



Clarington Public Library

Strategic Plan 2010-2015

Final Report

October 2010

A MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD CHAIR

In recent months the Clarington Public Library (CPL) Board engaged in a strategic planning process to consider the Library's future and the contribution it can make to the community. It is proud of the services that it provides to residents and is committed to continuing to provide the best possible library services. It is encouraged by the response to improvements such as the new branch library in Newcastle and by the continuing high rate of approval from library users.

This tradition of excellence in library services will continue. CPL will maintain and in every way possible enhance its standards of service with relevant resources and technology, knowledgeable staff, and attractive and welcoming facilities. While the Library Board is committed to continuing to provide the services that residents have to come to expect from CPL, it also believes that the Library can play an even more significant role in the community. It recognizes that the Municipality will experience great change in the next decade with population growth and the accompanying changes in the demographic profile, economic base and urban form. At the same time, larger social and cultural developments associated with new technologies, lifestyles and values will also transform the community. Many of these changes, and particularly those dealing with technology, have a special significance for the Library.

Recognizing that Clarington is on the verge of significant social and economic change, the fundamental question the Library Board addressed in the Strategic Plan is ***"how can the Clarington Public Library impact its community and make a difference over the next decade"***? This Strategic Plan answers those questions and defines the library's distinct role in the community. ***This role involves creating community, catalyzing social engagement and crafting dynamic services.*** It is reflected in the Library Vision, Strategic Directions and Action Plans of the Strategic Plan.

The Clarington Public Library Board is committed to realizing the goals outlined in this Plan. As it moves forward, the Library will continue to work with other municipal, public and private organizations as no one agency can be all things to all people. It will work with the Municipal Council and other stakeholders to ensure the Library remains a vital and essential part of the changing community.

Sincerely

Gail Rickard, Chair
Clarington Public Library Board

THE LIBRARY TODAY

The Strategic Plan charts a course for the future based on a solid understanding of current services and the opinions of community stakeholders, the ways in which the community is changing and broader social trends affecting library services. Here is a brief summary of the research that created the context for the Strategic Plan¹.

As CPL looks to the future with the development of a new Strategic Plan, it will build upon a solid foundation of community support for existing services. In the past ten years new libraries in Bowmanville and Newcastle, complementing existing facilities in Courtice and Orono, have demonstrated the Library's commitment to keep pace with the changing needs of its residents. These facilities have allowed CPL to enhance its resources and expand its services. Public library services are consistently evaluated in a positive manner and enjoy high levels of community support.

Maintaining current levels of service demands a continuing investment in the Library as the population and the digital society grow. Growth and technology will bring other changes and new expectations of the Library. The Library will focus on making an even greater contribution, adopting new roles and engaging the residents to retain community support and add to Clarington's quality of life.

The Strategic Plan is the Library Board's commitment to achieve that objective.

- CPL operates from 4 branches with a combined circulation of 651,407 (2009)
- With a new branch opened in Newcastle in 2009, CPL provided over 42,000 sq ft of library space; this will need to be expanded significantly to accommodate growth to 2031.
- In 2009, the libraries accommodated over 320,000 visitors with a further 175,000 virtual visits; to put this in perspective Clarington's population is 77,800 (2006 census)
- Close to 50% of the population are cardholders and CPL has seen both circulation and library visits per capita grow in recent years
- Users consistently report high levels of satisfaction with library services, pointing to excellent facilities, success in serving rural and urban areas, strong collections, and knowledgeable staff
- Community stakeholders and Library staff most often identify programming, expanded community engagement and partnerships, and outreach/marketing as areas where CPL could make improvements.
- Closer working relationships and joint planning and program development with agencies offering similar services were frequently identified opportunities for the future.

¹ An Environmental Scan background report documents the research undertaken for the Strategic Plan. This background report includes a socio-demographic profile, summarizes input from users and community stakeholders, describes selected features of current library services, and discusses future trends.

