



Milton
Public
Library
Be Inspired

Library Master Plan

October 2024 | Draft



Monteith + Brown
planning consultants



Rose Vespa Consulting



Milton Public Library

Library Master Plan

October 2, 2024

DRAFT

Prepared by:



Land Acknowledgement

Milton Public Library operates on treaty lands and the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Neutral, Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee people.

As we centre the truth and support reconciliation across Milton, our commitment to provide the highest quality service for all is inspired by First Peoples traditional knowledge, laws, and philosophies.

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Table of Contents

SECTION 1: OUR VISION & PURPOSE..... 1

1.1 Milton Public Library’s Vision & Purpose 2

1.2 Milton Public Library Services 5

1.3 Alignment with the Town of Milton 8

1.4 Selected Trends in Library Services 15

SECTION 2: SERVICE AREA ASSESSMENTS24

2.1 Advocacy, Governance & Funding 25

2.2 Communications & Marketing 28

2.3 Staffing & Training 29

2.4 Technology 32

2.5 Facilities 35

2.6 Customer Experience 48

2.7 Collections 52

SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION.....56

3.1 Timing of Recommended Actions..... 57

Appendix A: Comparator Library Data, 2022

List of Acronyms

ARUPLO	Administrators of Rural Urban Public Libraries of Ontario
AODA	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent Staff Position
GFA	Gross Floor Area
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
LMP	Library Master Plan
MPL	Milton Public Library
MTSA	Major Transit Station Area
SDOR	Service Delivery and Organizational Review, 2024
UGC	Milton Urban Growth Centre

Section 1:
Our Vision & Purpose



Section 1:

Our Vision & Purpose



The Milton Public Library Master Plan (the “LMP”) establishes a collective vision for library services and identifies future directions that reflect the needs of the community to the year 2029. The LMP is both aspirational and pragmatic in its intent by aligning with the strategic goals of the Town of Milton, building upon a recently completed Service Delivery & Organizational Review and prioritizing actions to help Milton Public Library (“MPL”) deliver on its Vision.

As a high performing organization that is constantly striving to improve its effectiveness, MPL has regularly prepared Master Plans to help guide it through the rapid changes in Milton over the past decade. This LMP updates a three-year plan prepared in 2021 during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Since that time, the importance of public libraries has never been more apparent; when access to MPL’s physical space was limited, there was a significant impact on many people who relied on the affordable public services, programs and expertise of library staff to navigate their education, professional and personal endeavours. This regularly scheduled update to the LMP provides an opportunity to re-engage the community following the pandemic, re-affirm MPL’s Vision, and articulate new priorities for the years ahead.

1.1 Milton Public Library’s Vision & Purpose

The aforementioned Service Delivery & Organizational Review (“SDOR”) was completed in 2024 shortly before this update to the LMP was initiated. The SDOR involved a comprehensive community outreach and consultation program that provides relevant insights into the LMP, including those that reinforce the role and importance of MPL to residents of all ages and backgrounds.

The MPL Board has been using an adopted Mission, Vision and set of Values statements since 2014. In consideration of consultations and conversations held as part of the SDOR and this LMP, a slightly adjusted and renewed Vision and Mission have been crafted for MPL to reflect a focus on innovation, while the Mission is rebranded as MPL’s Purpose in line with best practices and to provide greater clarity to the public.

This LMP introduces a new element to MPL’s strategic framework, namely four Strategic Pillars, each with supporting Objectives. Together, the Strategic Pillars and Objectives can direct MPL’s growth in line with changes to Milton’s population and evolving library best practices while connecting MPL’s Values to its Vision and Purpose.



Our Vision

To inspire through discovery, collaboration, creation and innovation.

Our Purpose

MPL empowers the community to:
Read. Learn. Innovate. Connect.

Our Values

Intellectual Freedom

Supporting the principles of free thought, belief, and expression.

Inclusivity

Empowering Milton's diverse community.

Accessibility

Providing free and equitable access.

Exceptional Public Service

Ensuring responsive customer service.

Lifelong Learning

Promoting literacy, discovery, and creativity.

Accountability

Prioritising transparency and fiscal responsibility in decision-making.



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Strategic Pillar #1 Telling Our Story

Objectives:

- Deepen MPL's engagement with the community and develop a stronger understanding of the unique needs of each library branch's catchment area within the Town.
- Celebrate and amplify MPL's successes while demonstrating the value of libraries to the community.

Strategic Pillar #2 Building Strong Infrastructure

Objectives:

- Proactively plan for future population growth by ensuring appropriate physical and technological infrastructure.
- Create inclusive, welcoming and safe spaces for all members of the community.
- Explore innovative alternative service delivery models that extend service beyond MPL's existing physical locations.

Strategic Pillar #3 Creating a Robust and Resilient Organization

Objectives:

- Provide a framework for strong governance.
- Ensure staffing levels throughout the organization can support MPL's operational requirements now and in the future.
- Invest in staff training and professional development especially as it relates to technology.
- Collaborate with the Town of Milton to address human resource needs including workforce development.

Strategic Pillar #4 Delivering Quality Services

Objectives:

- Leverage MPL's community-led approach to service in the creation of inclusive, equitable and responsive programming for all members of the community.
- Collaborate with academic, municipal and community stakeholders for the fulfillment of MPL's vision, mission and values.
- Use data and metrics to build both print and digital collections that meet community needs and keep pace with Milton's population growth.
- Explore and implement innovative models and ensure Milton residents have access to exceptional library service.

