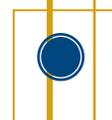
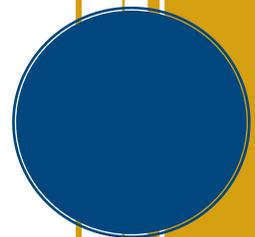




LIBRARY

Strategic Plan 2012-2017

The Huron County Library's Strategic Plan will provide an overall framework for decision making and direction to follow over the next five years. This document is based on a solid understanding of library and information science, the communities we serve and the societal influences inspiring libraries as well as information and cultural sectors today.





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A MESSAGE...

It is with pleasure that the Huron County Library Board presents the Huron County Library's Strategic Plan, 2012- 2017. To realize the vision outlined in our Strategic Plan, we will focus on five key strategies:

Cultivating the library's cultural presence and community partnerships.
Extending the reach of the library through promotion and outreach.
Aligning services with community needs.
Strengthening technology services.
Building the case for stable, sustainable funding.

These strategies were developed in a collaborative process over the course of several months in 2012.

Huron County Library has a strong history in Huron County. The library began in 1941 as a library cooperative before becoming the sixth county to have a County Library System and the first with a self-contained bookmobile.

A key strength of the system in recent years has been its ability to provide relevant services to its rural communities through traditional methods while forging ahead and providing core service through cutting-edge technology. The balance created between tradition and innovation has been one that has ensured equality of access for all library users.

Our ability to provide excellent service has been in part thanks to the strong partnerships that exist in support of libraries as well as information and cultural sectors in Huron County. Huron County Library values the support received from our communities and we will continue to engage in discussions with our partners throughout the implementation of this Plan to ensure continued excellence.

Michael Gorman, an academic focused on libraries and information science, has suggested that there are new fundamental principles at the core of libraries today. According to Gorman, libraries have a role to play in being inclusive, respecting all forms of knowledge, embracing technology and honoring the past.



In his own words, Gorman suggests that today's libraries must:

Serve [all] humanity
Respect all forms by which knowledge is communicated
Use technology intelligently to enhance services
Protect free access to knowledge
Honor the past and create the future
Michael Gorman

The five strategies and goals set out in our Strategic Plan align themselves well within these valuable fundamental principles.

Continued success within the Huron County Library will depend on our ability to change and adapt. We have recognized a need for a new Strategic Plan in order for the Huron County Library to position itself as ready for its future. We invite you to view the Huron County Library's Strategic Plan and to join with us as we build our, and your, library of the future.

Tyler Hessel
Chair, Huron County Library Board, Nov. 2011 – Nov. 2012

Meighan Wark
CEO, Huron County Library



OUR COURSE...

The Huron County Library's Strategic Plan will provide an overall framework for decision making and direction to follow over the next five years. This document is based on a solid understanding of library and information science, the communities we serve and the societal influences guiding libraries as well as information and cultural sectors today.

HURON COUNTY...

AS A COMMUNITY

The County of Huron is located in southwestern Ontario north of the City of London and west of the Golden Horseshoe area. The County is approximately 100 kilometers long from north to south, 50 kilometers wide from east to west. With no urban centers over 8,000 in population, a population density of just 17.4 persons per square kilometer, Huron is one of the most "rural" regions of the province. Due in part to its location along the Lake Huron shoreline, residents and visitors to Huron County know this region as "Ontario's West Coast".

In 2001, Huron County was divided into nine lower-tier municipalities during the amalgamation process; Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh, Municipality of Bluewater, Municipality of Central Huron, Town of Goderich, Township of Howick, Municipality of Huron East, Municipality of Morris-Turnberry, Township of North Huron and Municipality of South Huron. There are twelve library branches located in the lower-tier municipalities.



THE POPULATION

Huron County displays relative stability in population numbers. Over the past 30 years, Huron's population of just fewer than 60,000 people has changed very little; from 2006 to 2011, the population declined slightly by 225 people, or less than 1%. During the same period, Ontario's population grew by 5.7%. Between 2006 and 2011, the municipalities of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh and Morris-Turnberry, experienced modest population growth while the Municipalities of Bluewater, Central Huron, Town of Goderich, Township of Howick, Huron East, North Huron and South Huron experienced population loss.

Huron's population is proportionately older than the rest of the province with a median age of 45.1 years, compared to a provincial median of 40.4 years. 82.9% of Huron County's population is over the age of 15, which is comparable to the percentage within the larger province (83%). However, Huron County does have a significantly higher proportion of seniors (18.4%) compared to the province (13.6%).