FUTURE TRENDS FOR CLARINGTON AND ITS LIBRARY SERVICES

During the next twenty years Clarington will change and so will the Library. Demand for library services will increase due to population growth and the changing age, income, education and ethnic profile of the community.

The significant growth suggests a major shift for the Library and for other community agencies in Clarington. Retaining the desirable characteristics associated with the community in the past while accommodating this growth presents both opportunities and difficulties for everyone.

In Clarington's community of communities the Library can play a significant role by putting knowledge in people's lives, contributing to community initiatives that address Clarington's future and collaborating with partners in education, heritage, business and government. It also has a special role to play with other arts and cultural organizations in building the 'creative city, organizations that are increasingly recognized as the catalyst for economic growth in the future.

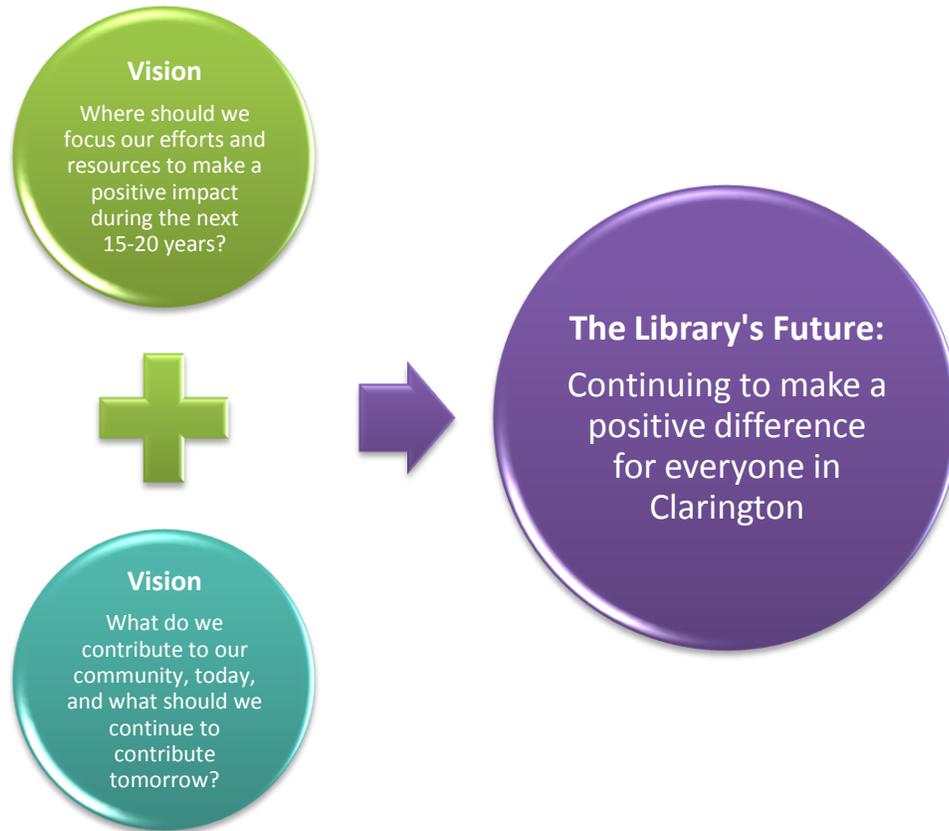
As a connector, it can make a difference by actively engaging in the issues facing the Municipality of Clarington.

The social and economic future of all Ontario municipalities will be tied increasingly to technology, the exchange of information, creativity and innovation in a knowledge based society. In the library's central role as a connector, it will train, inspire, link and support residents to maximize their potential to participate actively in the ongoing transformation of Canadian society.