1.2 Milton Public Library Services

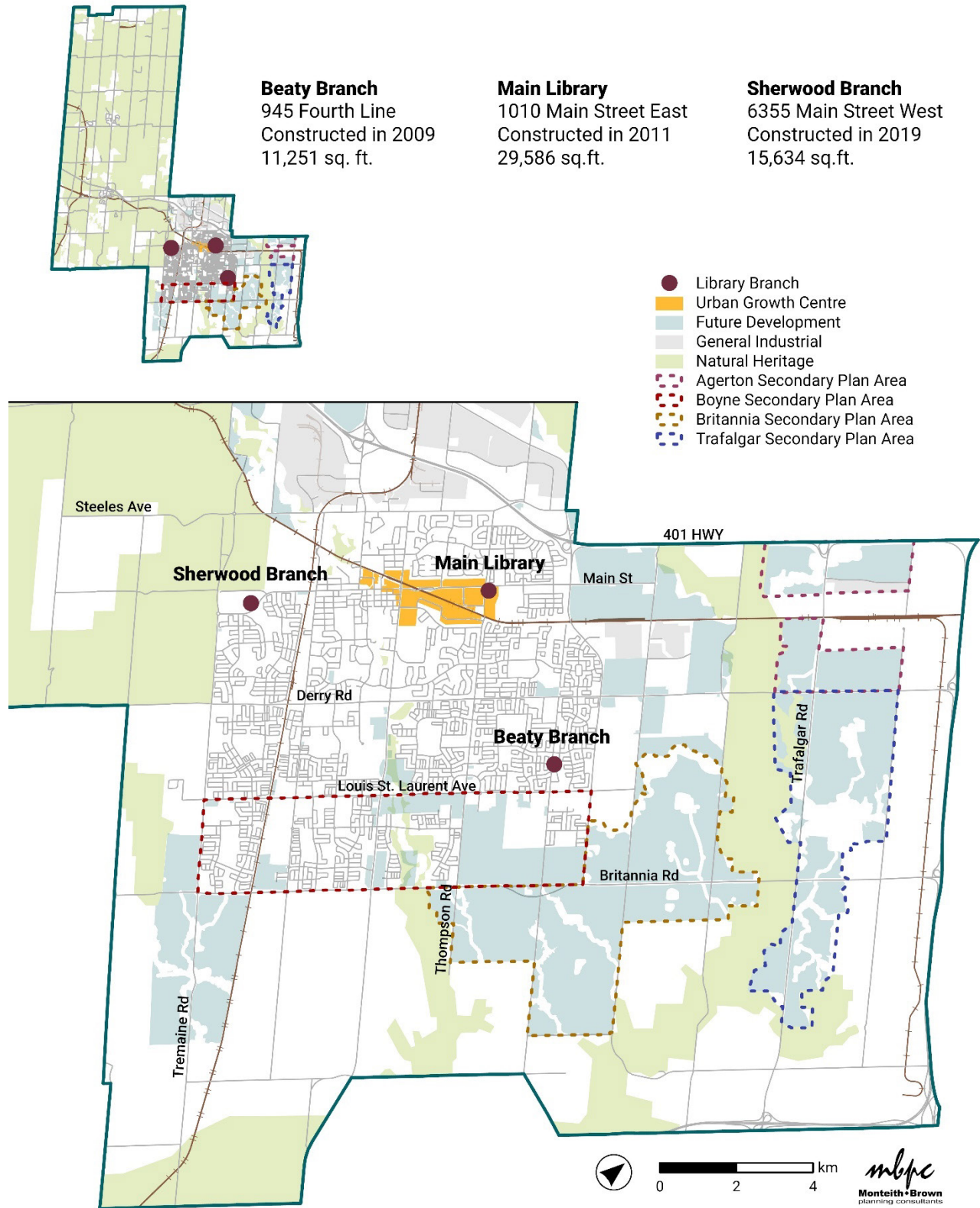
MPL delivers services out of three library branches that are situated in the designated Urban Area (Figure 1) where the Town of Milton Official Plan concentrates the majority of the municipal population and employment base. Each library branch provides a range of collections, workstations, areas for study and collaboration, and community-oriented programs while MPL provides electronic materials and virtual services through its website (www.beinspired.ca).

The three library branches collectively provide 56,471 square feet of space. Main Branch is co-located with the FirstOntario Arts Centre, the Sherwood Branch is integrated within a multi-use community centre, and the Beaty Branch is a stand-alone library. MPL's vast offerings are tailored to reflect the diverse range of residents living in Milton and strive to serve different interests based on ages, incomes, levels of education, cultural backgrounds and other characteristics. MPL endeavours to offer modern and high quality services that are welcoming to any person while Library staff employ promising practices and are continually exploring ways to increase MPL's reach. Examples of selected services, programs and events that are available through MPL include (but are not limited to):

- Access to a broad collection housed in physical and digital formats.
- A wide range of community partnerships with organizations from across Halton Region focused on settlement and employment services, social services, health services and more.
- Access to Wi-Fi and computer workstations, technological literacy programs, printing and 3D printing services.
- Children and youth-centric programming such as Storytimes, STEAM activities, TD Summer Reading Club, and much more.
- Programs for adults and older adults aimed at wellness, and social connection along with book clubs and large print materials.
- Spaces for individual and group study.
- Programs, events, and resources for racialized, ethnocultural and under-represented populations such as Black History Month celebrations, Pride Month, settlement and newcomer services, English conversation circles and inclusive membership for First Nations communities.
- Arts and culture programs such as crafts programs and poetry contests, movie screenings, painting and music activities shows/ displays for local artists.



