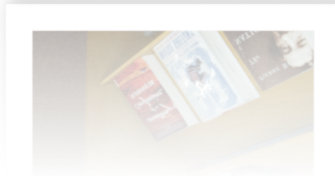
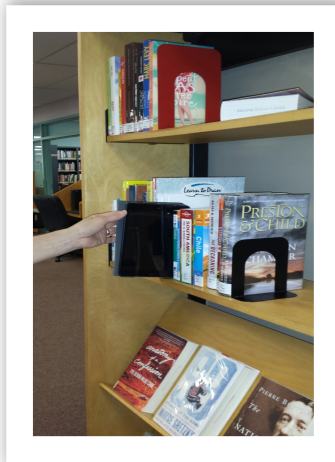


A Strategic Plan for the Mississippi Mills Public Library

2017-2026



**Mississippi Mills
Public Library**

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Acknowledgements | ii |
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2. Our Community and Our Library | 2 |
| 2.1 Our Community | 2 |
| 2.2 Our Library | 4 |
| 2.2.1. Activities and programs | 4 |
| 2.2.2 Revenues..... | 6 |
| 2.2.3 How Do We Compare with Other Community Libraries? | 6 |
| 2.3 What We Learned From Our Community | 8 |
| 2.3.1 From Internal Workshops..... | 8 |
| 2.3.2 From the External Workshop | 10 |
| 2.3.3 Needs Assessment - Pakenham..... | 12 |
| 2.3.4 Bridging Generations Project..... | 12 |
| 2.3.5 The Community Library Survey | 13 |
| 3. Strategic Planning | 17 |
| 3.1 Lessons Learned..... | 17 |
| 3.2 Strengths and Weaknesses of the 2011 Plan..... | 17 |
| 4. Moving Forward - The Ten Year Plan 2017-2026..... | 19 |
| 4.1 The Changing Role of the Library..... | 19 |
| 4.2 Strategic Priorities - 2017-2026 | 22 |
| 4.3 Strategic Directions | 23 |
| 5. Stewardship – Getting from Here to There | 28 |
| 5.1 Ongoing Measurement and Re-assessment..... | 28 |
| 5.1.1 Annual work plan..... | 28 |
| 5.1.2 Annual Report..... | 28 |
| 5.1.3 Cost effective analysis | 29 |
| 5.1.4 Bi-Annual Review of Financials and Priorities..... | 30 |
| 5.2 Public Relations/Public Partnerships | 30 |
| Annex..... | 32 |
| A.1 Internal Workshop(s) - Report..... | 32 |
| A.2. External Workshop – Report..... | 32 |
| A.3 The Community Survey | 35 |
| A.3.1 Questionnaire | 35 |
| A.3.2 Survey Results..... | 39 |
| A.4 SWOT Analysis of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan | 39 |

Acknowledgements

The Mississippi Mills Public Library Board would like to recognize that this strategic plan is the result of efforts from many contributors.

Internal workshops were held with Library Staff and Board Members, one and all providing contributions to discussions on the role and future of our library.

We thank (in alphabetical order) Bruce Attfield, David Balfour, Carmela Ciocio, Edith Cody-Rice, David Dern, Nancy Holman, Tiffany MacLaren, Jeff Mills, Helena Merriam, Amanda Polker-Mok, Warren Thorngate, Jane Torrance and Les Voakes for giving of their time and thoughts on libraries and learning at our external workshop.

A Library Community Survey was made possible through the financial support of the Elizabeth Kelly Library Foundation Inc. This funding enabled the hiring of Kristy Henry and Paul Rutledge, graduates of the Library and Information Technician Program of Algonquin College, who conducted a first survey to reach out to the community for comments and suggestions.

We also wish to thank The Municipality of Mississippi Mills for their financial support for this strategic plan.

The Mississippi Mills Public Library Board
January 2017

1. Introduction

The Mississippi Mills Public Library Board was tasked to prepare a strategic plan to give direction to the Mississippi Mills Public Library over the next decade.

The Strategic Plan 2017-2026 is a roadmap for the library to move forward and expand its community role in a technology-driven and rapidly changing social-economic environment. The road ahead may present some interesting challenges for libraries, and conceivably more so for libraries in smaller communities like Mississippi Mills. Changes in funding (e.g. municipal, provincial, federal) can bring unexpected riches or stresses upon library finances requiring libraries to rethink their priorities. Technology brings benefits and costs to the library budget and infrastructure and potential for enhanced services to our community. Changes in technology and the pace of change add to the challenges of meeting community needs and securing the needed funding.

Section 2 presents information on the community and the library of Mississippi Mills. Information was gathered from existing data sources and library information (e.g. financials, activities). Comparisons with libraries in several smaller communities are also provided. Workshops were used to solicit input from staff, the Board and members of the community. This section concludes with findings from the community library survey.

Section 3 gives a summary of the previous strategic plan including lessons learned. The strategic plan for the next ten years is outlined in Section 4. Consideration is given to how libraries are changing and the need for the library to have a plan moving forward. A long-term plan for the library needs to consider its strategic direction with the longer term planning for the community. The challenge is timing – the new municipal strategic plan is not yet available.¹

Ways and means to move forward with the plan are given in Section 5. It presents the need for ongoing measurement and tools for periodic reassessment to re-align library direction, as necessary.

Original reports, and additional information and references are provided in the Annex at the conclusion of the report.

¹ The intent was to consider the library medium- and long-term directions with the municipality's strategic directions. Once the municipality's new strategic plan is in the public domain (early 2017), this may be revisited.

2. Our Community and Our Library

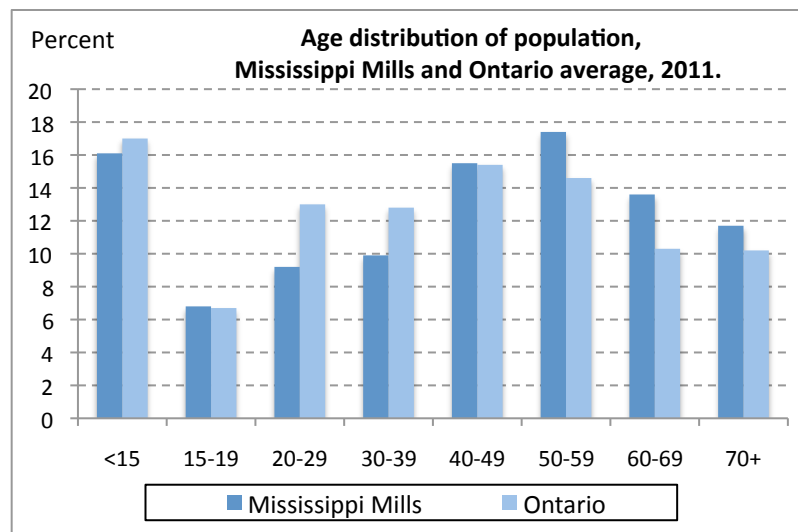
2.1 Our Community

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills is a diverse community, which includes the town of Almonte, villages in the former Ramsay and Pakenham townships and extensive rural lands. It is located near the large urban centre of Ottawa Ontario. Mississippi Mills had a population of 12,385 in 2011, an increase of 5.5% over the five-year period since 2006, or an average growth rate of 1.1% per year.² The growth in the population of Mississippi Mills is slightly below the Ontario provincial average of 5.7% over the same five-year period.

The Municipality projections of 1.9% growth per year bring the population of Mississippi Mills to 14,100 in 2017. Looking further into the future, growth projections bring the population from a low estimate of some 15,700 to a medium estimate of some 20,600 to a high estimate of some 21,000 by 2033.³ Half of the growth will be in Almonte, and half will be in villages and rural areas across the municipality. Of particular significance for library planning is that the library will continue to have a broad and diverse population to serve - town, village and rural populations.

In 2011, women accounted for 51% of the population in Mississippi Mills and men 49%. This matches the gender ratio for Ontario overall.⁴

The population in Mississippi Mills is somewhat 'older' compared with the average for Ontario. The median age in Mississippi Mills was 46.0 versus 40.4 for the province. Compared to the provincial averages, Mississippi Mills tended to have lower shares of its population in the 'younger' age cohorts (e.g. <15, aged 20-29 and age 30-39), and larger shares in 'older' age cohorts (e.g. 50-59, 60-69 and 70+).



Almost two thirds (64%) of the population of Mississippi Mills were married or in a common-law relationship. Among those not in a married/common-law relationship at the

² <http://www.mississippimills.ca/en/work/demographicstatistics.asp>

³ From *Official Plan Five Year Review – Comprehensive Review* (Revised April 2013), J.L. Richards and Associates Limited.

⁴ The release of 2016 Census results to update this section is due to start in February 2017 through to September 2017. Once the 2016 community data are available, an addendum for 3.1 *Our Community* will be prepared and made available for distribution to provide up-to-date figures for the Municipality of Mississippi Mills. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011>. For example, recent years have seen young families moving to Mississippi Mills; the community profile has changed since the 2011 Census was conducted.

time of the 2011 Census, 60% were single (never married), 22% were separated/divorced and some 18% were widowed.

In 2011, there were some 3,740 ‘families’⁵ in Mississippi Mills. Eighty-six percent of families were ‘couple’ families (married or common law relationship) and half of them reported children at home.

Among the couple families with children at home, 36% had one child, 45% had two children and 18% had three children or more.

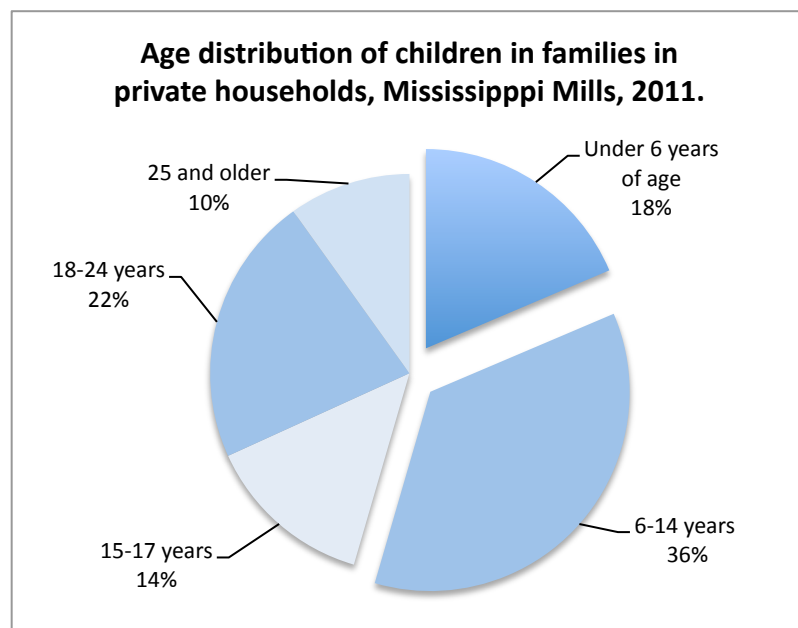
Just over one in ten families (13%) were lone-parent families. More than three quarters (78%) of the lone-parent families were female parent families. The sample size for Mississippi Mills is small but the data shows that among female single parent families, 63% had one child, 28% had two children and 7% has three children or more. Among the male single parent families, 60% had one child, 25% two children and 15% three children or more.

