

**Table 3.12 Expenditures 1999-2000**

	1999		2000	
	Actual (\$)	Percent	Budget (\$)	Percent
Wages/Benefits	\$919,219	63.6%	\$953,266	61.9%
Library Materials <sup>16</sup>	\$259,107	17.9%	\$325,167	21.1%
Branch Maintenance Grants	\$137,993	9.6%	\$137,993	9%
Administration/Office <sup>17</sup>	\$64,050	4.4%	\$66,196	4.3%
Equipment	\$28,500	2%	\$23,224	1.5%
Program Development <sup>18</sup>	\$30,211	2.1%	\$29,004	1.9%
Professional Development <sup>19</sup>	\$6,500	0.5%	\$6,500	0.4%
Total	\$1,445,580	100%	\$1,541,350	100%

### 3.9 Funding

The Huron County Library System receives funding from senior levels of government. The following are services and programs supported by this outside funding.

- ◆ **Community Access Program** – supported by Industry Canada, community partners and various local businesses. The program is active in the following Branch libraries – Bayfield, Blyth, Brussels, Clinton, Exeter, Goderich, Hensall, Kirkton, Seaforth, Wingham and Zurich.
- ◆ **A federal program from Human Resources Development Canada** that provides access to employment related information and services via the Internet and books will continue at the Brussels, Fordwich and Wingham branches.
- ◆ **The Library Strategic Development Fund and Network 2000** programs are initiatives of the province that will fund the installation of the Internet at the following Branch III libraries – Auburn, Bluevale, Centralia, Gorrie and the Library Headquarters in Clinton.

<sup>16</sup> Includes books and processing, video, audio collection, books and magazines, books purchased from fundraising.

<sup>17</sup> Includes audit and consulting fees, insurance, cost of printing, advertising, miscellaneous services, internet/e-mail, telephone, meal and travel expenses, cost of vehicle operation and office supplies.

<sup>18</sup> Includes book rebinding, program automation, Literacy program and Strategic Development Funding.

<sup>19</sup> Includes membership fees, conventions/conferences and staff training.



## 4.0 LIBRARY COMPARISON DATA

This section of the report compares the County of Huron Library system and five other County library systems in Ontario. The comparisons were Middlesex County, Oxford County, Victoria County, Bruce County and Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry County (SD&G). They were selected because of their similarity with the County of Huron based on population size and total service points. Ontario Public Libraries statistics for the year ending December 31, 1998 are used for the comparisons. The information is published by the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. While these comparisons may be instructive for purposes of discussion, variations in library systems and communities suggest meaningful comparisons are difficult to develop. This information should be interpreted with care.

### 4.1 Population and Service Points

Table 4.1 provides a comparison of the population and service points for Huron County and the other County library systems. While Huron is frequently compared to Perth County, Perth does not have a County library system so it was not included in Table 4.1. According to the 1998 statistics, County of Huron had a population of 58,764, slightly higher than the average of the other counties. Huron County had 12 permanent locations while the other counties range between 4 (Oxford) and 19 (Bruce) permanent locations. Huron County had the same number of service points as Victoria County (17), the lowest from all the comparisons. The County of Huron had the third lowest amount of total floor space, higher than Middlesex and Oxford County. The County had a total of 1,385 square metres of floor space per 25,000 population, significantly lower than that of Victoria, Bruce and SD&G, although higher than Middlesex and Oxford. Huron County had the second highest operating hours per week (345) behind Bruce County.

**Table 4.1 Population and Service Points<sup>20</sup>**

	Huron County	Middlesex County	Oxford County	Victoria County	Bruce County	Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry
Population Served	58,764	62,210	65,058	47,236	48,989	61,951
Permanent Locations	12	9	4	8	19	11
Total Service Points	17	18	20	17	24	20
Total Floor Space (sq.m.)	3,254 <sup>21</sup>	1,817	3,019	6,069	4,633	6,788
Floor Space Per 25,000	1,385 <sup>22</sup>	730	1,160	3,212	2,364	2,739
Population (sq.m.)						
Total Hours Open Per Week	345	302	213	209	470	278

<sup>20</sup> Ontario Public Libraries 1998 Statistics, 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Has been adjusted to include the floor space for the new Exeter Branch (approx. 297 sq. m.).