Figure 1: Milton Library Branch Locations



Note: The Sherwood Branch floor area includes approximately 5,000 sq.ft. that is shared with the community centre and is not available for library collections, study space, etc.



Table 1: Service Snapshot by Branch, 2023

Subject	Main Library	Beaty Branch	Sherwood Branch
Address	1010 Main Street East	945 Fourth Line	6355 Main Street West
Year Constructed	2011	2009	2019
Size (Sq. Ft.)	29,586 (two levels)	11,251 (one level)	15,634 (one level)*
Meeting/Activity Room Space	group study room, silent study rooms, children's program room, program room, lounge areas	group study room, silent study room, program room and lounge	group study room, silent study rooms, program room, lounge areas
Key Facility Characteristics	Co-located with FirstOntario Centre and MPL Administration/ Technical Services	Stand-alone Building	Co-located with Sherwood Community Centre
Weekly Hours of Operation	68.5	47 (closed Monday and Tuesday)	68.5
Collection Size	115,854	32,809	25,391
Annual Circulation	477,489	118,040	160,074
In-Library Visits	304,909	51,590	152,337
Programs Held Annually**	818	640	379
Annual Program Attendance**	19,861	8,656	8,526
Questions Answered	64,078	23,232	26,538

* The Sherwood Branch floor area includes approximately 5,000 sq.ft. that is shared with the community centre and is not available for library collections, study space, etc.

** Programs can be ongoing, in a series, or one-time events

Source: Milton Public Library, 2024



1.3 Alignment with the Town of Milton

Libraries are built, staffed and programmed in accordance with the needs of the population that are served. As critical parts of the community and integrated with other public infrastructure, MPL considers the frameworks and objectives of their municipal partners to achieve effective governance. The Town of Milton's Strategic Plan and Official Plan are two important documents that guide how it makes decisions.

Town of Milton Strategic Plan

The Town of Milton's Strategic Plan guides its corporate priorities and decision-making. The current Strategic Plan establishes a long-range vision to the year 2051 along with a practical vision for 2023 to 2027 and articulates a set of five Priorities (Figure 2).

MPL's community consultations reinforce the fact that local libraries provide safe, diverse and welcoming environments that support neighbourhoods, are a part of economic development infrastructure, and promote "live, learn, work and play." Similarly, MPL directly and indirectly contributes to all of the Town of Milton Strategic Plan Priorities in the following ways:

- **Invest in People:** Like the Town, MPL already strives to provide a more permanent, balanced and skilled workforce. MPL directly attracts skilled workers through its Job Fairs and labour-related programming thereby lending itself to helping the Town and other businesses attract skilled workers to their operations.
- **Innovate in Technology and Process:** MPL has invested in and provided access to technology and electronic resources for many years and is a conduit to digital equity/inclusion by providing all populations with opportunities for digital literacy and learning.
- **Quality Facilities and Amenities:** MPL strives to provide quality spaces and amenities within its branches, and each library has the potential to be a focal point in the neighbourhood it serves through design.
- **Connected Transit and Mobility:** Library branches are frequented by people with and without access to personal vehicles. Locating existing and future library branches along major roads, transit routes, sidewalks and near trails will help facilitate connections.
- **Planned Community Growth:** Library branches can be positioned and programmed to meet the unique needs of surrounding neighbourhoods and can complement higher-density and mixed-use communities. Integrating libraries as part of "15-minute neighbourhoods" can enhance vibrancy while promoting localized opportunities to live, learn, work and play.



Figure 2: Town of Milton Strategic Plan Visions & Priorities

Strategic Plan

2023-2027







Our Milton 2051 Vision

In 2051, Milton will be a safe, diverse and welcoming community that respects its natural beauty and heritage, supports a range of neighbourhoods, sustains a strong and balanced economy, and offers outstanding opportunities to live, learn, work and play.

To achieve this vision, the Town needs to develop shorter, practical visions along the way to 2051 to maximize resources and fiscal planning.

Our Practical Vision for 2023-2027

By 2027, Milton will have laid the foundation for its future as a diverse and welcoming community defined by higher densities enabled by transit.

This foundation will include transit system advancements, prioritized infrastructure, quality facilities and a diverse housing stock in varied neighbourhoods where people can live and work close to nature.

The Town will maintain its appeal and character for residents and employers while adjusting services, operations and development to reflect evolving resident preferences, demographics and growth.

Our Mission

We provide excellent and sustainable municipal services to foster a vibrant and inclusive community where residents thrive, businesses flourish and nature is cherished.

Each term of Council, our practical vision outlines priority areas to advance key projects and initiatives while effectively using resources.

Our Priorities



Invest in People

We will invest in a more permanent, balanced and highly skilled workforce required for Vision 2051, making the Town of Milton an employer of choice where diverse and talented staff are able to offer superior service and productivity in a period of rapid change.