- The population will grow from 77,820 in 2006 to roughly 135,000 in 2031, a 74% increase
- New residents will be more affluent with highly skilled occupations and higher expectations for library service
- Currently close to 90% of Clarington residents are Canadian born and 98% speak English at home. In the future, the population will be increasingly diverse, both ethnically and linguistically
- While Clarington's population will age consistent with all Ontario communities, new growth will result in relatively higher proportions of young families
- Technology will continue to transform society and the role of all information providers, including the library
- Trends indicate the library of the future will increasingly be integrated with a broader range of community services and libraries will have a larger role to play in the social and economic affairs of the community
- There will be increasing demand for audio and visual live-streaming, mobile and wireless services and increasing ownership of high tech devices for access (iPods, Blackberries, Kindles, smart-phones)
- Growth can be expected in a wide variety of Internet activities and social networking
Integrated service delivery systems where most services are delivered collaboratively will increasingly be the norm
- All service providers will be called upon to address greater diversity in their marketplace with distinct generational lifestyles (Zoomers, Millennials etc.) rooted in differing values and characterized by different expectations, needs and behaviours.

LIBRARY VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Strategic planning is a delicate balance of decision-making and risk-taking, and of maintaining current purpose and successes in an as yet unknown future. The plan must balance the Library's Mission and Vision – what we do well today, and what we need to do well in the future.



LIBRARY VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Vision is a detailed description of a compelling future for the Library. It sketches a picture of the future in enough detail for everyone involved with the Library, from community member to Board member to staff, partner and Council member, to see themselves in that future, and to be drawn to support the Library in realizing that future state. The following is our Vision:

- Clarington Public Library is a cornerstone of the community, partnering with other organizations to enhance cultural, educational and economic well-being.
- It is an accessible, welcoming, and active connector for social interaction, learning, and dialogue.
- It is a significant resource in a knowledge and information-based economy.
- It is an innovative, progressive organization widely recognized and supported in the community.

LIBRARY MISSION

Mission continues to define the Library's reason for being, and its unique contribution to the community. The following is our Mission:

The Clarington Public Library empowers and enriches the lives of all Clarington residents by connecting them to responsive, accessible, high quality services and resources that support an informed citizenry, lifelong learning and love of reading.

LIBRARY VALUES

Values are those beliefs that guide the Library's operations, behaviours and decisions. When faced with difficult situations or decisions that may not be popular with all segments of the community, values will guide the actions. CPL's values are:

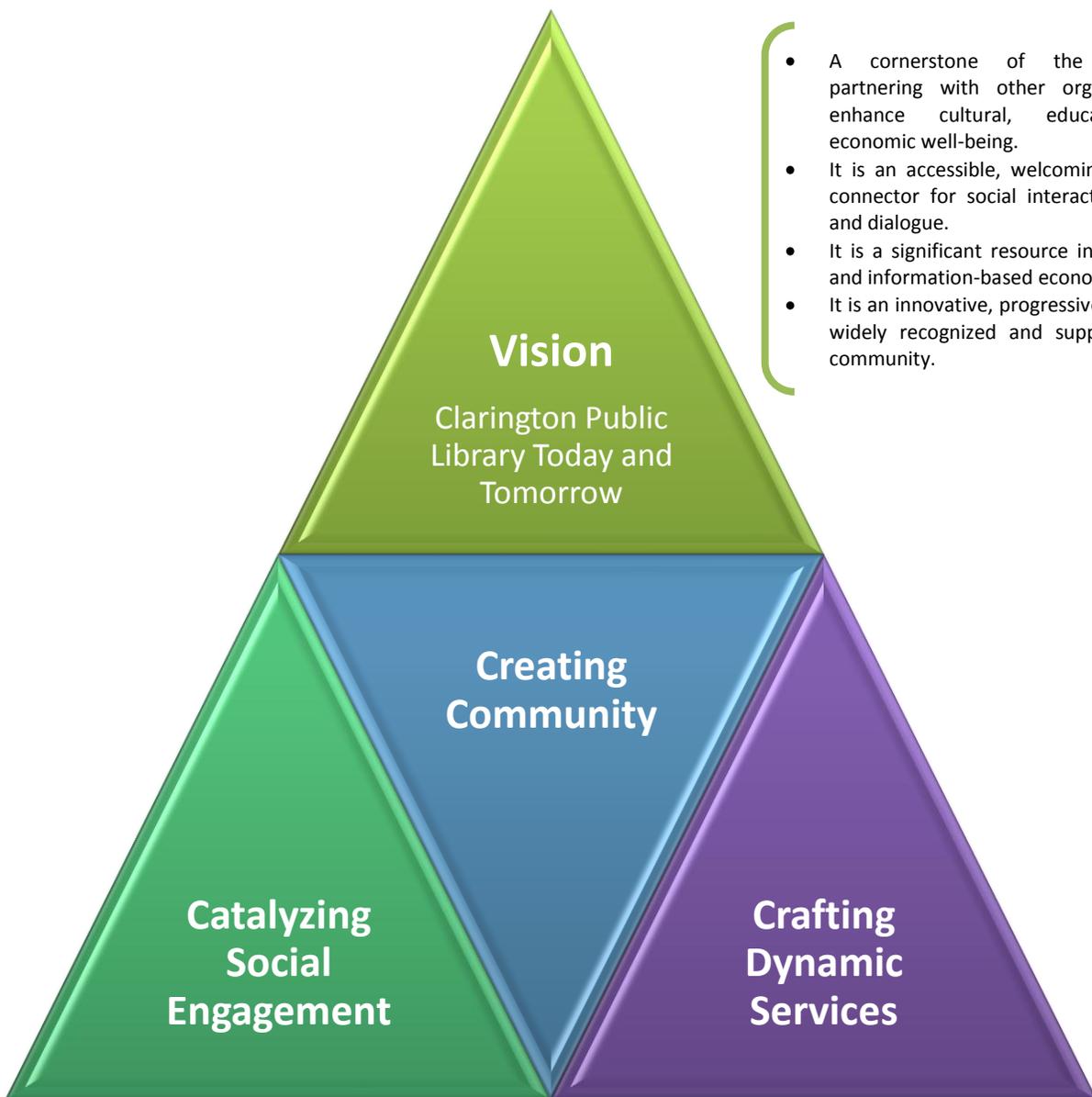
- **Accessibility:** Ensuring library services are accessible to the community
- **Accountability:** Taking responsibility for meeting library service needs of the community in an efficient, effective, socially and fiscally responsible manner
- **Intellectual Freedom:** Facilitating access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity
- **Quality Service:** Providing customer-driven service through investments in the development of trained and knowledgeable staff, current technologies, and relevant, current resources
- **Responsiveness:** Being adaptable and flexible to changes in the community and changes in approaches to the delivery of library services
- **Teamwork and Partnerships:** Working collaboratively internally as well as externally with the community at large to maximize community resources and benefits

LIBRARY STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

To realize the vision the Library will focus on three strategies:

- Creating Community
- Catalyzing Social Engagement
- Crafting Dynamic Services

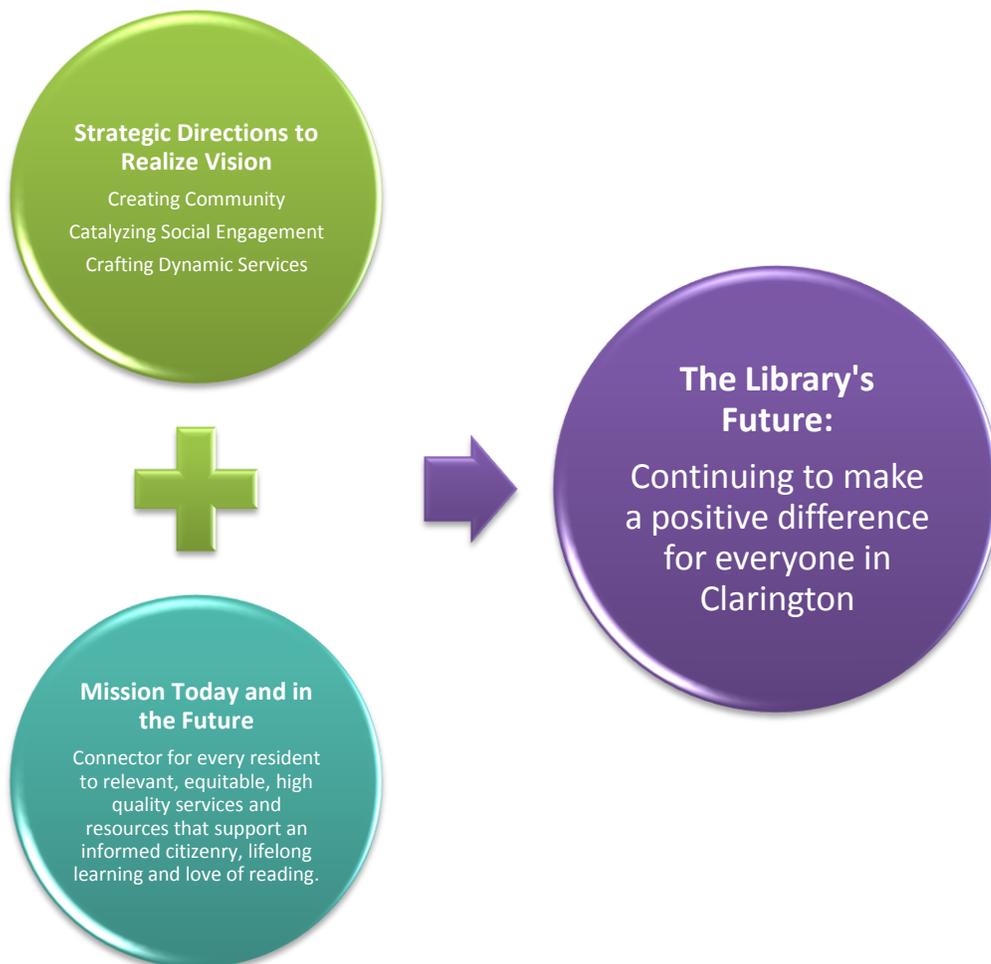
These strategies are highly inter-related and interdependent. They do not describe all that the Library must do in the next five years; instead they describe three key areas where the Library must focus its energies and resources to impact positively the lives of Clarington residents in the changing environment. The Library will also continue to manage a strong range of services that residents currently enjoy.



ACTION PLANS

Action plans are the key initiatives required to fulfill each Strategic Direction.

The Library Board has identified action plans and measures of success for the three key strategies. These initiatives have been identified at a broad scale, to outline clearly a course of action related to each direction. They do not identify an operational plan with day-to-day tasks, timetables and resource requirements. This level of detail will be reflected in annual operational plans prepared by staff to complement the Strategic Plan.



CREATING COMMUNITY



Goal

The goal is a strong, cohesive community.

Clarington Public Library is a cornerstone of the community, partnering with other organizations to enhance cultural, educational and economic well-being.

Our vision for the future is that the Library is a focal point for the community. We will concentrate on initiatives that result in residents recognizing the Library as:

- A familiar and well respected resource and a primary source of information on community services, events, and activities
- A physical and virtual space in which to come together
- The source for helping them identify and locate local services, explore Clarington's history, and participate in programs with residents who share their lifestyle and interests
- A place to meet neighbours, participate in community events, and gain a better understanding of their community.

Initiatives

To realize this goal, the Library Board will:

1. Expand physical and virtual service delivery points
2. Identify best option for expanded library services in Courtice
3. Improve access to local history resources
4. Design, develop and deliver services for people new to Canada
5. Partner with social, health, government and local organizations to provide innovative, in-demand services and programs
6. Develop a marketing strategy that:
 - a) Promotes the significant role of the library in the community
 - b) Promotes the library as an accessible, welcoming, and active connector for social interaction, learning, and dialogue
 - c) Identifies the library as a destination, a "community living room" for specific community segments

CATALYZING SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT



Goal

The goal is to be a catalyst for engaging Clarington's citizens in the key issues affecting the community.