<sup>22</sup> I.B.I.D.

## 4.2 Volumes and Titles Added

Huron County added 0.15 volumes per capita, third lowest of the comparisons. In 1998, Huron County added the most titles per capita and had the third highest percentage of reference titles behind Bruce County and SD&G. Huron County had the second highest total circulation, circulation per capita and circulation per dollars spent. The County had the second lowest library use per capita, just slightly higher than Middlesex County.

**Table 4.2 Volumes and Titles Added<sup>23</sup>**

	Huron County	Middlesex County	Oxford County	Victoria County	Bruce County	Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry
Volumes Added Per Capita	0.15	0.09	0.18	0.07	0.14	0.20
Titles Added Per Capita	0.12	0.06	0.11	0.07	0.08	0.06
Reference Titles as % of Total Held	0.45%	3.35%	0.42%	0.03%	9.62%	0.86%
Direct Circulation	388,303	254,084	269,520	152,647	459,067	167,125
Circulation Per Capita	6.61	4.08	4.14	3.23	9.37	2.70
Circulation Per Dollar Spent	0.28	0.22	0.23	0.25	0.32	0.18
In-Library Use per Capita	1.51	1.10	3.16	2.76	10.55	2.50

## 4.3 Reference Requests and Library Use

The County of Huron had the second highest annual requests (37,400) and requests per capita for reference materials, significantly lower than Bruce County's requests (81,069). The County is also second behind Bruce County for annual library use, library use per capita, library use per staff member and library use per dollar spent.

**Table 4.3 Reference Requests and Library Use<sup>24</sup>**

	Huron County	Middlesex County	Oxford County	Victoria County	Bruce County	Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry
Annual Reference Requests	37,400	33,217	23,694	17,049	81,069	21,395
Reference Requests Per Capita	0.64	0.53	0.36	0.36	1.65	0.35
Annual Library Uses	271,283	181,738	205,546	97,804	314,659	96,133
Library Use Per Capita	4.62	2.92	3.16	2.07	6.42	1.55
Library Use Per Staff Member	11713.43	5898.67	8,235.02	7,244.74	11,261.95	5,493.31
Library Use Per Dollar Spent	0.20	0.16	0.18	0.16	0.22	0.11

<sup>23</sup> Ontario Public Libraries 1998 Statistics, 2000.

<sup>24</sup> Ontario Public Libraries 1998 Statistics, 2000.

## 4.4 Staffing

While the County of Huron had the third smallest staff complement, it is slightly higher than the average for the comparisons. The County also had the third highest number of volunteers (49-lower than the average), librarians per 10,000 population (0.34-slightly higher than the average) and total staff per 10,000 population (3.94-slightly lower than the average).

**Table 4.4 Staffing<sup>25</sup>**

	Huron County	Middlesex County	Oxford County	Victoria County	Bruce County	Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry
Total Staff	23.16	30.81	24.96	13.5	27.94	17.5
Volunteers	49	150	30	0	180	2
Librarians Per 10,000 Population	0.34	0.56	0.31	0.00	0.41	0.32
Total Staff Per 10,000 Population	3.94	4.95	3.84	2.86	5.70	2.82

## 4.5 Grants and Local Support

In 1998 Huron County received 11.05% of its total revenue from Provincial Grants, the third lowest amount from the five comparison County library systems. The County received the second highest amount of local support per capita (\$18.71) significantly lower than that of Bruce County (\$23.65). The County receives \$41.31 of local support per household, third lowest compared to the others, although slightly higher than the average. Huron County had the second highest revenue and funds available behind Bruce County.

**Table 4.5 Grants and Local Support<sup>26</sup>**

	Huron County	Middlesex County	Oxford County	Victoria County	Bruce County	Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry
Provincial Grants as % of Total Revenue	11.05	10.00	9.93	22.29	13.74	14.41
Local Support Per Capita (\$)	18.71	15.59	14.03	9.25	23.65	10.86
Local Support Per Household (\$)	41.31	42.37	49.38	16.59	45.19	26.74
Total Current Revenue (\$)	1,382,948	1,170,618	1,186,841	646,294	1,579,174	912,665
Total Funds Available (\$)	1,423,037	1,188,382	1,261,700	646,294	1,598,345	913,555

<sup>25</sup> Ontario Public Libraries 1998 Statistics, 2000.