Innovate in Technology and Process

We will focus substantial investments in technology, process improvements and meaningful partnerships to improve customer service, embed sustainable practices and create a foundation for flattening long-term costs.



Quality Facilities and Amenities

We will deploy adequate and consistent resources to maintain, operate and intensify the use of parks, facilities and other Town-owned assets, improving resident safety and quality of place.



Connected Transit and Mobility

We will accelerate investments in Milton-owned transit assets so these connect to other services, increase transit ridership and help pedestrians and cyclists navigate our community defined by smart density, placemaking, mobility and economic development.



Planned Community Growth

We will plan and build infrastructure that supports the changing needs of our community as we prepare for a future with higher density, mixed-use neighbourhoods that offer an excellent quality of life.

A Place of Possibility



Milton Official Plan

The Official Plan is the Town’s legal framework for land use planning that directs how Milton grows and develops. The Official Plan guides where development will occur and the types of land uses that are permitted including areas for housing, employment, education, parks and public facilities such as community centres and libraries.

Unlike past iterations of the LMP, implementation of this updated LMP will occur within the policy directives of a new Milton Official Plan. Currently in Draft form,¹ the new Official Plan is underpinned by land use planning concepts around complete, equitable, resilient, healthy and attractive communities.

Libraries are included under the Institutional Uses designation that support healthy and engaged living that add to the quality of life. Section 3.5.2 of the Draft Official Plan states an Objective to “Provide cultural and library facilities that offer a diversity of experiences to the public” and that it will be a policy of the Town to:

- i. Consider the policies of this [Official] Plan, secondary plans and other relevant information when determining the appropriate location, site layout, built form and quality of design of cultural and library facilities.
- ii. Provide cultural and library facilities including through community partnerships, joint ventures and facility sharing.
- iii. Support the implementation of the Milton Public Library facilities requirements as presented in the Milton Public Library Master Plan.

The new Official Plan is being developed in two phases. Phase 1 is currently underway and to date has culminated into general directions and a framework for managing growth to the year 2051. Phase 2 will provide the more detailed development management and implementation directions. Town Council endorsement and Provincial approval of the new Milton Official Plan is presently targeted for 2025.²

**Draft Milton Official Plan
Section 3.5.2, Objective 1**

“Provide cultural and library facilities that offer a diversity of experiences to the public.”

Embedding MPL into Milton’s Urban Structure & Corporate Priorities

The Town of Milton’s Strategic Plan and new Official Plan (Draft) build a strong case for continued investment in libraries by virtue of the quality of space, experiences and benefits that MPL provides to residents and businesses. In fact, MPL inherently supports virtually every aspect of the Town of Milton’s 2051 Vision, reinforcing that library branches are a key part of city-building priorities, and contribute to complete, healthy, resilient and attractive communities.

As the number and the socio-economic characteristics of people living in Milton changes, MPL needs to be able to respond if residents are to obtain the many benefits that the Library brings. Similarly, the Town of Milton is charting a new vision for planning and development of its built environment and MPL will be an important contributor to the quality of life that is being pursued.

Although MPL is an autonomous operating unit, it works with the Town to advance common objectives related to city building, community development, and other investments in quality of life. Accordingly, the new Official Plan will be an important document to be considered through this and future updates to the LMP as facility development strategies need to have regard for the future urban structure and associated visions established across different areas of Milton.

The Draft Official Plan sets a population target of 400,400 persons by the year 2051 and advances an “Urban Structure” that is comprised of a Major Urban Centre, Urban Village Centres, Community Hubs and Complete Neighbourhoods. It directs population and employment growth to strategic areas while promoting intensification to support compact, efficient and vibrant communities in:

- **Existing Complete Neighbourhoods** which are comprised of designated Mature Neighbourhood Areas, the Bristol and Sherwood Surveys, and the Boyne Secondary Plan Area; and
- **New Complete Neighbourhoods** comprising the Milton Education Village, Trafalgar and Britannia Secondary Plan Areas.

What this means is that there will be an increased need for library services in both existing and future residential areas. With Main Branch, Sherwood Branch and Beaty Branch all situated in proximity to centres and hubs, these existing library branches are likely to be subjected to growth-related residential and employment pressures as well as the continued evolution of socio-demographic characteristics of residents living within them. On this basis, these three library branches are integral parts to helping the Town achieve visions set out in the Official Plan and Strategic Plan. Main Branch will be particularly critical given it is located within the designated Major Urban Centre and proximity to the designated GO Transit MTSA (Major



Transit Station Area) where this branch will play part of defining the intended quality of life through education, and civic engagement. New library space can also be anticipated in any underserved areas resulting from changes to the urban structure.

To provide context, the draft Official Plan identifies over 27,000 new residential units in the Existing Complete Neighbourhoods along with more than 43,000 residential units in the New Complete Neighbourhoods.³ With more than 230,000 additional residents forecasted in the Town to meet the population target, the need for library services cannot be understated in any part of Milton. From the perspective of MPL, these identified nodes are important as they will concentrate residents and employment opportunities where the Library can play a pivotal role. Just as importantly, the Library can form an integral part of other civic transformations envisioned through the new Official Plan and Secondary Plans such as complete and connected communities, a thriving arts scene, and social and health harmony.