Among the children living in ‘families’ in private households, almost one in five were less than six years of age and more than one third were 6-14 years of age. This means that more than half (54%) of children in families in private households in Mississippi Mills were under the age of 15.

According to the 2011 National Household Survey, more than half of the Mississippi Mills population (56%)⁶ had

some post-secondary education. Among those with postsecondary education, at least one in five were from fields in business/management/public administration or fields of architecture/engineering/related programs.

More than two thirds (69%) of the population⁷ in Mississippi Mills was in the labour force in 2011. People tended to be in occupations in sales/service (19%) followed by occupations in business, finance and administration (17%). With regards to sector of employment, more than half of the employment was in the services sector (business, health care, social, other services), with 10% in construction or manufacturing sector and 5% in agriculture and resource-based industries.



⁵ Family refers to married/common-law couple with/without children; lone parent family.

⁶ Education data is based on population count of 10,110 (population 15 years of age and over).

⁷ Population 15 years of age and over. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3509030&Data=Count&SearchText=mississippi%20mills&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&A1=Labour&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>

The average income for people in Mississippi Mills was \$44,547⁸. For persons who reported full-year full-time employment, the average employment income was \$59,887. Sixty nine percent of the population reported employment income from wages/salaries and 5% reported self-employment income. Just over one in ten received some form of government payment.⁹

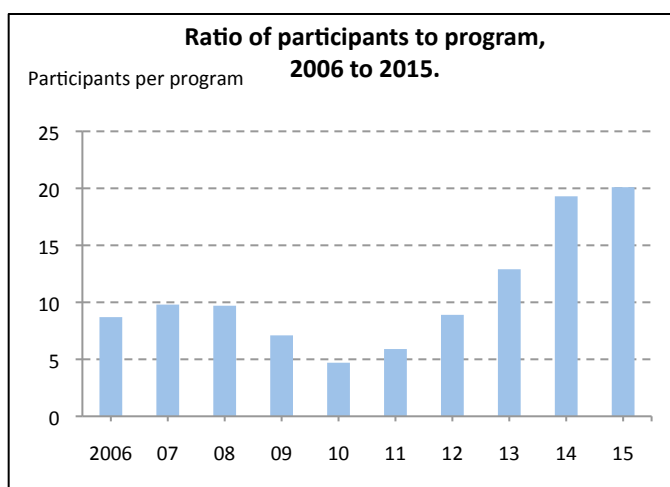
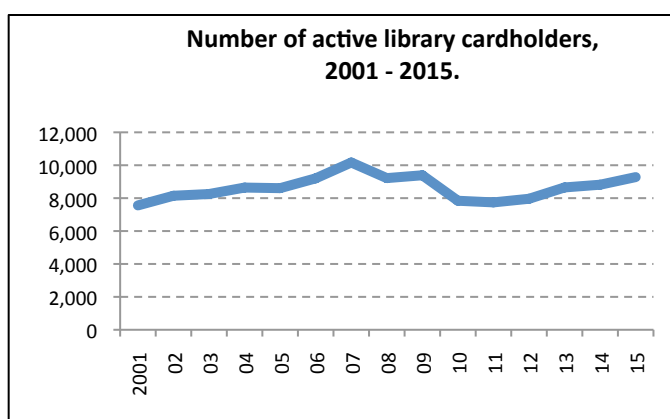
2.2 Our Library

2.2.1. Activities and programs

In 2015 there were 9,279 active cardholders. Over the last fifteen years (2001 to 2015), the number of active cardholders of the Mississippi Mills public library (MMPL) has fluctuated with a peak of 10,167 reached in 2007 when numbers retreated somewhat, due in part to a culling of inactive accounts. Since 2011, the number of active cardholders has been increasing every year.

Activities and programs are initiated in response to community needs and interests and are adaptive in nature. A program is defined as *any planned library activity or event for library patrons of all ages*. Programs may have defined start and end dates. They can be a unique one-time event such as a concert or author visit, or consist of a series of similar activities over time such as a children's story time or an adult book club. Often a program will have specific goals and objectives. For example, the literacy program aims to improve early literacy skills for children with individualized reading attainment objectives.

Although programs are constrained by time, cost and resources, the number of programs per year has grown



⁸ Total population aged 15 and over is 10,110; 460 reported no income; 9,650 reported income; this refers to all types of income. Income figures are for calendar year 2010.

⁹ This includes payments such as a pension plan benefits, child benefits, employment insurance benefits and other income from government.

over the last decade - from 348 in 2006 to 408 in 2015, slightly below a peak of 449 programs in 2013. The 8,219 persons who attended programs in 2015 were more than double the 3,017 of a decade earlier.

In terms of participants per program, figures for recent years show greater participation compared with earlier years. In 2015, the average of 20 participants per program was more than double that of a decade ago. Traditionally, much program development has focused on babies, toddlers and children up to age 12. Figures for children's programming include staff visits to schools, school visits to the library, summer programming, literacy tutoring and seasonal programming.

The Literacy program has expanded from the one-on-one literacy support in the summer to one-on-one support in the schools. As well, the numeracy Jump Math program is being developed based on the literacy program model.

Other examples of programs for children include the TD Summer Reading Club, the Teen Advisory Group (TAG) and the Teddy Bear Sleepover.

Program development for adults is in its early stages. Prior to 2013, there were few programs for adults. Examples of adult programs now in place include:

- The Seed Library – includes gardening talk series, events, contests and seed exchanges.
- The Travelogue Series – people share travel advice, stories and photographs.
- The Tech Tutor program – provides one-on-one tutoring as well as media workshops and basic computer how-to support
- Book Club – this provides an opportunity for friends and neighbours to come together and indulge in their love of books in a relaxed environment.
- Human Library Project – in partnership with public libraries across Lanark County, this provides a framework for challenging conversations about stereotypes and prejudices where real people are “on loan” to readers.
- One Book, One Community – an initiative to promote reading and conversation in our community by sharing one book together with related events; in partnership with public libraries across Lanark County.
- Death Café – participants meet to discuss issues relating to death with an aim to increase awareness of death and help people make the most of their lives.

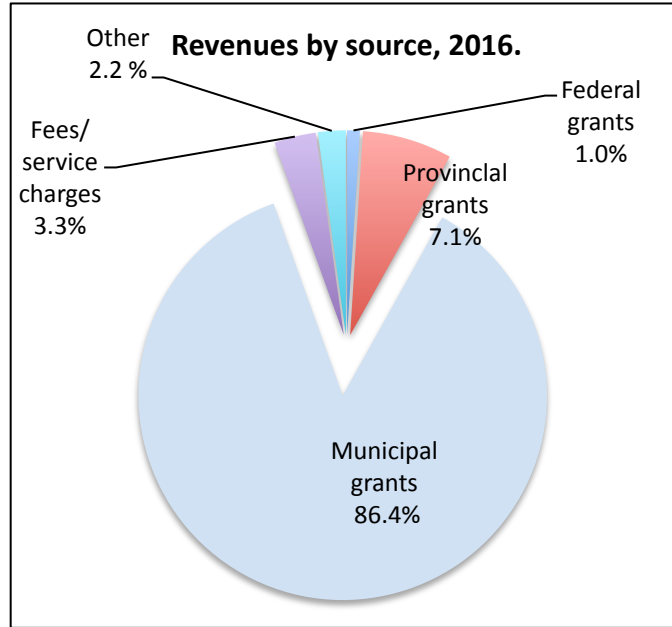
The library also participates in the Seniors Expo, Mississippi Mills at a Glance and the Bridging Generations project in Pakenham. Efforts are under way to provide resources and opportunities to community residents by offering services such as a musical instrument lending library and the lending of disc golf sets.

2.2.2 Revenues

Over the five-year period 2012-2016, revenues increased by 22.6% from \$488,911 to \$599,416 – or an average of 4.5% per annum. The municipality provided almost ninety cents of every dollar of library revenues per annum.

In 2016, provincial grants accounted for 7.1% of annual revenues. The federal government provided the smallest share of revenues – 1.0%.

The library encourages local interest groups to come together. It provides a gathering place for the community – meeting rooms are available for public rentals at a cost in both Almonte and Pakenham branches. Fees are also collected from other services including fines for overdue items and photocopying services. Fees and service charges provided 3.3% of library revenues in 2016.



‘Other’ revenues that include donations and bequests accounted for 2.2% of library revenues in 2016.

Until recently, the province provided monies for technology and Internet for libraries in Ontario. This IT-directed support has now ended. The decline in provincial financial support for the technology component of library activities raises additional concern - computer services, e-services and associated costs continue to grow. For example, over five years, the cost for computer services jumped from less than \$2,000 in 2012 to \$7,687 in 2016 to estimated costs of some \$10,000 in 2017.

2.2.3 How Do We Compare with Other Community Libraries?

A 2016 report of the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries¹⁰ gives an opportunity to see how MMPL compares with libraries in other communities similar to Mississippi Mills. The data set used is for communities with resident population size of >5,000 to < 15,001¹¹. North/Grenville Kemptville is included even though it falls just outside the population band. As well, in light of Ottawa’s proximity and not without some curiosity, information is also given for the Ottawa Public Library.

¹⁰ Federation of Ontario Public Libraries, *Ontario Public Library Operating Data 2005-2014, Overview, Primer on Library Statistics and Collected Tables.*, 2016