The Library is an accessible, welcoming, and active connector for social interaction, learning, and dialogue.

A democratic society relies on public libraries to ensure the free exchange of information and support an informed citizenry. The Clarington Public Library will be a catalyst for engaging Clarington's citizens. With other organizations we will initiate innovative approaches for realizing an informed and educated community, and addressing economic, health, environmental or other issues that impact the quality of life of Clarington residents.

Initiatives

To realize this goal, the Library Board will:

1. Provide resources and programs about community issues, presenting all sides of the issue
2. Expand the library's role in disseminating municipal information
3. Encourage ongoing dialogue with residents about improvement to services within available funding
4. Explore and expand partnerships with other organizations
 - a. joint programming to reach a broader range of the community
 - b. co-marketing
 - c. community events

CRAFTING DYNAMIC SERVICES



Goal

The goal is to design, develop and deliver innovative, quality services and programs that match the needs of the community.

The Library is a significant resource in a knowledge and information-based economy.

The Library is an innovative, progressive organization widely recognized and supported in the community.

The Library will continue to design, develop and deliver innovative, quality services and programs that match the needs of various community segments. As technologies increasingly change our publishing, education, recreational, social, work, family and individual environments, our service portfolios will need to balance the traditional with the digital, and the virtual with the physical.

Initiatives

To realize this goal, the Library Board will:

1. Identify services that need to be created, revamped or discontinued
2. Identify community segments not currently engaging in our services and programs, and determine appropriate services and partnerships
3. Define and develop literacy programs relevant for a technology-intensive world, now and in the future:
 - a. Computer literacy
 - b. Traditional literacy
 - c. Transliteracy (e.g. The ability to read, write and interact across a range of platforms, tools and media)
4. Build virtual content including more interactive applications and more self-service technologies
5. Build library staffing capacity, and capabilities, recognizing the new types of roles and competencies required by the changing and broadening social environment

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Measures of Success have been identified to help ensure the Library is meeting its goals.

1. Expanded services for Courtice community
2. Increased interactivity in library virtual services
3. Increased self-serve services
4. Higher participation in a range of relevant community events
5. Usage keeping pace with community growth
6. Stronger relationship with community organizations
7. Increased support for the dissemination of municipal information
8. Relevant public programs on civic and social issues that are important to Clarington residents
9. Increased levels of user satisfaction
10. Continued positive feedback from residents

UPDATING AND IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Updating and Monitoring the Strategic Plan

The Library Board will regularly update the Strategic Plan. The Vision and Goals will also be formally reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they continue to reflect the preferred future for the Clarington Public Library. The Vision and Goals should be applicable for the short-term (3-5 years).

Specific initiatives will be reviewed annually. Initiatives that have been completed will be eliminated and revisions and additions will be made as applicable.

The measures of success will be used to monitor the Library's success in achieving the Vision and fulfilling the Goals. These measures of success will also be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The Strategic Plan and Service Delivery

In addition to regularly updating the Strategic Plan, its Vision, Goals and Initiatives, formal procedures will be adopted to ensure that the plan is used in the ongoing management of the Library. Staff reports and recommendations should be consistent with the Strategic Plan. A process for incorporating Strategic Plan goals and initiatives in the annual budget process will also be considered.

The Strategic Plan provides overall direction for the Library's future. However, other plans and studies will be required to successfully implement these strategies. The Board will update its Service Delivery Study and will likely undertake other studies, such as a marketing strategy and a review of staff capacity and capabilities. These are required to keep pace with growth and to ensure the Clarington Public Library continues to anticipate and respond to a changing future consistent with the goals set out in our Strategic Plan.