<sup>26</sup> Ontario Public Libraries 1998 Statistics, 2000.

## 4.6 Salaries and Wages

The County of Huron had the second highest salaries as a percent of the total expenditure behind Victoria County and spent the most per capita dollars on materials. The County had the second highest expenditure and total expenditure per capita behind Bruce County, the third highest expenditures per household behind Oxford and Bruce County and the second highest expenditure per square metre behind Middlesex County.

**Table 4.6 Salaries and Wages<sup>27</sup>**

	Huron County	Middlesex County	Oxford County	Victoria County	Bruce County	Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry
Salaries as % of Total Expenditure	64.94	63.80	60.72	65.98	64.12	64.77
Materials Expenditure Per Capita (\$)	3.17	2.56	2.64	1.38	2.55	1.25
Materials Expenditures as % of Total Expenditure	0.13	0.14	0.14	0.10	0.08	0.08
Total Current Expenditure (\$)	1,382,984	1,148,992	1,208,778	622,072	1,511,067	912,566
Total Expenditure Per Capita (\$)	23.53	18.47	18.58	13.17	30.85	14.73
Total Expenditure Per Household (\$)	51.97	50.18	65.40	23.63	58.92	36.26
Total Expenditure Per Square Metre (\$)	467.70	632.36	400.39	102.50	326.15	134.44

<sup>27</sup> Ontario Public Libraries 1998 Statistics, 2000.

## 5.0 TRENDS AFFECTING LIBRARY SERVICE DELIVERY

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### 5.1 Introduction

The chart on the following pages summarizes a number of key trends affecting library service delivery in Ontario. The trends and their possible implications for facilities and programs, the role of the library and management and financing are noted.

Unless otherwise indicated these trends pertain to Ontario and are summarized from a recent report prepared for the Strategic Directions Council (SDC). The SDC is currently preparing a new strategic plan for Ontario public libraries and as part of this project retained PricewaterhouseCoopers<sup>28</sup> to research social and economic trends affecting libraries. The report was completed in the Spring of 2000 and is an up-to-date and relevant resource. Of course much of the data in support of the trends is from Ontario, and in some cases Canadian or U.S. sources. No comparable information exists for Huron County. Consequently, the relevance of these trends for the Huron County strategic plan will have to be considered by the Steering Committee.

In addition to the PricewaterhouseCoopers report, the SDC commissioned a survey of Ontario residents in 2001 as background for the strategic plan (The Market Probe report<sup>29</sup>). This survey investigated current use and perceptions of the library. It is the only comprehensive survey of public opinions concerning the library in Ontario in recent years and the findings are instructive. The survey sample was not sufficient to provide a regional breakdown of response but the findings are representative of the Ontario population generally. Findings from the Market Probe survey are identified in the following chart with the nomenclature (MP).

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<sup>28</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers, Strategic Directions Council (SDC) Strategic Planning, June 2000

<sup>29</sup> Market Probe Canada. Ontario Public Library Strategic Plan Survey. November 2000.