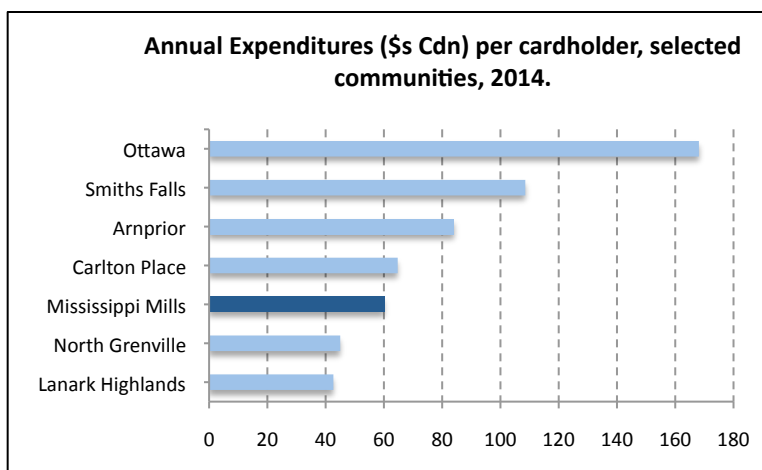
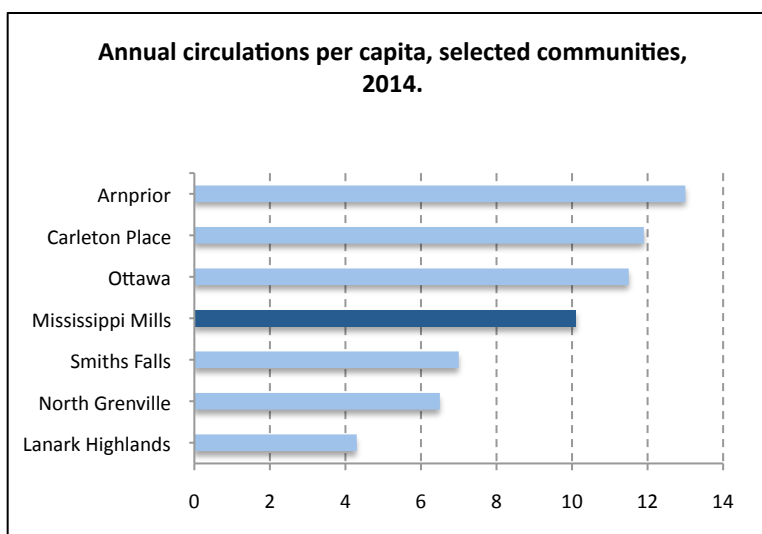
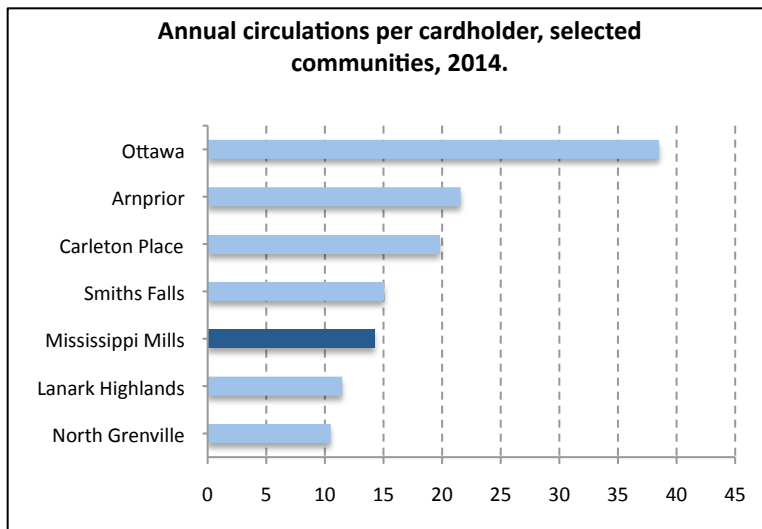
¹¹ Note: North Grenville (Kemptville) library is included (population of 15,085) even though it is just outside of the population threshold >5000 and <15,001. Population totals are Ottawa (951,727), Arnprior (11,700), Smiths Falls (8,978), Mississippi Mills (12,385), Carleton Place (10,154) and much lower Lanark (5,128) – population figures are for 2014.

In 2014, the MMPL had annual circulations of 14.2 per cardholder. This was lower than annual circulations per cardholder reported for Arnprior (21.6), Carleton Place (19.8) and Smiths Falls (15.1). Lanark Highlands (11.5) and North Grenville (10.5) ranked below MMPL.

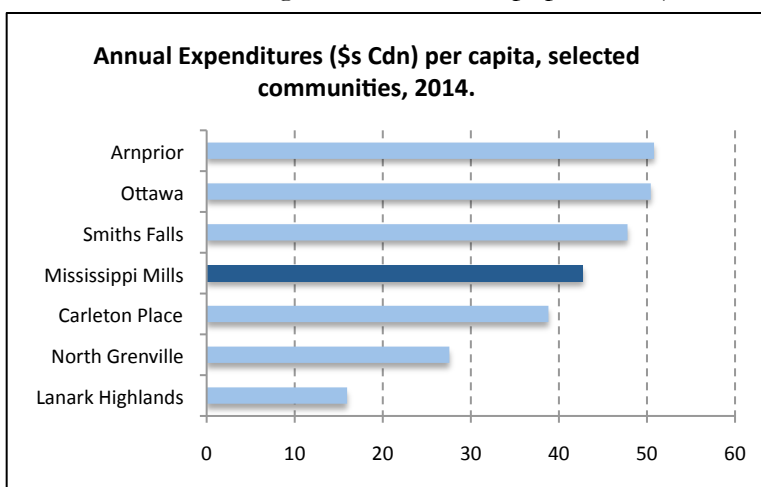
Circulation patterns can be examined against the resident population (per capita) as an indicator of community involvement. The MMPL had 10.1 annual circulations per capita in 2014. Arnprior (13.0) and Carleton Place (11.9) libraries registered higher annual circulation per capita. The MMPL surpassed the rates reported for Smiths Falls (7.0), North Grenville (6.5) and Lanark Highlands (4.3). In fact figures show MMPL was not much below the 11.5 annual circulations per capita of Ottawa.

The Ottawa library had expenditures per cardholder of \$168 in 2014. Within the smaller communities examined, Smiths Falls expenditures per cardholder outpaced the other communities substantially - in 2014, Smiths Falls expenditures per cardholder was \$104 with Arnprior almost 20% below at \$84.

Reporting \$60 expenditures per cardholder, MMPL spending was slightly below that of neighbouring Carleton Place (\$65) while well above that of North Grenville (\$45) and Lanark Highlands (\$43).



How do library expenditures rank when considered against the resident population (cost per capita)? Per capita expenditures give some interesting results. For example, Arnprior library spending of \$50 per capita matches that for Ottawa; Smiths Falls follows with \$48 per capita. MMPL comes in with \$43 per capita, higher than that of Carleton Place with \$39. North Grenville followed with \$28 per capita and then Lanark Highlands far below with \$16 per capita.



2.3 What We Learned From Our Community

Input was sought from different segments of our community. A series of workshops were held. Internal workshops focused on defining priorities for the library through discussions with Library Staff and the Library Board. An external workshop tapped the experience and thoughts of participants active in the community and education and learning. Information was also gathered from the Pakenham Branch Space Needs Assessment report (2015), and from the Pakenham Village Bridging Generations Project report (2016). Over the latter part of the summer and early fall (2016), a community survey was carried out by the MMPL Board to ask people about libraries and their library experience.

2.3.1 From Internal Workshops

Two internal workshops were organized to gather ideas and thoughts of Library Staff and the Library Board. A consultant from the Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS) was engaged to facilitate the two workshops¹². The agenda was structured around:

1. Participant reaction to the background readings on current trends (materials provided by the consultant prior to the workshops).
2. Situational analysis- what is happening, and what is changing in this community?
3. Trends in our library – “The Wave Exercise” (Swell, Crest, Trough, Undertow)
4. Themes and ideas from the discussion drawn out as a basis for strategic directions.

A number of priorities were identified:

1 – The need to address physical space

The library, Almonte Branch, will use every possible physical space to its best advantage.

Interior Spaces¹³

¹² Ms. Peggy Malcolm, consultant SOLS facilitated two workshops on Thursday, September 22, 2016. Ms. Malcolm met with Library staff in the morning and members of the Library Board in the afternoon. For more detailed notes from the workshops, refer to Annex A.1.

- Develop and implement a total facility plan which incorporates feedback received from staff and comments from the user survey to ensure that the interior library usage continues to meet the needs of the community and uses every space within the present building to best advantage while remaining flexible in nature.
- Rework the public space to ensure there is a balance of quiet space for tutoring and proctoring, for meeting rooms and the other general uses of the library, which tend to be noisy by nature.
- Develop a capital building plan for a conservatory space to provide a quieter reading area facing the library's outdoor garden.
- Rework the library service desk to incorporate a fully accessible section within that service desk.
- Rework the staff workspace to create efficiencies of workflow, incorporating storage space and ensuring that the workspaces incorporate proper ergonomic equipment.

Outdoor spaces

The library will rework the outdoor spaces at the Almonte Branch to “invite the public to come”. It will:

- Increase signage at the entrance to the library, especially at street level.
- Provide outside benches for wireless users (ensuring that the strength of signal is sufficient and available at the times needed by the public).
- Consider a library/Internet café area, particularly to complement the farmer's market already located in the area Saturday mornings.

2 – The need to address services

Collections

The library will have a current collection, which meets the needs of the community. Staff will:

- Develop a coordinated collection plan for all areas of the library, considering both locations, ensuring that the collections match in terms of holdings and circulated items.
- Work to ensure that all collections are accessible and arranged in a manner that best suits the way that the public uses the library: i.e. the DVD collections are more accessible to public spaces.
- Consider integrating the junior non-fiction into the adult non-fiction area to create an information section at both locations, and to free up space in the children's area for more sitting and gathering spaces for the children.

Programs

The library will offer programs that meet the changing needs of the community. It will:

- Develop a coordinated plan for programming to ensure a sufficient number of programs and programs of the type requested by the community through user surveys and feedback.

¹³ Note: the Mississippi Mills Long Term Capital Financial Plan includes funding of \$1 million for renovation and expansion of the Almonte Branch within the next five years.

- Ensure that staff participates in local training and outreach opportunities so that they can gather ideas for programming and ensure coordination.

3 - Foundational work

Library Policies

The library will develop a complete set of governance and operational policies as recommended by SOLS¹⁴ and in alignment with municipal practices:

- The Library Board will review all policies. It will create a list of policies with creation and review dates, including those required by legislation (i.e. those related to Occupational Health and Safety and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)).
- The Library will work toward accreditation under the Ontario Public Library Guidelines program.

Staff Development

Staff will be fully trained and prepared for work at the library. The CEO will:

- Facilitate professional development opportunities for the staff.
- Evaluate staffing levels and competencies in order meet expected service standards and advance the delivery of excellent customer service.
- Review workflows to optimize service delivery, including the timely receipt of new materials and handling of donated materials to avoid congestion in staff areas.

Communication with the Community

The Library will strive to:

- Ensure that the community is made aware of the services of the library.
 - Programs and services will be announced and advertised at community events and in municipal spaces through available television screens.
 - The library will reach out to residents in new neighbourhoods through an advertising campaign including providing materials for Welcome Wagon visits.
- Ensure that the library space is visible to the community through increased signage and directional items within the framework of changes to outdoor spaces.

2.3.2 From the External Workshop

An external workshop to gather community perspectives on the role of libraries and the role of a library in a community like Mississippi Mills was held.¹⁵ Key findings include:

1 - Importance of libraries identified:

- Libraries are community hubs and places of integration.
- Libraries cut across social, academic and business sectors.
- Libraries are inclusive of different cultures and diversity – they are a source of ideas and innovation.

¹⁴ *Trillium Public Library: Sample Policies*, <https://www.sols.org/index.php/funding-development/166-sols-publications/428-trillium-public-library-sample-policies> .

¹⁵ Stoneleigh Strategies Inc. was hired to facilitate the external workshop and produce a report of the outcomes and findings of the workshop. The full report is provided in the Annex A.2.

- A key challenge for libraries is meeting the wide array of user demands.
- Libraries are vital to continuous learning and development.
- A library thrives on a symbiotic relationship with the community. The social and economic fabric of the community and the strength of the library both flourish and are self-sustaining because of two-way continuous interaction. This entails a two-way flow of information and other forms of contributions, and calls for strategic partnerships with community players (e.g. volunteer mentoring by seniors).