In 2006, the median income of Huron County was lower than the provincial average (62,446 compared to 69,156).

Migration patterns have had an influence on population numbers in Huron County. Over the years, the out-migration of youth (< 24 yrs) has been identified as a major challenge for Huron County. Between 2006 and 2011, there was a decrease in population of that age group by 2,650. Immigration to Huron County by foreign-born residents is not a major driving force in the area's population profile. Only a small portion of recent immigrants to Canada choose Huron County as a place to settle. However the 2011 document titled, "An Immigration Strategy for Huron County" outlines immigration as a key strategy to maintain or increase population numbers in Huron County.



SUMMARY OF INFLUENCING TRENDS

Aging population

Outmigration of youth

Majority of lower-tier municipalities seeing decrease in population

Average incomes lower than provincial average

Low percentage of first generation Canadians

Increased attention by the County to reach out to 'newcomers'



OUR LIBRARY TODAY... AND IN THE FUTURE...

TECHNOLOGY, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND PROGRAMMING

According to the 2011 report, “Environmental Scan for Ontario Public Libraries”, reliable technology and efficient use of telecommunications (including the Internet) are increasingly top priorities for Canadians. The statistics indicate that there continues to be a portion of the population without access to either. From the report:

Efficient access to the Internet now determines how well an individual, business, or organization can function in society and the economy.... Personal online networks are increasingly essential for maintaining social contact, and more mainstream entertainment and recreation is moving away from traditional channels and onto to the Internet... The figures tell us that 79% of Canadian households have access to the Internet (81% in Ontario), but outside urban areas this figure drops to 71%. 23 million Canadians use the Internet, and surveys are showing that age is no barrier to use, with people over 55 and pre-schoolers alike among the growing cohorts of users. Currently, the Canadian governing agency for broadband, the CRTC, has set a 2015 target for all households to be able to access broadband at five MbPS (megabytes per second) for downloading and one MbPS for uploading.

However, in 2011, major telecommunications companies were already announcing their plans to roll out the next generation of connectivity in urban areas, which has download/upload speeds in the region of 6.5MbPS and 5MbPS respectively. 75% of Canadians have access to broadband, but where broadband isn't available the high statistic brings little comfort, especially as telecommunications companies and government fail to agree on how to fill the gaps (“Environmental Scan for Ontario Public Libraries, 4-5).



Inequality of access to the Internet and reliable technology is commonly called the “Digital Divide”. Libraries will continue to have a significant role to play in reducing the number of individuals in the population without access to the Internet and related services.

In Huron County this will be a challenge due to changes in funding to the Community Access Program. Providing access to the Internet and related technology, however, is not just important in terms of building capacity of human capital but also in relation to community economic development.

In another trend, the move towards mobile technology including ebook readers, tablets and smartphones is increasing in demand every year. Libraries, as a result, are increasingly called upon to provide access to their resources and services through the relevant platforms and technology.

The shift in providing access to library services through technology means shifting the focus to ensuring access to library services outside the traditional bricks and mortar of the library facilities themselves. Similarly, the library needs to reposition itself as a partner in programming and community development beyond the boundaries of the library facilities. The Huron County Library must continue to be a leader in rural community development, actively participating in a variety of cultural and social partnerships in order to build stronger communities.

SUMMARY OF INFLUENCING TRENDS

Reliable technology and access to the Internet a priority for residents

The “Digital Divide” a continued reality, particularly in rural communities

Increased focus on mobile technology, including ebook readers, tablets, smartphones has resulted in a need for providing access to library resources via those platforms (through apps, etc.)

To ensure relevance, need to approach library/cultural programming and service delivery through partnerships



OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE...

VISION STATEMENT

Huron County Library offers residents access to a robust network of inviting and accessible facilities, engaging online spaces, knowledgeable and welcoming staff, comprehensive collections, progressive, user friendly technology and innovative programming. The library is well funded because it is widely recognized for its partnership approach to library service and its important contribution to cultural vitality.

MISSION STATEMENT

Huron County Library builds strong communities by serving as an inclusive community hub and ensuring universal access to information and ideas for cultural, economic, educational and recreational development.

OUR VALUES

Equitable universal access
Literacy and lifelong learning
Intellectual freedom and protection of privacy
Customer service
Innovation and tradition
Community focus
Accountability, integrity and teamwork



THE STRATEGIC PLAN...

Between June and August 2012, two strategic planning sessions were held with the staff and board of the Huron County Library. During those sessions, five key strategies were identified as priorities for the Huron County Library over the next five years.