Keeping Pace with Population Growth

Milton has experienced some of Canada's fastest population growth rates over the past 20 years. To put things in perspective, the Town's census population was recorded at approximately 31,500 persons in 2001 while the most recent census population in 2021 is more than four times higher at nearly 133,000. MPL, like other municipal services, has been pressed to keep pace with this extraordinary level of growth. This level of growth has placed financial strains on all municipal and library services, of which MPL works to alleviate through its offerings.

Milton's 2024 population is estimated to be 166,000 persons and is projected to grow to 221,000 at the end of the LMP planning period in 2029.ⁱ The rapid population growth will continue as the population more than doubles by the year 2051 to reach 400,400 persons. As noted in previous pages, the majority of growth will be directed to the Town's designated Urban Area including the Boyne, Trafalgar and Britannia Secondary Plans. Little change is expected to populations in Milton's Rural Areas, although outreach to these settlements can better connect them to the community as a whole.

While the LMP is focused on the next five years, clearly there will be a need to begin planning how library services will respond to this long-term growth as soon as possible. As noted previously, growth management and infrastructure planning is well underway and MPL needs to be positioned to have land in place for new and/or expanded library facilities. Otherwise, land acquisition in the future may prove costly, cumbersome and potentially result in libraries being located in sub-optimal areas.

ⁱ Region of Halton Best Planning Estimates v.3.031, August 2023. Milton's 2024 and 2029 populations are estimated using a straight-line average assumption between 5-year forecasts.



Other Demographic Considerations

In addition to population growth, rates of socio-economic and cultural diversification have also changed dramatically. Such community characteristics inform how MPL serves its public through the spaces and services it provides.

- **Age Structure:** 2021 Census data shows that Milton has a younger median and average age in relation to Halton Region and Ontario. Nearly one out of three residents (31%) are below 20 years of age, half (50%) are between 20 and 54 years of age, and 19% of the population is 55 years of age and over. Age-specific population projections were not available at time of writing.
- **Income:** The Town’s median Census income of households was \$126,000 in 2020, higher than that of Halton Region (\$121,000). Statistics Canada recorded 7,700 residents (6% of the total population) living below its Low-Income Measure After Tax including 2,700 children under the age of 18.
- **Cultural Diversity:** The 2021 Census records 42% of Milton residents as being born outside of Canada though the majority have lived in Canada for more than 10 years. The Town’s largest source of immigration comes from Pakistan, India and The Philippines. Further, 55% of Milton residents are racialized and there are more than 46,000 people in the Town that speak a language most often at home that is not English or French. As of 2021, the top five non-official mother-tongues spoken in Milton are Urdu, Arabic, Spanish, Punjabi, and Tagalog.



166,000

Estimated Population, 2024



400,400

Forecasted Population, 2051

The socio-demographic makeup of the Town of Milton directly influences how the Library system is set up, what services are provided, and how much capacity is required to service the needs of the community.

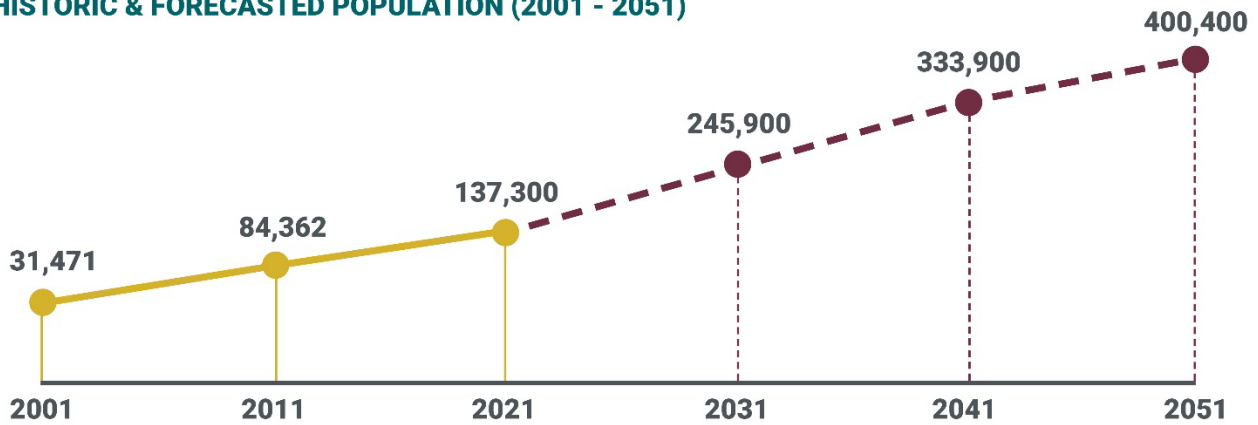
+158%

population increase over the past 10 years

55%

of the population is racialized

HISTORIC & FORECASTED POPULATION (2001 - 2051)



Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2001-2011; Town of Milton Official Plan Draft, 2024

Note: Town of Milton Official Plan Draft (2024) identifies Milton's 2021 population at 137,300 persons factoring in 3.3% undercoverage

AGE STRUCTURE,

35.2

average age

0 to 9



15%

10 to 19



16%

20 to 34



17%

35 to 54



33%

55+



19%

CULTURAL DIVERSITY, 2021

42%

of Milton residents are immigrants

Largest source of immigration coming

Pakistan (21%)

India (15%)

Philippines (6%)

INCOME, 2021

\$126,000

median household income, 2020

5.8%

residents are living in low income measure after-tax (LIM-AT)



1.4 Selected Trends in Library Services

Overdue: The Case for Canada's Public Libraries by the Canadian Urban Institute argues that libraries are not just physical spaces to store books. Rather, libraries are places that spur a vibrant culture, encourage better health, strengthen democratic principles, and can be catalysts for neighbourhood or downtown revitalization. These principles have and will continue to be embodied in library spaces through a variety of existing emerging trends as discussed in the following pages with respect to public libraries in North America.