2 - Future Role of Libraries identified:

- Libraries as Learning Commons
 - Foster environments characterized by more social interaction as a means by which to research, transfer, and promote knowledge, experience and social/professional networks.
 - Quiet rooms for focused thinking; leading edge spaces to nurture and advance knowledge, expertise and linkages through social interaction.
 - Live books sessions (e.g. rather than reading the book of an author, the author reads the book), personal and professional workshops, maker-spaces (e.g. 3-D printing area, craft area, learn tools, collaborate to invent and learn), book clubs.
 - Provide space but also the environment to promote knowledge and learning.
- Librarians as expanded specialists
 - In addition to helping users identify information sources and data bases, specialists will, for example, nurture critical thinking skills of users, help with challenges of users e.g. harvesting Big Data, help users to access and use new technologies, share community intelligence and community asset maps (e.g. sharing information about resources and strengths to help people learn about their community), act as a community ‘matchmaker’.
- Access to technology and technology know-how
 - Libraries will serve an important role in showcasing new technologies and offering affordable access to community members.
- Small business advisory services
 - Libraries can help bring clusters of small business together to capitalize on shared skills, products, networks and community intelligence. This may also attract new businesses to the community.
- Continued promotion of the love of reading
 - Promoting the love of books remains a central tenet of library.
- Community Integration
 - The library will continue to serve as a location to help new residents integrate into the community.

3 - Moving Forward

- Libraries are important for long-term economic and social well being of a community.
- The central tenets of a library as a safe place, which is affordable and accessible by all, remain intact and immutable.
- Other values should be re-examined as libraries evolve e.g. ensure appropriate alignment with emerging concepts.

- A key challenge will be raising the awareness and understanding of library users and funders.
- The library will need to move confidently and effectively with priority setting.
- A funding strategy is essential, anchored by a compelling story and the goal of sustainable funding – partnerships are likely to play a pivotal role.
- Innovative approaches to funding e.g. crowd-funding, will likely present opportunities.
- Need to develop staff competencies to align with evolving library concepts presents a challenge – social interaction skills including mentoring combined with technology know-how and the more traditional skills of librarians.
- Consideration should be given to ensuring effective alignment with the municipal long-term strategy.

2.3.3 Needs Assessment - Pakenham

In 2015, a Space Needs Assessment for the Pakenham library branch was carried out.¹⁶ Public consultations were held with members of the community, the Mayor and Councillors. During these consultations, the consultants presented the AODA requirements, reported on library trends and next steps. Spirited discussions took place with a format that encouraged participation by everyone in attendance. Several major themes emerged including:

- The necessity of appropriate space requirements for all typical library activities to ensure continuing use of the Pakenham branch.
- The need to address all infrastructure and furniture issues for both public and staff, including those specifically reflected in the AODA legislation as well as suitable seating, tables, workspaces, lighting, gathering and meeting spaces.
- The demand for larger and more diverse collections in DVDs, CDs and the continuity of a series.
- The need for additional technology services, more computer workstations, Tech tutors, ability to borrow equipment, access to scanners, digitization program, etc.

2.3.4 Bridging Generations Project

The Bridging Generations Project in Pakenham brought together “young baby boomers”, older seniors and some younger volunteers in a series of conversations about building strong community connections, opportunities for improving key areas such as health services, transportation, housing, respect and social inclusion, beautification, recreation and communication and information to create a resilient “age friendly” community.¹⁷ The forum identified two key areas involving the future use of the renovated Pakenham branch library:

- The identification of the Pakenham branch as a central Information Hub for seniors - a ‘one-stop shop’ to receive municipal, regional and village information and assistance in navigating that information.

¹⁶ Doris Rankin and Associates 1292080 Ontario Inc.

¹⁷ Bridging Generations Report, March 2016.

- The creation of a “mature Social Drop-In” for the village and its surroundings. The planners envisaged this centre would offer both a general social function and opportunities to obtain information and to share or learn skills.

2.3.5 The Community Library Survey

A survey was conducted to gather information and suggestions for use in this strategic plan and as a tool for the library to use in the future.¹⁸ This survey represents a significant undertaking to solicit opinions and thoughts from the community. Information was collected and lessons learned. The survey was conducted at different venues (e.g. PuppetsUp, Pakenham Fair), and was available in both library branches. An e-version was on the library website. While pleased with the success of this first survey (almost 500 respondents), there is room for improvement with regards to getting the survey out to the broader community. For example, optimism in reaching certain segments of the population including non-users (e.g. people who no longer use the library) was not realized. Youth are under-represented.

Four in five of the respondents to the survey had a Mississippi Mills library card. This section focuses on persons with a Mississippi Mills library card (398 respondents). Within this group,

- Two in five people¹⁹ are working for wages outside of the home, close to one in five are self-employed in their own business (including farming). More than one third of the people responding to the survey are retired.
- As mentioned above, input from some age groups is limited. Two in five of the respondents are under 50 – 7% are under the age of 30, 16% age 30-39 and 15% age 40-49. Three in five of the people responding to the survey are 50 years of age and over – 15% age 50-59, 25% age 60-69 and 21% 70 years of age and older (6% did not answer the age question).

It is important to consider the limitations of the survey when reading the findings. That said, the results do provide some interesting and timely insights. The survey is not intended to be a foundation for strategic planning. Rather this first survey provides some timely community thoughts and comments on the library.

Some of the findings:

- Most people report weekly visits to the library – 53%. One quarter of people visit the library on a monthly basis and 16% occasionally.
- People were asked to provide feedback on the times of day they prefer to visit the library – an issue that can be challenging – balancing people’s needs with library budgets. Overall, during the week evenings show the highest ratings when it comes to preferences for opening hours, followed by afternoons and then mornings. Saturday afternoon is as favoured for visiting the library as Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon is more popular than Sunday morning (see Table 1).

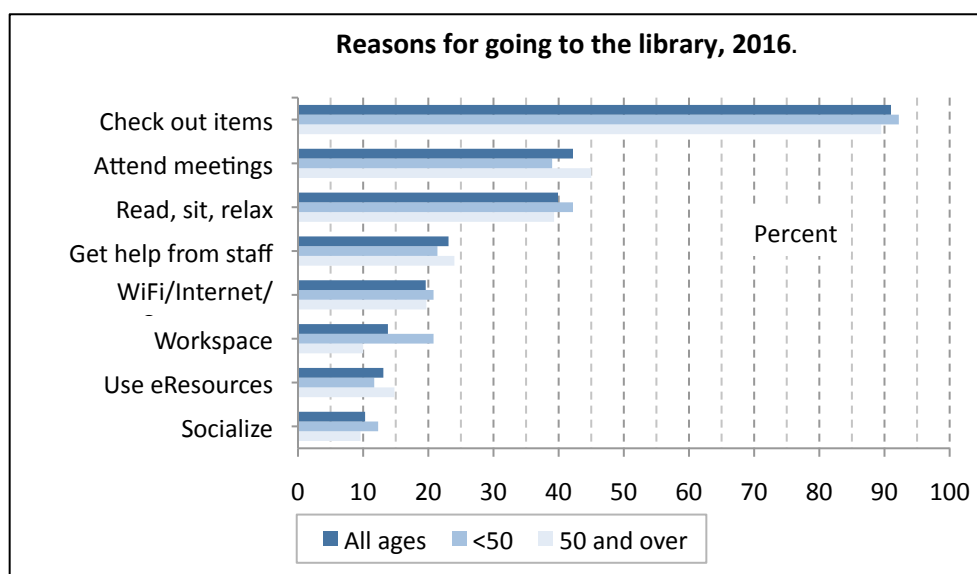
¹⁸ A stand-alone publication of the survey is available. For more information refer to Annex A.3.2.

¹⁹ 378 of 398 responded to this question.

| | Mon. | Tues. | Wed. | Thurs. | Fri. | Sat. | Sun. |
|--|---|-------|------|--------|------|------|------|
| Time of day preferred for visiting the library | The days of the week persons preferred expressed as a percentage of total responses | | | | | | |
| Mornings | 48% | 46% | 53% | 49% | 52% | 75% | 32% |
| Afternoons | 57% | 61% | 63% | 62% | 65% | 74% | 42% |
| Evenings | 68% | 71% | 75% | 81% | 72% | 34% | 19% |

Note: people were invited to identify all preferences so percentages do not add to 100%.

- People were asked about why they go to the library.²⁰ As one might expect, signing out/checking out items is the main reason people go to the library – this is what at least nine in ten people said. Some two in five go to the library to attend meetings, exhibitions and events or to sit, read and relax. Almost one quarter go to the library to get help from the staff, which includes getting help with reference material and information on programs of the library.

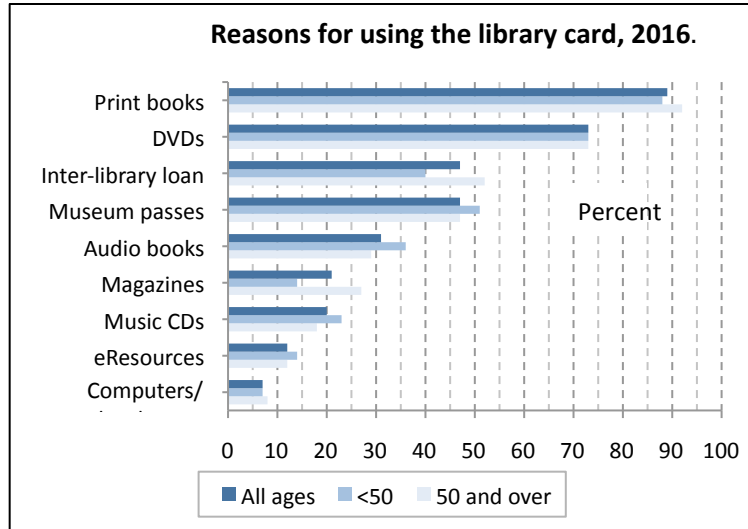


Although the sample size is small, it is helpful to consider how age is a possible determinant factor of library usage.

- Regardless of age, some nine in ten people reported they go to the library to sign out/check out items and some one in five people go to the library for Wi-Fi/ Internet/ computer.
- While 39% of people <50 go to the library to attend meetings/exhibitions/events, a larger share (45%) of persons 50 and over also cite this reason.
- A slightly greater share of people 50 and older go to the library to get help from the staff (24%) compared with people under 50 (21%).

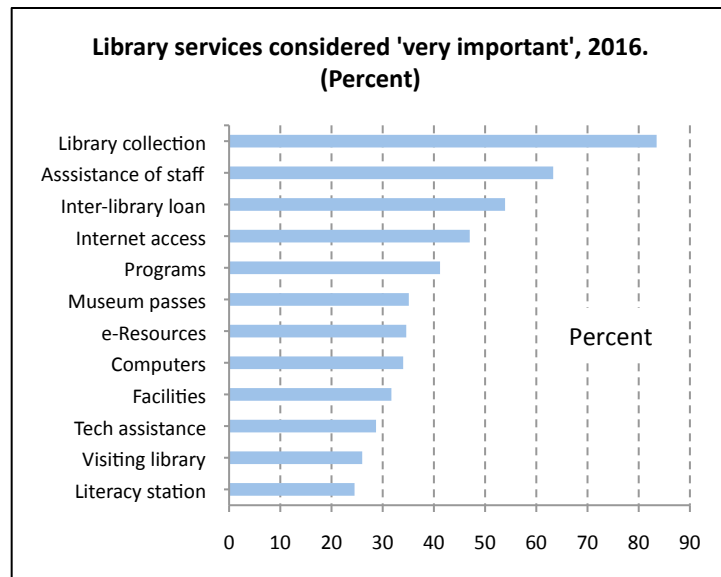
²⁰ They were asked to fill in multiple choices so numbers do not add to 100%.