The five key strategies for the Huron County Library, 2012 – 2017 are:

Cultivating the library's cultural presence and community partnerships

Extending the reach of the library through promotion and outreach

Aligning services with community needs

Strengthening technology services

Building the case for stable, sustainable funding

Our Strategic Plan describes each of the goals and the actions that we will pursue in order to achieve the five key strategies. These goals and actions will be further developed in the Library's annual budgets, staffing priorities and management activities. The Strategic Plan will be a guiding document and a point of reference for our ongoing responsibilities.

This document does not describe all that the Library will do in the next five years; it describes the key areas where we will chart new course and embark on new directions to continue to provide excellent service in the future. The Library will pursue these new directions and continue to improve existing services.



STRATEGIC GOALS...

Cultivating the library's cultural presence and community partnerships

Our goal will be to highlight and cultivate the library's cultural presence and community partnerships.

To realize this goal, we will:

- Allocate funds to reflect the shift in priorities
- Promote and highlight the Library's cultural presence and programming as significant assets to Huron County
- Develop the library as a key asset to the cultural sector in Huron County.

SOME CURRENT PARTNERS:





STRATEGIC GOALS...

Extending the reach of the library through promotion and outreach

Our goal will be to extend the reach of the Huron County Library through promotion and outreach.

To realize this goal, we will:

- Undergo community engagement projects – both online and through face-to-face initiatives
- Increase awareness of the range of library programs and services
- Identify marketing and promotion as priority and fund accordingly

If you do build a great experience, customers tell each other about that.

Word of mouth is very powerful.

Jeff Bezos, Founder and CEO of Amazon.com, Inc.



STRATEGIC GOALS...

Aligning services with community needs

Our goal will be to align the services of the Huron County Library with the needs identified in each community.

To realize this goal, we will:

- Evaluate the hours and services at each of the branches
- Make each branch welcoming and inviting
- Ensure best possible access to services (by providing barrier-free facilities and a variety of formats in the collection)
- Strengthen community knowledge and familiarity of staff to local resources

*I spent three days a week for 10 years educating myself in the public library,
and it's better than college. People should educate themselves –
you can get a complete education for no money.
At the end of 10 years, I had read every book in the library
& I'd written a thousand stories.
Ray Bradbury, Author*



STRATEGIC GOALS...

Strengthening technology services

Our goal will be to strengthen our technology services in order to improve access to library resources.

To realize this goal, we will:

- Identify technology as a core service and fund accordingly
- Develop the infrastructure necessary to deliver services through technology relevant to Huron County
- Embed and integrate technology in everything we do
- Build the library's virtual presence

We are the children of a technological age. We have found streamlined ways of doing much of our routine work. Printing is no longer the only way of reproducing books.

Reading them, however, has not changed.

Lawrence Clark Powell, Librarian, Literary Critic and Author



STRATEGIC GOALS...

Building the case for stable, sustainable funding

Our goal will be to make the best possible case for stable, sustainable funding in order to achieve the best possible services in our Library.

To realize this goal, we will:

- Build on the existing relationships with County Council and municipal councils
- Focus on strengthening relationships with business and community leaders
- Raise awareness of the social value of library services and contributions to overall community vitality

We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.
Cesar Chavez, Politian



HURON COUNTY LIBRARY...

Administration

Health and Library Complex
77722B London Rd., RR#5
Clinton, ON
519.482.5457

Bayfield Branch

20 Main St. Bayfield, ON
519.565.2886

Blyth Branch

392 Queen Street Blyth, ON
519.523.4400

Brussels Branch

402 Turnberry Street Brussels, ON
519.887.6448

Clinton Branch

27 Albert St. Clinton, ON
519.482.3673

Exeter Branch

330 Main St. S. Exeter, ON
519.235.1890

Goderich Branch

52 Montreal St. Goderich, ON
519.524.9261

Hensall Branch

108 King St. Hensall, ON
519.262.2445

Howick Branch

Howick Community Centre
45088 Harriston Rd. Fordwich, ON
519.335.6899

Kirkton Branch

Kirkton-Woodham Community Centre
70497 Perth Rd.164 Kirkton, ON
Phone: 519.229.8854

Seaforth Branch

108 Main St. S Seaforth, ON
Phone: 519.527.1430

Wingham Branch

281 Edward Street Wingham, ON
Phone: 519.357.3312

Zurich Branch

50 Main St. Zurich, ON
Phone: 519.236.4965

www.huroncounty.ca/library