The role and function that libraries play within communities have shifted over time, evolving to provide more than just spaces to read and access books. Libraries have become spaces that contribute to the social, economic, and cultural fabric of societies. This shift has grown facilities to provide different programming and events to varying age and interest groups, access to digital technologies and creative spaces, spaces to work and study, and even skills training to assist with employment opportunities. Many libraries are safe and welcoming spaces where people can feel free from discrimination, criticism, harassment or other forms of emotional and physical harm.

Many elements of these trends presented are reflected in this LMP. Where possible, specific relevant initiatives and successes have been incorporated into the narrative; however, it is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather a representative sample of both the accomplishments of MPL and best practices of libraries within Canada and the United States. It is recognized that public libraries are experiencing incredible transitions and that the trends presented in this LMP may evolve as libraries continue to adapt to their environment and to the needs of their communities.

Flexibility and Innovation in Service Delivery and Space Allocation

As Milton experiences rapid population growth over the next few decades, the need for libraries will increase along with the need for existing branches to provide more space. Growing land scarcity and escalating cost of real-estate will require MPL to find creative solutions. Some innovative examples of recent and local trends employed by public library systems facing similar challenges include use of the 'Express' Library concept, provision of extended access libraries, and pursuit of outdoor library spaces.



Alternative Service Points / Alternative Service Delivery

The need for increasing the number of service points for library services has taken the form of ‘Express’ libraries’ throughout the GTA; nearby examples include Vaughan Public Library and Oakville Public Library. The new approach includes using rental pick-up locations, hold lockers, returns via drop-off bins, as well as browse and borrow through the use of self-serve kiosks/book vending machines.

Express libraries are a convenient and cost-effective way for libraries to align with the objectives of their municipal colleagues seeking to create walkable and transit-oriented communities. These alternative service points are not only related to high density areas, but can have application in remote and rural areas as well, meaning there may be applications in Milton given its populations living in designated Urban Area and Rural Areas.

Extended Access Library

The Hamilton, and Kingston Frontenac and Essex County Public Library systems are three examples that provide extended public access to libraries outside of normal staffed hours. The model uses self-service technology (e.g. Bibliotheca Open Plus) that allows access to collections and technology using a library card. In the case of Essex County and Kingston Frontenac, there were no library jobs lost as a result of going staff-less; the intent was to creatively work within their fiscal parameters to increase public access to libraries.

While library users generally place strong value in having library staff being available, province-wide consultations also prioritize longer hours of operation and increased access to library services such as holds lockers. Pragmatically, a balance needs to be struck between hours of operation in relation to staffing costs which often presents a challenge to public libraries in Ontario where funding allocations are not always able to be increased in line with services.

The Balance Between Inclusion and Intellectual Freedom

The Controversy Surrounding Libraries

Intellectual Freedom is a cornerstone of public libraries – without it, the ability for people to access knowledge that challenges ideas would not be possible. The Canadian Federation of Library Association’s Statement on Intellectual Freedom “affirms that libraries have a core responsibility to support, defend and promote the universal principles of intellectual freedom and privacy.” In recent months, libraries have become a battleground for clashing beliefs. While some advocate for banning books that are offensive, racist, or homophobic, others advocate for banning books in the children’s section that discuss the same themes. In staying



true to their core values, public libraries will be tested from time to time on their commitment to free speech.

While efforts are happening in Canada regarding tracking the number of banned books across the country, there is data from the American Library Association that confirm in 2023 there was a 63% increase in challenged books from the previous year. In 2022, there were 1,269 challenges to library books and resources, the highest number since the Association formed more than 20 years ago; by comparison, there were 729 challenges in 2021. Public Libraries in Canada such as the Ottawa Public Library have drafted updated statements on Intellectual Freedom to clearly state that libraries will facilitate access to information and resources so long as it is considered legal by Canadian courts. More recently, public libraries have also been challenged for hosting controversial speakers at programs whether it be an opponent of 2SLGBTQIA+ programming or a Drag Queen Storytime for children. These tensions have highlighted that the foundation of democracy and the values of librarianship are called into question more than ever before.

While debate is acceptable and healthy in a democracy, libraries and librarians are now on the frontlines of the culture wars that are playing out around the world. Public libraries must prepare and educate their staff, their library boards, and their municipal councils to be at the ready when a challenge to a library program, book or service occurs. They must also be at the ready to be advocates for free speech, intellectual freedom and the role of librarians and public libraries in a democratic society. Public libraries must identify opportunities to proactively engage their community through programming, town halls with staff and through presentations to council and other funders. For example, Oakville Public Library hosted a conversation in 2022 hosted by the Library's Board Chair with special guest James Turk to discuss Intellectual Freedom. In June 2023, the Library CEOs of Halton Region issued a public statement during Pride Month to affirm their commitment to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and to providing a safe and welcoming space for all.