- Workspace seems to be more important for people <50 - twenty one percent say they go to the library to use the workspace compared with only 10% of people 50 and older.
- Print books were the most popular use of the library card - nine in ten people use their library cards for print books. DVDs are very popular – 73% use their library card for taking out DVDs. Almost half of the people (47%) say they use their library card for inter-library loans or museum passes. Audio books are also taken out by about one third (31%) of people who replied to the survey and about one in five use their card for magazines (21%) or music CDs (20%). Only 12% said they use their library card for e-Resources.

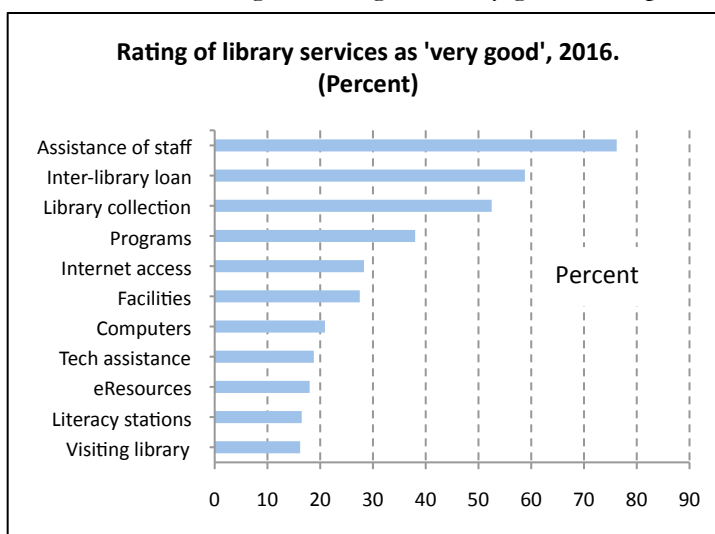


- People <50 years of age show a somewhat higher propensity for museum passes, music CDs, audio books and eResources compared to persons 50 and older. For people 50 and older, taking out magazines and inter-library loans are more popular uses of their library cards compared with those < 50 years of age.

- People were asked to rank the 'importance' of the library services. Ranking ranged from 'not important' to a high of 'very important'. More than four in five people said the library collection was *very important* to them. The assistance of the library staff was also very important for many – 63% said assistance of library staff is *very important* and second in ranking only to the library collection itself. Services like the literacy station and visiting library were cited by around one quarter of the responses as *very important*.



- Library services were rated from a low of 'average' to a high of 'very good'. People are pleased with the library staff - three quarter of the responses said the assistance of library staff is *very good*. The next service that impressed with a high share of *very good* scores is the inter-library loan service. Services like the visiting library, literacy station and e-related services did less well with regards to getting feedback of *very good*. Results suggest services linked to technology tend to be rated as *good*.



- Most people reported learning of library programs, services and activities from signs/posters/flyers – 63%. The next most popular source for information is library staff (54%), then 'word of mouth' (50%) and the library website (47%).
- The library scores well when people are asked for their overall opinion of the library. More than two thirds said the library is *very good* and another quarter said it is *good*.
- People were asked their opinion on the importance of a library and the message is clear - a library is *very important* – so said nine in ten people.
- People were also asked to convey their thoughts on other services they would like to see the library provide. Suggestions include:
 - Additional programs, in particular for the winter e.g. film nights and activities that combine education and the community.
 - Adult education programs; continuing education
 - Basic computer classes.
 - Better audio book downloads – better selection of books.
 - Services for youth aged 10-18 – find a way to bring them in, hire youth worker, help them with homework or career service. (This is now partially addressed with the opening of the Youth Centre but yet again it suggests the value of partnerships for learning and integrating under participative segments of the population like youth).
 - Learning second language programs.
 - After school library program for kids.
 - Tech training for seniors.
 - Maker-spaces (e.g. spaces for creating, learning, making, 3D printers).
 - More baby/child programs especially in summer.

These suggestions came from invitations to survey respondents to list what else they would like to see at the library – a bit of a wish list. It illustrates the challenges faced by the library. While wanting to engage the public in setting strategic priorities, budget considerations may limit the extent to which the wish list can be satisfied.

3. Strategic Planning

Sometimes it's necessary to step back from the rush of daily activity and ask ourselves: What are we doing? What are we doing well? What do we need to do to serve our community better?

The first attempt to create a strategic plan followed the process outlined in “Creating the Future You’ve Imagined: a Guide to Essential Planning.”²¹

The plan, published in 2011²², took more than two years to complete and helped the MMPL Board to focus on mission, values and vision for the library. It was a critical look at services, and identified strengths to build on and weaknesses that needed to be addressed in the medium term.

The plan identified five key strategic directions:

1. Develop a facilities improvement plan to ensure the library is accessible and welcoming.
2. Raise the library’s profile in the community.
3. Cultivate strategic partnerships and relationships within the community.
4. Upgrade and update the library’s technological resources.
5. Build the capacity of staff to serve the community more effectively.

3.1 Lessons Learned

The first lesson learned was that the Board didn’t feel comfortable with a ten year plan; shifts in technology, such as the development of e-readers, tablets, and Smartphones were happening so quickly that the potential for new uses and their effects on library service were beyond our ability to forecast. Consequently, in 2011, the Board decided to limit the plan to five years, and to undertake a thorough reconsideration in 2015-16.

3.2 Strengths and Weaknesses of the 2011 Plan

Strengths

- The plan’s review provided the Board with its first goal-oriented, “action roadmap” – a reference for making decisions in a coherent fashion.
- Four “Strategic Directions” were identified, addressing physical, technological and service gaps in the system.
- Priorities achievable in the mid-term were identified; most of the actions identified in the plan have been addressed and over 80% of the finite goals have been achieved. (e.g. Website launched in 2015; social media presence in 2013; joined SOLS e-book consortia; increased liaison with Municipal staff; increased partnerships/memberships such as the Chamber of Commerce, Textile Museum; completed space needs assessment for Pakenham Branch 2015; increased programming since 2013).
- Finite projects were identified, e.g. improving accessibility. The Almonte Branch is now fully wheelchair accessible, and plans to renovate the Pakenham Branch are underway.

²¹ SOLS, 2007.

²² Mississippi Mills Public Library Strategic Plan 2010-2020.

- Ongoing action items were introduced e.g. building staff capacity through training opportunities and establishing new relationships within the community.
- The plan offered benchmarks for evaluating financial requests. Budget requests were to reference strategic priorities. Success measures identified were customer feedback, circulation usage statistics, electronic database usage statistics and regular staff reports to the Board.

Weaknesses

Lack of funding for the Strategic Plan meant:

- Limited public input into the planning process. Without resources to conduct a formal survey, we relied on a limited number of exit interviews with library patrons.
- Limited printing of summary sheet and a very low public profile for the Strategic Plan.
- Limited staff input into the development of the plan.
- Activities to support directions were not clarified and expanded on a yearly basis. However, annual reports to the Board were made in the form of a chart listing strategic objective, activities, and completion status.
- “Soft” services lacked evaluation criteria, indicators of success and consequently evaluation became a simple Y/N checklist.

The SWOT analysis of the 2010-2015 strategic plan is provided in the Annex, Item A.4.

4. Moving Forward - The Ten Year Plan 2017-2026

4.1 The Changing Role of the Library

The Past

In the late 19th century in Ontario, a public library system replaced the private libraries and Mechanics Institutes, which charged subscribers to join and to borrow books. Ontario property tax revenues would now fund libraries. Based on the principle of universal access to information and a respect for the power of education, public libraries were originally intended to provide all residents of a municipality with open access to reference materials.²³ The library was envisaged as a collection of books, housed in a suite of rooms or a distinct building, which could be borrowed by members - an archive for learning and enquiry.

By and large, the original, archival model of the library was retained throughout the next century. The public library in the 20th century was a place to access information and leisure reading materials. Libraries were quiet, reflective places used mainly for research, individual study and borrowing books, magazines or media and its service was focused on its circulation function. After WWII, libraries began to offer programs for children and adults and to add purpose-built meeting rooms available for programming and public meetings.

The Present

During the past two decades, advances in digital technology have fundamentally changed how people access information, and how the publishing industry delivers books to their customers.

Rather than seeking out print references, people rely on their computers and smart phones for answers to factual questions. For example, in 1974, non-fiction represented 65% of the circulation in the Hamilton Public Library system; by 2011, non-fiction represented only 20% of library circulation.²⁴ The Internet has replaced the reference book as the go-to source for information in the 21st century. It has virtually killed the reference function of public libraries, but has also opened up a whole range of exciting possibilities for library development.

Changes in digital technology have led to fundamental changes in the perception of libraries and library service. **More and more, the library is seen as a gathering place - a meeting place for cultural, social, educational and collaborative experiences.**

What do you see when you enter our library today?

A middle-aged couple examines the artwork in our corridor gallery. In the reading room, an elderly gentleman sits in a wing chair reading the newspaper. Two teens, curled into lounge chairs, are intent on texting; they've come here to enjoy the free Wi-Fi service. Meanwhile, a family chooses a DVD for tonight's entertainment, a row of clients use the public access computers, a young mother reads to her toddler in the children's section and a technology tutor shows a new entrepreneur how to set up her own webpage. The meeting room may be in use for an adult learning course, a photography group's monthly seminar or a Travelogue presentation, while at the back of the adult section, the staff-led book club chat about their latest selection.

²³ www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/libraries

²⁴ Ken Roberts. Changing Times: Inspiring Libraries <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-illDOBuFo>.

The MMPL has become much more than an archive; it provides a variety of programs and equipment to enhance the interests of its patrons. It understands and addresses the desire for life-long learning. (e.g. the Travelogue series is among the most popular programs; musical instruments and disc golf sets are available for patrons to borrow).

The Future – the Long Range Vision

In 2012, Mr. Ken Roberts, an award-winning librarian from Hamilton Ontario, was commissioned by the British Columbia government to write a report on the future of libraries. He identified a number of trends that will affect all public libraries during the next 30 years:

1. **The rise of the e-book** - The publishing industry will move to electronic publishing for virtually all non-fiction materials, literary fiction and first time authors within the next decade. According to Roberts, this shift is driven by the economic demands of the publishing industry as publishers choose to shrink costs by releasing literary fiction and first time authors only in e-book form. Many readers who do not read e-books now, and say they never will, will be reading them by 2025. Although e-books are still a minor element in circulation, their availability and use will balloon during the next decade.
2. **The death of traditional reference** - Reference books as we know them will become extinct, and will be replaced by digital, subject-based data bases with interactive home pages that contain whole libraries full of research papers and articles. The reference role of the library will move from finding answers to helping their patrons' access information. "*It is important that libraries embrace the fact that their mission is not connected to a type of container (print) but to the ability of residents and students to access the best of the world's intellectual property, no matter the format in which it is presented.*"²⁵ Through consortium licensing, libraries will be able to provide patrons with access to e-books and large databases they cannot afford to purchase themselves.
3. **The reconsideration of library functions** - Libraries will move from information to creation spaces, with the introduction of specialized equipment in laboratory spaces for music or video editing, collaborative computer spaces and maker places. Staffed by trained technologists, these areas provide patrons with the tools to explore their ideas alone or in small groups.
4. **Reaching beyond the walls** - Libraries will find ways to reach beyond their walls. Libraries provide WiFi beyond the walls connecting the inside with user spaces outside. In the future, libraries will be able to alert patrons to materials – books and magazines that suit their interests. They will partner with other libraries and business to provide expensive services and information, and will be able to tailor their services to the needs of their communities.
5. **Changing use of interior space** - The use of interior space will change to accommodate both individual and collaborative endeavours. Libraries might have to create "quiet areas" for individuals while the majority of space is used for meeting, greeting and collaborative activities. The libraries of the future will be collegial, convivial and conversational.