Social and Economic Trends in Ontario Implications for Library Services

Trends	Possible Implications for Library Services		
	Facilities, Programs and Services	Role of the Library	Management and Financing
<p><b>A. Relatively Stable, Aging and More Educated Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Limited future population growth</li> <li>◆ Huron County age structure older than Ontario average; Ontario population projections show most significant growth in over 50 year olds (100-115% increase 1993-2016 for 50-60 year olds)</li> <li>◆ Huron County education levels below provincial average, but increasing. Forty percent increase in Ontario university enrolments predicted by 2011.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Limited overall population growth suggests stable demand, however, increased education and aging positively associated with library use.</li> <li>◆ Retired, older library users more likely to require traditional services (i.e., borrowing print material).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Library may play increased role as community focal point for older residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Early retirement, aging population may restrict willingness to support libraries through tax base</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. Shift in Employment With Growth in Small Business, Service Sector, Self-Employment and Job-Retraining</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Most significant employment growth 1996-2006 in finance, services and construction (21-26%). Manufacturing to decline (-10%) and slow growth for government, primary, trade and utilities sector (2-8%).</li> <li>◆ These trends are consistent with 1971-96 trends in Huron County employment with the greatest increases in management / professional / services.</li> <li>◆ Significant increase in self-employment</li> <li>◆ Number of home offices tripled in US between 1988-98. Trend expected to continue.</li> <li>◆ In 1997, 28% of adults participated in adult education and training activities. Heaviest involvement amongst those aged 17-34.</li> <li>◆ In 1997, businesses with less than 5 employees represent 9% of employment, but 26% of gross increase in employment. (88% of Huron County businesses employ less than five people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increasing emphasis on information services for business</li> <li>◆ Increasing need for access to electronic information / data bases for service and finance sector</li> <li>◆ Increased interest in career counselling and job retraining</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Expanded role for library in an information economy based on small business / home business</li> <li>◆ Possible role for library (in partnership with others) in supporting search for employment, job retraining.</li> <li>◆ Expanded partnership opportunities / opportunities to provide government services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Expanded services for business sector may require new staff skills, approaches to service delivery</li> </ul>

Trends	Possible Implications for Library Services		
	Facilities, Programs and Services	Role of the Library	Management and Financing
<p><b>C. Increased Access to Electronic Information / Use of the Internet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ 43% of Canadian homes had Internet access in 1999 and a further 20% expected to subscribe in the next 12 months. Use increases with income, community size and education.</li> <li>◆ 60% of Ontario residents have at home Internet access; and 10% only have access at the library (MP)</li> <li>◆ 32% report less library use with Internet access and most (48%) didn't feel the library could help them use the Internet more effectively (MP)</li> <li>◆ Close to 50% are not confident the library will be an effective information provider in the future (MP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increasing demands for access to electronic information should be anticipated; ability of library to meet the needs of their customers in a competitive environment for information services is an issue</li> <li>◆ Competitive quality of service is required or library will lose users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The library can play a role as a trainer for users of Internet / electronic information</li> <li>◆ Library must clarify services it can and will provide to Internet users or risk losing their support</li> <li>◆ Improved marketing of library services relative to Internet / electronic information may be required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Skills, interest and ability of staff to act as trainers for electronic information may be an issue</li> <li>◆ Financial resources, feasibility of electronic access at level II and III Huron County Libraries will be an issue</li> </ul>
<p><b>D. Changing Perception of the Role of Library as a Public Institution / Public Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ About 50% of Ontario residents view the library as one of many competitors in the information services market; these residents attach no particular significance to the library's role as a public institution (MP)</li> <li>◆ 25% of Ontario residents feel libraries will be less important in the future compared to 27% stating they will be more important. (MP)</li> <li>◆ Younger respondents and heavy Internet users are more likely to report libraries will be less important and more likely to report they have less benefit than other tax supported services (MP)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ If the library is to retain support for role as a public institution, will require marketing and promotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Possible deterioration of public support / funding for libraries</li> </ul>

Trends	Possible Implications for Library Services		
	Facilities, Programs and Services	Role of the Library	Management and Financing
<p><b>E. Increased Pressure on Library Services Due to Restructuring of Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Cutbacks in education funding may limit resources available for in-school library staff and materials</li> <li>◆ Increasing number of children who are home schooled</li> <li>◆ Increasing number of school board - library board partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Potential for joint capital and operating projects with boards of education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Expanded role to support school related activities</li> </ul>	
<p><b>F. New Municipal Management Approaches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ New provincial legislation and initiatives are changing the environment for library service delivery</li> <li>◆ Increasing demands for financial and service accountability from local ratepayers and funding bodies</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ need to adopt more sophisticated library planning, management and delivery methods</li> <li>◆ requirements for business plans, strategic plans and performance measures</li> <li>◆ staff skills and resources may be an issue</li> </ul>
<p><b>G. A Growing Number of Competitors for Recreational Reading Materials and Other Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Growth in super bookstores and virtual bookstores (amazon.com)</li> <li>◆ Emergence of ebooks, projected to represent 10% of total publishing market by 2005</li> <li>◆ Close to 80% of residents visited a bookstore last year; heavy bookstore use is positively related to library and Internet use (MP)</li> <li>◆ One quarter of Ontario residents use bookstores more often than in the past and visiting for "reading / leisure / social time" accounts for 21% of reasons for increased use (MP)</li> <li>◆ A number of government agencies are establishing resource centres (e.g., the Huron County Business Centre)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Libraries increasingly asked to provide "bookstore" amenities such as comfortable seating, coffee, attractive environments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Implications of emerging competitors is unclear, particularly in the short-term and in Huron County</li> <li>◆ Competitors may be limited in Huron County</li> <li>◆ Extent of competition is unclear; bookstores and libraries may serve the same user, but provide different services</li> <li>◆ Library may increasingly partner with other information providers, including government agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Potential to explore partnerships with bookstores to complement each other and increase overall use</li> <li>◆ Staff ability to negotiate partnerships may be an issue</li> </ul>