The Library and Social Equity

In the “new normal” brought about by the pandemic, MPL leadership and staff are balancing the needs of marginalized communities with the need to provide a safe working environment for their teams as well as a safe space for everyone using a library. It has become apparent that all public libraries, but especially those in urban areas, are finding themselves problem solving for patrons who are experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health challenges and poverty.

Public libraries in the United States and Canada have addressed these new service demands by employing social workers and youth workers. The strain on both the operating budgets of libraries and the workload of front-



line library workers has been identified more recently by library leaders, staff and unions. Libraries have always been good partners and there are instances when public library systems should take the role of ‘coordinator of services’ as opposed to directly delivering services. This relates specifically to vulnerable populations such as refugees, persons with disabilities, the unemployed and the unhoused. Library spaces can be used to facilitate the physical coordination and collaboration with other social service agencies that directly serve at risk and marginalized populations. The gaps in serving the needs of vulnerable members of society have been exposed during the pandemic and libraries can play a role in facilitating services to close the gap.

Food security means that all people, always, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life. Food justice is a similar principal to food security, however, is a social movement oriented to provide access to healthy, nutritious, and affordable food particularly where there may be “food deserts.”

Progressive library systems across North America are promoting food justice primarily through distribution of food through branches; food literacy and food education/nutrition programs; culinary instruction; and supporting community-based organizations with a mandate towards food justice through promotion and/or partnerships. MPL pursued a partnership with a local organization that was unable to sustain itself, other opportunities may arise if the number people relying on external agencies for food increases (which is the trend presently across Canada due to escalating cost of living).

Bridging the Digital Divide

Digital Technologies

Along with physical books that can be borrowed from the public, digital technologies, eBooks, and other online resources can be accessed from libraries. This trend responds to the increasing dependence of society on digital platforms or technologies. Toronto Public Library’s *Technology Access in Public Libraries: Outcomes and Impacts for Ontario Communities* report highlights the unparalleled benefits that libraries offer communities.⁴ The findings report that 44% of people who used technology services at a library were introduced to new technology, and 84% of users felt more comfortable using digital resources after using one or more services. Additionally, 43% of study respondents reported that they were successfully able to find a job after using the library’s technology services.⁵



MPL makes technology and digital resources widely available and accessible for in-branch use through laptops or MacBooks that can be borrowed, Wi-Fi access to the internet, printing, and Children's Early Literacy Computer Stations. MPL also provides eResources including online books, audiobooks, magazines, newspaper and journal articles, learning tools, virtual classes, research databases and more to be accessed with a Library account. Even digital radon detectors, thermal cameras, and Kill-a-watt appliance meters can be borrowed to be used in the home. Noteworthy as well is MPL's pursuit of offering screenless technologies such as Lego Coding Express which teaches coding without a screen and other libraries are extending technology to include simple hand tools such as quilting needles and sewing machines.

Makerspaces/Tech

The shift towards digitizing libraries have also extended to the emergence of makerspaces, which are shared, community spaces that offer technologies to be used. The availability of 3D printers, sewing machines, design software, robotics, and recording equipment foster a sense of creativity, innovation, collaboration, and interaction amongst those with similar interests and facilitates skills development and lifelong learning. Libraries that offer makerspaces thus provide access to both low- and high-tech tools and equipment for free, teach people how to use tools, and introduce them to new technologies and skills through workshops, training, and educational programming, allowing people to gain the skills they need without barriers. The recently redeveloped Hazel McCallion Library in Mississauga features multiple maker-rooms in its basement level – with direct access to the underground parking garage – that provides access to many of the equipment and technologies noted above. The newly installed Tech Hub at MPL's Sherwood Branch is a local example on a smaller scale.

Artificial Intelligence

With the rise of digital technologies, public libraries are left to keep up with the increasing popularity of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality, and other emerging technologies. These technologies are not without both opportunities *and* challenges. Though AI technologies can offer assistance interpreting data, producing and reading written work, generate images, and boost people's work efficiency and knowledge, AI can also misinterpret information, resulting in the loss of truth or context, it can lead to privacy concerns with its powerful access to vast amounts of data, and may require much more investments in educating the public in using it correctly.⁶



Library Performance

The cause of the drastic shifts that libraries have undergone is largely driven by technological and societal trends. Innovations like mobile phones, portable technology, Wi-Fi, eBooks, tablets, and smartphones create the need for libraries to provide access to digital technologies. In terms of the societal trends that have influenced the shift in library provisions, certain trends that emphasize creativity, social justice, sociability, community connection, and lifelong learning are valued uniquely today. In addition to social demands, MPL is experiencing growing demands for workspaces conducive to education and employment (e.g. spaces for study and work from home). Such social and technological changes are unfolding and interacting in ways that are affecting customer experience, collections, community relationships, and in turn, physical space.