²⁵ Ken Roberts, <https://commons.bclibraries.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Facing-the-Future-A-Report-on-the-future-of-libraries-for-the-Province-of-British-Columbia.pdf> p.8.

6. **Changing nature of library work and service** - Repetitive tasks such as cataloguing and processing will be reduced and patron assistance and tutoring will increase. While library staff will still focus on service to patrons, the ways in which they assist will be more personal and technological. The need for regular staff training and upgrading will become greater than it is now.

The Next Ten Years

1. **Change will be the new normal** - During the next ten years, libraries across the province will be wrestling with the changes articulated above. The central challenge will be to maintain traditional library services while introducing new services and new service models to both staff and library patrons.
2. **The transition from Archive to Gateway** - Several intermediate trends have already emerged since Roberts completed his report in 2012. Among them, perhaps the most significant is the shift in perception of a library from an archive to a gateway, both virtual and physical. The library is quickly becoming a central community space for people to meet, share ideas, discover and collaborate in learning activities. Whatever the name – “Idea Shop” “Community Living Room”, “Cultural Hub” “Discovery Place” - the libraries of the future will be more open and more social than libraries of the 20th century. They will connect to their communities as prime sources of local information, cultural and educational activities.
3. **The endurance of traditional formats** – Despite confident predictions of the ascendancy of the e-book, industry watchdog “Publisher’s Weekly”²⁶ reported that sales of these products have stalled during the past two years. An Ontario Government profile of the book publishing industry noted that in 2015 e-book sales in Canada levelled off; e-books represented 17% of industry sales in 2015, the same share as in 2013.²⁷ Meanwhile, the library community and the publishing industry are locked in a battle to reduce the costs of e-books to libraries.

During the next ten years public libraries will continue to offer print books, magazines and entertainment media as core services. Programming for young children will continue to attract parents to the children’s book collection, and adults will demand more and more varied opportunities to learn and share knowledge.

²⁶ June 17, 2016.

²⁷ www.omdc.on.ca/collaboration/research-and-industry-information/industry-profiles/Book:industry-Profile.html.

4.2 Strategic Priorities - 2017-2026

The Mission

Inspire life long learning, provide equitable access to information, advance knowledge and strengthen the community.

A public library supports education by providing learning facilities so that people can continue learning throughout their lives.

The Vision

An informed, engaged, creative and connected community.

The library is staffed with trained professionals to advise and assist on the range of resources available. Computer literacy programs and 'tech tutors' play an important role to help close the digital divide by giving one-on-one assistance and technology training.

Core Values

Access
Diversity
Service
Intellectual Freedom
Learning and Culture
Innovation and Creativity
Inclusiveness

4.3 Strategic Directions

**SHIFT THE FOCUS OF THE LIBRARY FROM
ARCHIVE MODEL OF THE 20TH CENTURY TO
GATEWAY MODEL OF THE 21ST CENTURY**

One of the most significant shifts in recent years is the shift in perception of a library from an archive for materials to a gateway to cultural, and social and educational experiences.

The library will connect to the community as a central community space for people to meet, share ideas, discover and collaborate in learning activities.

Libraries will be physically more open, with multi-use spaces for a variety of learning and entertainment activities. Some spaces could feature digital equipment for creative uses such as self-publishing of manuscripts, photo-editing and maker spaces. Library staff will be trained and available to assist people in using the technologies.

Collections, especially non-fiction, will shift from print towards electronic formats as libraries cooperate to purchase on-line data bases for information.²⁸ Nevertheless, the core collection of the physical materials will remain central to the library's collection.

**SUPPORT STAFF TRAINING TO BETTER
SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY**

The library will offer programs that meet the changing needs of the community, and will support those programs with knowledgeable staff.

As the focus of the library shifts towards more programming and creative use of technology the need for staff training and upgrading will become even more important than it is now. Library specialists will help with technological challenges such as harvesting Big Data, accessing Internet resources and mastering new technologies. They will share community information and community asset maps and facilitate cooperative community initiatives.

²⁸ Support for this from: Current Trends in the Library world, From Archive to Portal, (p.20); External Workshop, "Libraries as Learning Commons", (p.12); Bridging Generations Report, the library as an information and social centre for Seniors in the village of Pakenham; Comments from Community Survey, suggestions for additional programs and services, (p. 17).

Planning for staffing needs will include succession planning for replacement of retiring staff with qualified library/technology specialists.

Staff participation in municipal planning activities will help ensure that library goals mesh with municipal aims.

Partnering with outside agencies, organizations can provide opportunities for expanded programs and purchase of sponsored equipment.²⁹

STRENGTHEN VOLUNTEER BASE

Volunteers are invaluable for the library. They bring much to the library in terms of resources, skills, and diversity. They enable the library to offer some programs that would not otherwise be possible. Volunteers help spread understanding of the offerings and role of the library in the broader community through what one might call ‘natural osmosis’ flows of information.

In the social-professional-learning environment of the library, volunteers get new experience and acquire new skills. Volunteering at the library can give people a sense of belonging.

Volunteers can help build a sense of the community within library walls – people learn about the library and meet people. In turn they may bring home more understanding of the community they live in. Mississippi Mills is rich with residents with diverse skills and knowledge. For example, mentoring by senior citizens is a valuable resource; people with shareable skills could offer workshops.

We need to develop formal and informal volunteer opportunities for youth - use the library volunteer program to bring youth into the library to build relationships with staff. Bringing young people into volunteer activities can give the library insight into the interests of young people in the community.³⁰ An example is the TAG Teen Advisory Group, which provides high school students opportunities to accumulate volunteer hours. Teens can also apply for general volunteer duties.

²⁹ Support for this from: External Workshop, identified need for librarians as “expanded specialists” and enabling use of new technologies and technological applications (p.13); Internal Workshop, identified several staff development needs, (p.12); Bridging Generations Project, identified role of library staff as community information providers (p.14); Library trends, as per Ken Roberts, noted the reconsideration of library functions noting that libraries of the future will need trained technologists to provide patrons with the tools to use specific computerized equipment and software (pp.19-20).

³⁰ Refer to “*Youth Volunteers at Your Library – Engaging Youth in your Library.*” 2005.
<http://heartwood.ns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/YouthVolunteers.pdf>

UPDATE LIBRARY INFRASTRUCTURE

The central tenet of a library as a safe welcoming space, which is affordable and accessible by all, will remain intact and immutable. Print collections will continue to be a significant element in space use and will follow AODA guidelines for accessibility.

Buildings will provide space and the environment to promote knowledge and learning.³¹

The expansion project of the Pakenham branch, to reflect its future uses as a local information centre and meeting place for the village, will be completed.

A plan for the renovation/expansion/re-invention of the Almonte branch, which reflects the idea of a library as a central community space for learning, entertainment, creating and relaxing, will be developed and implemented.³²

Careful planning and community engagement will be necessary in the planning stages. Plans should consider a balance between flexible active spaces and quiet areas for relaxation and study, as well as the provision of working technology spaces.

Completion of changes to the library infrastructure will require innovative approaches to fundraising and development of partnerships.

CREATE INNOVATIVE FUNDING PLAN

Ninety percent of the library's budget comes from the municipality and pressures on its budget are not likely to abate. Other revenue sources such as the province may withdraw program support such as the recent loss of provincial funds targeted for IT support. At the same time the library budget offers little opportunity for creativity or discretionary spending. For example, in the 2017 budget, 71% is tied to salaries/benefits, 7% to utilities, building maintenance (with maintenance costs always an unknown but typically on the rise) and insurance. This leaves just over 20% of the annual budget 'flexible' for CEO planning and decision-making to deliver core services to the community.

“Access to technology and technology know-how – obsolescence and cost are inhibiting factors for many in the community from both a personal and professional standpoint. Libraries will

³¹ Internal Workshops recognized the need for change in space use at the Almonte Branch, the need to ensure balance between quiet and active spaces and suggested consideration of ways to integrate inside and outside space; External Workshop noted space and environment for learning.

³² This is supported by the inclusion of \$1 million funding identified in the Mississippi Mills Long Term Capital Plan for 2016-2030.

serve an important role in showcasing new technologies and offering affordable access to community members.”³³

At a recent meeting of Administrators of Medium Public Libraries Ontario, information was tabled that suggests funding of Ontario libraries may be facing funding pressure, and will undergo significant changes in the near future. Highlights from the conference include:

- A review of public library funding in 2017;
- Review/revisit of public library operating grants and pay equity grants;
- No expected increase to funding envelope.

The library faces increasing pressure for revenues from donations. In Canada in 2006 there were 90,000 registered charities (projected to increase by 10% per annum) and 200,000 non-profit groups, all of which vie for donations from public and private sources³⁴. The report proposes ‘building philanthropy’ instead of ‘asking’ – moving from increasing transactions of donations to relationships for funding. This is about moving to longer-term relationship building – plan for longer term funding by building a relationship with the donor(s). Donors can be encouraged to commit for the longer term. Identification of needs can be matched to philanthropic interests and encourage investment – planned giving with planned and evidentiary outcomes for the givers.

It is time to bring an innovative approach to funding planning. Additional revenue streams have to be identified. A funding strategy should be developed – it has to have a compelling story for the funding. We need to raise awareness of the contributions of the library and the value the library is for the community.

INCREASE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Collaboration is a focus of the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries 2016-2020 strategic plan – “Collaborate with other library associations, organizations and agencies to lobby for public libraries in provincial political arena”.³⁵ Greater benefits may be realized when resources and skills are pooled.

The MMPL has to increase and strengthen collaborative efforts with organizations and agencies. For example, the Mills Community Support carried out an extensive survey of seniors in the community. One of the challenges of the community library survey was the inability to reach certain segments of the community including teens and seniors. A library survey can be ‘piggybacked’ to this type of activity, pooling resources and skills.

³³ From the report on the external workshop, refer to Annex Section A.2.

³⁴ From *Building Philanthropy – Fundraising programs any library can do that will create donors*, Rob Lavery, Resource Development Consultant, SOLS 2006. The report is available at <https://www.sols.org/index.php/about/sols-publications>

³⁵ FOPL Strategic Plan, 2016-2020. <http://fopl.ca/news/new-fopl-strategic-plan-2016-2020/>

Collaboration for raising additional funds should be explored. We have examples of successful collaborative efforts. The Elizabeth Kelly Library Foundation Inc. has had a long-term commitment to the library in support of literacy programs and technology (e.g. literacy tutors, library website, computer hardware, speaker fees for series such as One Book One Community). In November 2016, a book sale was held - a joint initiative of the library and the Youth Centre. Both organizations shared the work and the funds raised. Another example is the TDCanada Trust Summer Reading program that is held annually. In 2016, the library held 140 events with 1,379 participants. The Jump Math program divides free resources and workbooks to support our numeracy program. Another example addresses new eligibility restrictions for the Youth Intern Program (Tech Tutor). Together, public libraries across Lanark made a single application to share one Youth Intern across all five libraries. The application was approved and the successful candidate will be assisting us with adaptive technologies and public computer platforms.