Trends	Possible Implications for Library Services		
	Facilities, Programs and Services	Role of the Library	Management and Financing
<p><b>H. The Library as a Place and Focal Point in the Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ While electronic access will increase, prevailing view is that physical facilities will continue to be needed in the digital age</li> <li>◆ Only 43% of residents thought it was likely or very likely that in the future the public library will no longer be a building due to electronic access (MP)</li> <li>◆ 70% feel library will continue to be a focal point for the community; a safe and welcoming place (MP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Continued demand for physical facilities will create pressures if a decentralized multibranch system must be upgraded to meet new needs</li> <li>◆ Increasing pressure to provide higher quality facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Potential to provide expanded range of services and act as “community centre” with appropriate facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Need to review library service and planning standards</li> </ul>



## 6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

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### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the results of the first workshop with the Study Steering Committee. The purpose of the initial workshop was to complete the Environmental Scan for the Strategic Plan by identifying factors influencing the future of library service delivery in Huron County. Specifically, the workshop participants addressed the following questions:

1. **SWOT Analysis:** What are the most significant strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities for the Huron County Public Library?
2. **A Preferred Future for the Library:** What are the most significant characteristics of the Huron County Public Library today that should be reflected in the library in the future? What are the most significant characteristics that must be changed or improved to take advantage of the opportunities and address the threats in the SWOT?
3. **Issues for the Strategic Plan:** What are the most significant issues that will need to be addressed in the Huron County Public Library Strategic Plan?

The Steering Committee's response to these questions is documented below.

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### 6.2 SWOT Analysis

The workshop participants were asked to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths and weaknesses are based on the library as we know it today. These are the characteristics of the library today that are most or least effective in meeting the needs of the community

Threats and opportunities focus on the library in the future. Threats are considerations that suggest library services will become less relevant, in lesser demand or less able to meet community needs in the future. Opportunities describe ways in which the library might expand, improve or enhance its services in response to the anticipated social, economic and demographic changes in the future.

The strengths / weaknesses and the opportunities / threats are summarized in Figures 6.1 and 6.2.

Figure 6.1 – Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses
◆ The County libraries act as a focal point for knowledge and recreational reading in the community	◆ Both users and staff may have a traditional view of the library and consequently there may be some resistance to change. This may frustrate attempts to adopt new or improved services
◆ The libraries have a distinct image and a strong presence in the community. They are seen as the primary source for recreational reading and information. This image is a solid foundation that can be built upon in the future to provide improved or expanded services.	◆ In an effort to provide good access to library services throughout the County, resources may be spread too thin and this may undermine the quality of service
◆ Libraries create a sense of place and attachment. They provide a focal point in many communities for social interaction.	◆ There are problems with providing well trained and qualified staff at all libraries because of the number of service points in the library system
◆ The libraries provide appropriate access in both urban and rural areas of the County	◆ The library is seen as a soft or non-essential service. This may adversely affect financial support among taxpayers and Councillors who place a priority on hard services
◆ Library staff are helpful, friendly and knowledgeable and create a positive image for the municipality in their dealings with residents	◆ Many library buildings are out-dated and inadequate
◆ There is strong community support for the library – both among the general public and County Council	◆ At many libraries the hours of operation are limited and consequently the library may not be open at times that are convenient for users and this may limit use.
◆ The libraries provide a good collection of traditional resources	◆ The library is not optimizing its technological capabilities.
◆ The library system allows for the sharing of materials and resources within the County. This rotating of resources allows for a higher level of service and greater efficiency in the use of materials.	
◆ The libraries are an accepted and effective part of the County municipal structure	
◆ All libraries have computer access	