Collaboration with the municipality means the library strategy should consider the municipal strategic plan. It is especially important to ensure effective alignment as the library moves forward - the library has to support the community's overall strategy for the future. The library has an important role to play in the growth and future of the community.

Collaboration in decision-making is essential. Planning and policy efforts have to bring together staff, Board and community. Involving staff brings 'front line' understanding of what the community likes and needs to discussions. Involving staff in early stages can build confidence and 'buy-in' for change. Collaboration will increase transparency of decision-making at all levels. Transparency will help build stronger communications.

5. Stewardship – Getting from Here to There

Ten years is a long time for a strategic plan to have relevance in today’s fast changing world. The 10-year strategic plan needs to be reactive. In order to be in a position to adapt to changing social and fiscal environments of rural and urban populations within the Mississippi Mills community, it is important to incorporate ‘living’ elements. It is vital the strategic plan enable library staff and the Board to “remain agile to enable timely response to emerging issues and opportunities”.³⁶

The strategic plan cannot be put on the shelf as a completed exercise and left to gather dust. The process undertaken to produce this strategic plan represents a substantial investment of financial resources and human effort with the ultimate goal of ensuring the MMPL meets the needs of the community and thrives in the longer term.

Timely information is essential - ways and means to gauge progress and re-align priorities as needed. The sharing of information and planning (e.g. change or no change in priorities of the library) with Library Staff, the Board, the Municipal Council and the community is important to reach the end goal of providing the community with a library that services growing and changing community needs, a library that continues to evolve as a key provider of learning, knowledge and community.

5.1 Ongoing Measurement and Re-assessment


5.1.1 Annual work plan

A work plan puts in place actions to close the gap between where the library is today and where the library wants to be in ten years – the work plan is about how the library moves forward year to year. An annual work plan will respond to priorities identified in the strategic plan by identifying specific actions and associated timelines.

A work plan will be organized to meet the identified strategic directions. It can be used to monitor activities and help identify where remedial solutions may be required.

An annual work plan will provide the Board with a means to monitor progress and be ready to provide support to the CEO as needed.

The work plan will clearly define timelines and expected outcomes.



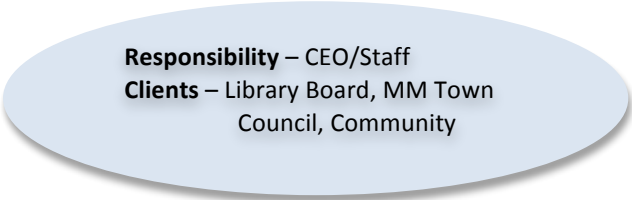
Responsibility – CEO/Staff
Clients – Library Board, Staff, funders.

5.1.2 Annual Report

One of the main purposes of an annual report is to present an accounting of the financials to the managing board. Yet for the library, an annual report has a wider-reaching function - it can provide the governing structure(s), in this case the Board, the Municipality of Mississippi Mills and the public with a record of accomplishments, demonstrate compliance to the strategic plan and signal the need for intervention.

³⁶ FOPL Strategic Plan, 2016-2020. <http://fopl.ca/news/new-fopl-strategic-plan-2016-2020/>

For the library, an annual report is an opportunity to showcase accomplishments, to show how the library is doing and reinforce its role for the community. Through an annual report, public shareholders (e.g. clients of the library and the broader taxpayer community) can learn of activities, engagement of various groups in our community and services that are realized through their investment and support.



An annual report is a valuable aid for the CEO to log progress and for the Board to carry out due diligence in its oversight and compliance responsibilities.

5.1.3 Cost effective analysis

Cost-effective analysis is about considering the aspects of quality and the overall worth of having the undertaking or program or activity at the library. It is about assessing costs and benefits and not limited to counting the number of people in a program or dollars spent on heating a meeting room.

Cost effective analysis is a tool for quantitative and qualitative evaluation of programs and activities of the library. It seems more suitable, more ‘human friendly’ (compared with cost/benefit analyses), for decision-making and priority setting in a small public institution like the MMPL. Cost effective analysis allows for an examination of the costs and the outcomes of a library initiative or program. It can be used to consider whether or not the undertaking or program is worth the investment of time and funds. It is useful for examining the purpose of a program or initiative, considering its relation to the overall strategic direction of the library. Various instruments like satisfaction surveys, questions to the participants (e.g. program staff and library clients), and other tools are readily available in the public domain and/or accessible at minimal financial costs.

Cost-effective analysis is an important tool for management in preparation for budget planning and priority setting. Cost effective analyses can also be a powerful tool to gain additional funding and support. For example, if the library can report on the overall benefits and outcome of a program or theme, then as budgets are under more pressure to prove their worth, the library can show the return there is on the investment, both in terms of cost and how much it matters to the community. At a recent meeting of the Administrators of Medium Public Libraries Ontario, it was noted – expect more reporting and accountability for funds.³⁷

It is also worth mentioning that cost-effective analyses can be particularly useful when applying for funding. Funding agencies want to have a clear picture as to how their investment will impact on the library or community. Funding agencies need clear and concise feedback on outcome and impact of their



³⁷ Based on discussion re “Draft Discussion Paper Towards More Effective Public Libraries in the Context of the New Ontario Culture Strategy” prepared for Advance Meeting on Public Library Funding Review November 30, 2016, Stephen Abram, FOPL, Shelagh Paterson OLA.

investment – they too have a management structure that needs to decide upon where to direct their funds.

5.1.4 Bi-Annual Review of Financials and Priorities

A bi-annual review of fiscal activities in relation to strategic priorities falls under the responsibility of the Board. Day to day management and operations are the responsibility of the CEO whereas the Board is responsible for the macro-management of library resources. The Board has an active role in monitoring and understanding fiscal trends and works with the CEO when adjustment or intervention is needed. For example, IT hardware can place a significant and sudden demand on financial resources, and repair/replacement can be on an ‘emergency’ basis, or built into longer term as the hardware ages.

Monthly reviews of financials may not signal where attention is needed. Annual budgets bring a flurry of budget activity and typically once passed, things are filed away until next time. The Board should make better efforts to ensure financial means are in place for the library to meet its strategic priorities. A bi-annual review that reports on fiscal activity linked to priorities and outcomes (e.g. what has been accomplished and paid for; what needs to get done next; what priorities are to be re-aligned based on operating or capital expenditures) will put the Board in a stronger position. The Board needs to recognize ‘red flags’ before they are too close.

Responsibility – Library Board
Clients – Library Board/CEO

A bi-annual review will enable the Board to increase its vigilance and place itself in a better position to respond to CEO requests for fiscal considerations. It will move the Board into a more knowledgeable and stronger position so the Board can better lobby for funding (e.g. engage members of the community for planning and funding support).

5.2 Public Relations/Public Partnerships

The previous strategic plan identified the need to cultivate strategic partnerships and relationships as a priority. This is even more important as we move forward in the next ten years. The library needs to build on its network and extend partnerships with local arts and culture groups (e.g. as with the success seen with Corridor Gallery at the library). It should work on growing better and more relationships across the community including service clubs and the business community. Awareness builds relationships and can strengthen the library’s base in the community.

The Board will work with the CEO, to build public relations. The CEO does this as part of her/his daily ‘on the front lines’ activities. The Board, however, has to consider a move from passive observation to more active engagement of local politicians and agencies to lobby for the library. For example, the Board can work towards developing a closer relationship with the Municipal Council. As well, the Board can contribute to municipal discussions that may impact the community.

The library, albeit not by design or intent, is a marketing means for flourishing community living. A library that responds to community needs can increase engagement of members

of the community. Important messaging can be circulated on behalf of the library – investment in the library is an investment for the future and money well spent. Strong public relations can lead to opportunities to secure funding and support for medium- and long-term plans of the library to better serve the community.

Annex

A.1 Internal Workshop(s) - Report

Key conclusions are presented in Section 3.2.2 Detailed notes from the workshop can be provided upon request. Send your request to pharris@mississippimills.ca.

A.2. External Workshop – Report

This is the report submitted by Stoneleigh Strategies Inc.

The Importance and Future Role of Libraries: Summary of External Consultations in Support of the Mississippi Mills Library Strategy Formulation Exercise

Context

The Board of the Mississippi Mills Library is developing a ten-year strategy. This Strategy will chart the Library's path forward in the face of rapidly evolving socio-economic and technological pressures and opportunities.

In support of this strategy formulation exercise, Stoneleigh Strategies, Inc. was engaged by the Board to facilitate a community Roundtable. Several other community members were also consulted by phone.

The purpose of this Roundtable was to discuss the importance and future role of libraries. Drawing upon a wide array of community perspectives (e.g. municipal, academic, youth, legal, news media, families, etc.), the Roundtable and phone interviews provided valuable insight into broad themes and issues important to Library Board strategy deliberations.

Purpose of this Paper

This Paper provides a summary of the key themes, issues, and opportunities that have emerged from the Roundtable discussion and phone interviews. Stoneleigh Strategies also provides a brief set of concluding remarks and key considerations moving forward.

Importance of Libraries

Libraries are community hubs and integrators. They are essential to a community's long-term social and economic well-being.

The concept of libraries has evolved from the stereotypical safe and quiet place used to access books and associated information. Libraries are now viewed as a safe environment (both quiet and social) to research, transfer and develop knowledge, expertise, and social/professional networks in various hard, digital, and personal/experiential formats. For communities such as Mississippi Mills, the library strengthens social and economic fabrics, and provides a competitive edge over larger cities who may find it much more complex and less feasible to mobilize the whole community in support of social and economic well-being.

A relevant and effective library includes and involves the broad spectrum of community demographics, from children, youth, families, to middle-aged and senior citizens. It also cuts across social, academic, and business sectors. An effective library is also inclusive of

“Libraries are a place for people to gather...they should be safe...they should be affordable and accessible to all.”

Community Roundtable
November 9, 2016

different cultures and diversity – a true source of ideas and innovation. One of the key challenges faced by libraries is to meet a wide array of user demands that shift across these demographics.

Libraries are vital to continuous learning and development. For example, youth can find identity, connect with/integrate into a community, and seize young leadership opportunities; children learn to love books, to collaborate, and gain early experience in problem-solving and creativity; senior citizens

have access to meeting space, are afforded opportunities to access and learn continuously evolving technologies and social media, and can find satisfaction in mentoring younger community members; hobbyists gain access to know-how and materials such as occurs with the Community Garden Library; and small business and professionals benefit from targeted workshops and networking events.

A library thrives on a symbiotic relationship with the community. The social and economic fabric of the community and the strength of the library both flourish and are self-sustaining because of two-way continuous interaction. This entails a two-way flow of information and other forms of contributions, and calls for strategic partnerships with community players (e.g. partnerships on maker-spaces and technology showcases; volunteer mentoring by senior citizens; etc.).

Libraries foster community-based partnerships that seek to strengthen social and economic well-being of the community.

The Future Role of Libraries

Roundtable and telephone discussions identified a series of important roles for libraries:

1. **Learning Commons.** Libraries are fostering environments characterized by more social interaction as a means by which to research, transfer, and promote knowledge, experience, and social/professional networks. While quiet rooms remain for focused thinking, leading-edge spaces designed to nurture and advance knowledge, expertise, and linkages through social interaction will likely grow and serve as a good magnet for new and existing library users. Live book sessions, personal and professional workshops, and maker-spaces are just a few examples of how a learning commons can benefit a community.

Bringing a wide set of individual and organizational competencies (e.g. STEAM – science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) together across social and economic domains is expected to be valuable in solving issues and seizing opportunities. Learning Commons will not only provide the space, but also the environment to promote and foster this convergence of knowledge, expertise, and networks with an eye toward community social and economic benefits.

“Things are just things without people...”

Community Roundtable
November 9, 2016

2. **Librarians as expanded specialists.** In addition to helping users identify information sources and data bases, the specialists will, for example, nurture critical thinking skills of users; help with challenges around managing and harvesting Big Data; help users to access and use new technologies; share community intelligence and community asset maps; and act as community match-makers along social and professional lines;

3. **Access to technology and technology know-how.** Technology development is occurring at an ever-increasing speed. Obsolescence and cost are inhibiting factors for many in the community from both a personal and professional standpoint. Libraries will serve an important role in showcasing new technologies and offering affordable access to community members. For example, workshops on 3D printing provide an opportunity for all segments of the demographic profile to benefit. Youth become evermore comfortable with the new technology reality, small business gain a better understanding of how technologies may benefit their business, and senior citizens are in some cases better placed to remain connected to society;
4. **Small business advisory services.** Libraries can help bring clusters of small business together to capitalize on shared skills, products, networks, and community intelligence. This may also help to attract other small business to the community. Professional workshops and other idea generating fora are likely to play a key role in helping local business succeed;
5. **Continued promotion of the love of reading.** The heart of the traditional library – promoting the love of books – remains a central tenet; and
6. **Community integration.** In addition to bringing diverse perspectives together in pursuit of social and economic benefit, the library will continue to serve as a location to help new residents to integrate into the community. This is an important role, helping the community to bring in and retain new residents (replete with their own ideas and skills). Pursuing a strategic partnership with the Welcome Wagon would in this regard, and lead to a raised awareness of the library.

Concluding Remarks and Considerations Moving Forward

Libraries are important to the long-term economic and social well being of a community. Libraries mobilize communities. They are a safe environment (both quiet and social) to research, transfer and develop knowledge, expertise, and social/professional networks in various hard, digital, and personal/experiential formats. The central tenets of a library as a safe place, which is affordable and accessible by all, remain intact and immutable. As libraries evolve however, other values should be re-examined to ensure appropriate alignment with the emerging concept.

A key challenge moving forward will be raising the awareness and understanding of library users and funders of this evolved concept and associated products and services.

Furthermore, users, funders, and the community at large must also recognize the importance of the symbiotic relationship that is critical to a self-sustaining library model.

Given fiscal realities and competing pressures, libraries will need to move confidently and effectively with priority setting. Furthermore, a funding strategy will be essential, anchored by a compelling story and the goal of sustainable funding. Partnerships are likely to play a pivotal role here, as will the theme of community innovation and development. And innovative approaches such as crowd funding are likely to present strong opportunities, although the impact of any short-term funding on long-term funding agreements should be well understood.

Developing staff competencies to align with the evolving library concept presents an important challenge. Social interaction skills, including mentoring, must be combined with technology know-how, and the more traditional skills of critical thinking and research methodologies.

And finally, as the Mississippi Mills strategy formulation exercise moves forward, consideration should be given to ensuring effective alignment with the municipal long-term strategy.

A.3 The Community Survey

A.3.1 Questionnaire

A SURVEY FOR THE MISSISSIPPI MILLS PUBLIC LIBRARY — HELP US SERVE YOU BETTER —

1. You are a resident of:

1. Municipality of Mississippi Mills 2. Carleton Place 3. Other

2. Do you have a Mississippi Mills Public Library card or use the services of the Mississippi Mills Public Library?

4. Yes 5. No (If no, please go to Question 13)

3. What is your home branch?

6. Almonte 7. Pakenham

4. Why do you visit the library? (Check all that apply)

- Read, sit and relax
- Sign out/check out items
- Use eResources
- Wifi/Internet/ Computer Access
- Work space
- Get help from the staff (e.g. reference, information on programs)
- Attend meetings, programs, exhibitions, events
- To socialize/meet friends
- Other (Please specify)

-
- No response.

5. How often do you visit the library?

- Daily • Weekly • Monthly • Occasionally • Not at all
(Go to Question 7).

6. Do you find the library hours convenient?

8. Yes 9. No

7. What do you use your library card for? (Check all that apply)

10. Print books 11. Audio books 12. Magazines 13. DVDs
14. Music CDs 15. eResources 16. Computers/Other hardware
17. Inter-library loan 18. Museum passes
19. Other (Please specify) _____

8. On average, how often do you download eResources, eBooks and eServices?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Occasionally
- Not at all

9. **How important** are the following library services:

| | Very important | Important | Somewhat important | Not important | No opinion |
|--|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|------------|
| The library collection | | | | | |
| Digital resources/ eResources | | | | | |
| Programs of the library | | | | | |
| Literacy stations | | | | | |
| Inter-library loan service | | | | | |
| Assistance of library staff | | | | | |
| Visiting library service | | | | | |
| Computers and printers | | | | | |
| Internet access | | | | | |
| Technology assistance (e.g. 'tech tutors') | | | | | |
| Facilities/work space | | | | | |
| Museum passes | | | | | |

10. **Rate the library services** you use:

| | Very good | Good | Average | No opinion |
|--|-----------|------|---------|------------|
| The library collection | | | | |
| Digital resources/ eResources | | | | |
| Programs of the library | | | | |
| Literacy stations | | | | |
| Inter-library loan service | | | | |
| Assistance of library staff | | | | |
| Visiting library service | | | | |
| Computers and printers | | | | |
| Internet access | | | | |
| Technology assistance (e.g. 'tech tutors') | | | | |
| Facilities/work space | | | | |

11. How do you learn about the programs, services and activities offered by the library? (Check all that apply)

- 20. Library website
- 21. Library staff
- 22. Signs/posters/flyers
- 23. Newspapers
- 24. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- 25. Word of mouth (family, friends, etc.)
- 26. Other (Please specify) _____

12. Overall, how would you rate the Mississippi Mills Public Library?

27. Very good 28. Good 29. Fair 30. Poor 31. No opinion

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

13. How important is a library to you?

32. Very important 33. Important 34. Somewhat important 35. Not important 36. No opinion

14. What do you value most about a library?

15. What other service(s) would you like to have a library provide?

16. What time of day do you prefer for visiting a library branch? (Check all that apply)

| | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| Mornings | | | | | | | |
| Afternoons | | | | | | | |
| Evenings | | | | | | | |

17. Thinking about the next 3-5 years, how likely are you to increase your visits to a library to use:
(Check all that apply)

| | Very likely | Likely | Somewhat likely | Not likely |
|---|-------------|--------|-----------------|------------|
| Books in the library collection | | | | |
| Graphic novels/books | | | | |
| DVDs in the library collection | | | | |
| Music CDs in the library collection | | | | |
| Magazines and newspapers in the library collection | | | | |
| Electronic services to access books (Ontario Public Library OverDrive, on-line resources) | | | | |

18. If you are not likely to visit a library in the next 3-5 years, please explain: (Check all that apply)

- 37. I am not an avid reader.
- 38. I am not sure what a library offers me.
- 39. I prefer to buy books rather than go to a library.
- 40. I have my own computer/eResources at home (or elsewhere).
- 41. It is difficult for me to get to a library (e.g. transportation, health, hours of operation).
- 42. I prefer to access the library service digitally.
- 43. Other (Please specify). _____

SOME INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

19. What is the language most commonly spoken and read in your home?

- 44. English
- 45. French
- 46. Other (Please specify) _____

20. Age

- 47. Under 14
- 48. 14-19
- 49. 20-29
- 50. 30-39
- 51. 40-49
- 52. 50-59
- 53. 60-69
- 54. 70 and older
- 55. Prefer not to answer

21. Education

- Some high school
- High school diploma
- Some post-secondary
- College graduation
- University graduation
- Prefer not to answer

22. Do you have children (Includes children, grandchildren, foster children or other youth)?

- 56. Yes
- 57. No

23. Do you accompany children to the library?

- 58. Almonte
- 59. Pakenham

24. Work status? Are you: (Check all that apply)

- 60. Employed – working for wages outside of the home.
- 61. Employed – working for wages from the home.
- 62. Self employed – working in own business, farm etc.
- 63. Working in the home – without formal wage arrangements (e.g. stay-at-home parent, home schooling, home maker, caring for family member).
- 64. Not working
- 65. Retired
- 66. Prefer not to answer.

THANK YOU for taking the time to answer our questions.

The information will be used to help shape the 10-year strategy for the library.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Mississippi Mills Public Library Board would like to thank the Elizabeth Kelly Library Foundation (Inc.) for their generous support for this survey.



A.3.2 Survey Results

An e-copy of the stand-alone community survey report is available on the library website. Printed copies are available at the library branches in Almonte and Pakenham.

A.4 SWOT Analysis of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan

SWOT Analysis - Strategic Plan 2010-2015 (continued)

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Excellent first attempt to articulate library system planning priorities.2. Focussed the system priorities for a five year time period.3. The four Strategic Directions addressed physical, technological and service gaps in the existing library system.4. Provided a Benchmark for evaluating financial requests.5. Priorities were achievable in mid-term – most of the “hard” projects were completed within the time frame.6. Had the involvement and support of the whole Board during the process.7. Attractive one-page summary produced and presented to council for reference when making presentations. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Lack of public input into the planning process - no survey, limited number of exit interviews with library patrons.2. Did attempt to contact outside groups with limited response.1. Lack of public information about the Strategic Plan.2. Very limited printing of summary sheet .3. Activities listed were vague at the beginning.4. Activities to support directions were not clarified and expanded on a yearly basis.5. “Soft” services lacked evaluation criteria, indicators of success.6. Evaluation became a simple Y/N checklist. Limited staff input into development, and consequent lack of enthusiasm, for Strategic Plan.7. Limited staff input into development, and consequent lack of enthusiasm, for Strategic Plan. |

SWOT Analysis - Strategic Plan 2010-2015 (concluded)

| Threats | Opportunities |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of public profile for library system until 2013. 2. Lack of connection/ communication between Board and Council 3. Subsequent lack of understanding for Capital requests, training and operating support. 4. Active community provided overlapping services (alternate in-house libraries for seniors, public information, educational opportunities for adults and cultural events). 5. EKL Foundation was not included in planning or execution of 2010-2015 plan. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural Mapping Project and subsequent Cultural committee offers involvement and potential partnerships. 2. Membership in community organizations offers opportunities for increasing public input into current planning. 3. Pakenham Expansion Needs Assessment gathered information about potential future community services and involvement. 4. Increased public profile and programming services during past two years have significantly improved possibilities for targeted input. 5. Possibility of including community groups and active patrons in planning process. 6. Social media tools developed during the past two years have strengthened the possibilities for inexpensive survey/information gathering. |