Figure 6.2 – Opportunities & Threats

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Information is an increasingly important part of day-to-day living and increasingly critical to the economy. The library is in a unique position to respond to these increasingly important information requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Libraries will be affected by diminishing resources and increasing competition with hard services for available municipal financial support</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The growth of home based business will place increasing demands on the library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Some segments of the community may increasingly look to other information providers, such as the Internet, to meet their needs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The library in Huron County can respond to needs that in other municipalities might be served at least in part by others, such as major bookstores or a university library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To the extent that the library must compete with other information providers, library use and support may be adversely impacted. In both cases, this may place added pressure on library funding</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The library has a unique role to play as the “net navigator” in helping residents to access and effectively use the Internet. The role of the library as an Internet trainer will expand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increased use of the Internet from home and a growing supply of information accessible from the net (e.g. government documents) may decrease use and support for the library</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Given the role that the library can play in training and helping to navigate the net, there will be opportunities to attract new users to the library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Other providers, such as government offices, may increase their role as direct information providers to the community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ With the changes in information technology, there is an opportunity for the library to reassess its role and refine the services it will provide to the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ There may be a need to limit the number of library branches due to financial pressures and to provide the types of services that will be demanded in the future.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The library can increasingly form effective partnerships with other information and service providers, such as government offices. Contracts may be increasingly available to provide government services through the library</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Improved technologies for access to the library may result in fewer branches and other opportunities to share resources and link County library branches in a manner that is more cost effective</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increased opportunities will be available to link the Huron County Library to a growing and more sophisticated provincial library system</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ A stronger connection can be made between the library and its contribution to the economy; the ability of the library to contribute to broader municipal objectives such as economic development will be enhanced.</li> </ul>	

## 6.2 Characteristics of the Library to Retain and to Change

The characteristics of the Library to be retained and changed are summarized in Figure 6.3.

**Figure 6.3 – Characteristics to be Retained and Changed**

Retained	Changed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The library as a welcoming place and a place to find leisure reading materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The image of the library as a non-essential, soft service; there is a need to tie the library more directly to other desired community features – such as the “information economy” – to ensure that it is seen as an essential service</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The role of the library as a focal point in the community; a focus for social interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The library must have the financial stability to effectively deliver services and to plan for future service provision</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The community orientation of library staff – personalized, friendly and helpful staff with the training and qualifications to provide required services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The library must be more open to partnerships; these partnerships must be seen as a productive experience and the library must be more prepared to initiate partnerships.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The library’s role as an access point for information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The library must increasingly be prepared and able to demonstrate that it is an effective manager of information and community service delivery. The library must evaluate its performance and demonstrate its contribution to the community</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The library must be prepared to challenge the status quo; to adopt a more proactive stance regarding its role in service delivery</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The library must be prepared to review its “legislated mandate” and clarify the interpretation of core services and of its ability to pursue self-generated revenue, etc.</li> </ul>

## 6.3 Issues for the Strategic Plan

The primary issue for the Strategic Plan was succinctly stated as determining the type of library service that Huron County will attempt to deliver in the future. Recognizing that the library can not be all things to all people, the workshop participants focused on the need to clarify the role of the library in the community. To do this, a number of issues would need to be addressed, including:

- ◆ What is the appropriate mix of services – particularly the library’s role in supporting recreational reading and providing access to information?
- ◆ What role, if any, should the library play in providing a broader range of services, including services that would not traditionally be associated with the library – such as government services?
- ◆ What is the most effective configuration of facilities to fulfill the library’s role? To what extent will the library of the future depend on physical facilities at multiple locations through out the County?
- ◆ Given the range of services and the facility requirements, what is the appropriate staffing structure for the libraries – the staff complement, expertise and training?
- ◆ How will the library system be funded?