Despite the growing trends towards alternative uses, borrowing books and materials remain one of the most popular reasons for visiting public libraries. MPL's "Library of Things" has grown to include a variety of activities, passes, and items that can be borrowed and used beyond the physical library space. These "Things" include community passes to the Conservation Halton Parks, Art Gallery of Hamilton Family passes, and Ontario Park Permits. Additionally, the MPL offers outdoor games and sports equipment to be borrowed from the Main Library. These items include sports kits, hiking poles, tennis racquets and balls, pickleball sets, snowshoes, and even cricket sets.

Libraries as Third Spaces

In the book *The Great Good Place*, sociologist and author Ray Oldenburg suggests that people need three places in their lives to thrive, with the home being the "first place", work or school as the "second place" and an ambiguous yet necessary "third place" as the source for community building and social engagement. These spaces are typically spaces where people gather or meet for good company and conversation such as libraries, cafes, bookstores, bars, and others. An important feature of third spaces is that it is easily accessible to all people from all backgrounds and interests.

This trend is being particularly emphasized with aspirational visions to see library spaces integrated throughout urban areas as highlighted by the *Overdue* report. By combining library spaces with education buildings, office or retail spaces, transit centres, residential buildings, recreation spaces, or even marketplaces, the vision of libraries as a place of respite leisure, or community building in the midst of other functions draws on the idea of "third space."



What differentiates MPL and other libraries from other third spaces is the level of trust and safety imparted which has also led to a term of libraries being coined as “the community’s living room.” Libraries are not only a space to escape crowded homes but serve as the home away from home where emotions can be expressed through welcoming programs and thought-provoking resources. MPL can become an extension of home life in many ways including an off-site home office complete with printer and other related technologies.

MPL is already used to be a third space for the community, offering spaces for community building, social activities, and public participation. Spaces for co-learning, programming and socializing are readily available. Library space brings the community together through book clubs that allow people to discuss their ideas, tea-enthusiasts gather during Tea Fest, and various crafts and hobby groups share their passions.

Main Branch is likely to see an even greater demand as a third space given the degree of residential intensification that will take place close by as population densities increase around the GO Transit Station; with the size of housing units in these areas likely to be smaller and have small or no backyards, residents may be more likely to rely on MPL for space.

Bookstores like Indigo, Chapters, or Barnes & Nobles in the United States have given people a taste of the ultimate trio: coffee, WI-FI and a good book. These bookstores allow people to feel a sense of comfort or familiarity in spaces other than their home or work. Building on that popularity, providing “The Starbucks Experience” in libraries includes one main goal: to enhance customer service by becoming the “third place” in people’s daily lives.⁷ By offering spaces where customers can meet, socialize, work, read, and/or drink coffee, people are free to interact in any way they choose, often spending hours at a time. The greatest disadvantage to spaces like cafes is that the expectation to purchase food or drink can be a barrier for many people, something that is not the case in the library setting.

Public libraries, though free to use, typically did not allow food or drink inside, making it difficult for people to spend longer periods of time at the library. Adding designated zones for food or drink, cafés, or self-serve stations can help libraries thrive as third places. For example, Barrie Public Library includes a Book Boutique & Café where people can have coffee or tea, water or pop, granola bars, muffins, and other snacks at the library.⁸ MPL has updated its code of conduct to permit snacks and drinks (but not full meals) in designated areas. Allowing food and beverages in the library can encourage more frequent visits and longer stays.



Library Design

When discussing how people use, move through, and behave in library spaces, library design becomes a crucial topic to consider.⁹ Some of the trends emerging from library design include an accommodating library atmosphere, welcoming and inclusive design, and biophilic design.

Library Atmosphere

Libraries used to be known for being “quiet spaces” where only whispers were tolerated to allow others to read or study quietly. However, libraries are not so “quiet” anymore, instead, they are becoming social hubs and vibrant places of interaction and events¹⁰. This trend towards the vibrant library does not negate the need for quiet spaces, resulting in a design function that needs to accommodate for the varying needs. This has resulted in a trend towards different zones of use, where the furniture, noise levels, lighting, and activities within that space are catered towards a certain activity or atmosphere. This means that library users can choose whether to engage in more active, social zones or quieter zones apart from others. The challenge however is that the growing demands on the library place a strain on the use and design of space that might conflict.

Welcoming and Inclusive Design

In order to draw people in for social interaction and engagement, designing library spaces that do not create physical barriers for anyone is crucial in maintaining a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Thus, features such as comfortable seating areas, quiet spaces, meeting and study rooms, and children’s spaces are integral to ensuring a variety of users can feel welcome. Accommodation of persons with disabilities is top of mind but can have space implications; for example, persons using mobility aids such as wheelchairs may require materials to be placed on lower shelving with wider aisle widths while neuro-diverse individuals may seek out quieter areas; barrier-free accessibility and universal designs thus have requirements for greater space. MPL’s Tech Hub took barrier-free accessibility into account during the facility design stage.

Outdoor & Biophilic Library Spaces

Today, people spend an average of 90% of their time indoors, resulting in a disconnect between people and nature.¹¹ Many libraries systems, including MPL, have incorporated outdoor seating through patios and reading gardens while others are “bringing the outdoors inside.”

Public demands for outdoor seating and library programming grew during the COVID-19 pandemic, where people searched for more outdoor areas with ample space, fresh air, and the ability to distance from others.¹² MPL branches offer access to outdoor areas including seating in the landscaped courtyard at Main Branch (shared with the FirstOntario Centre) and the



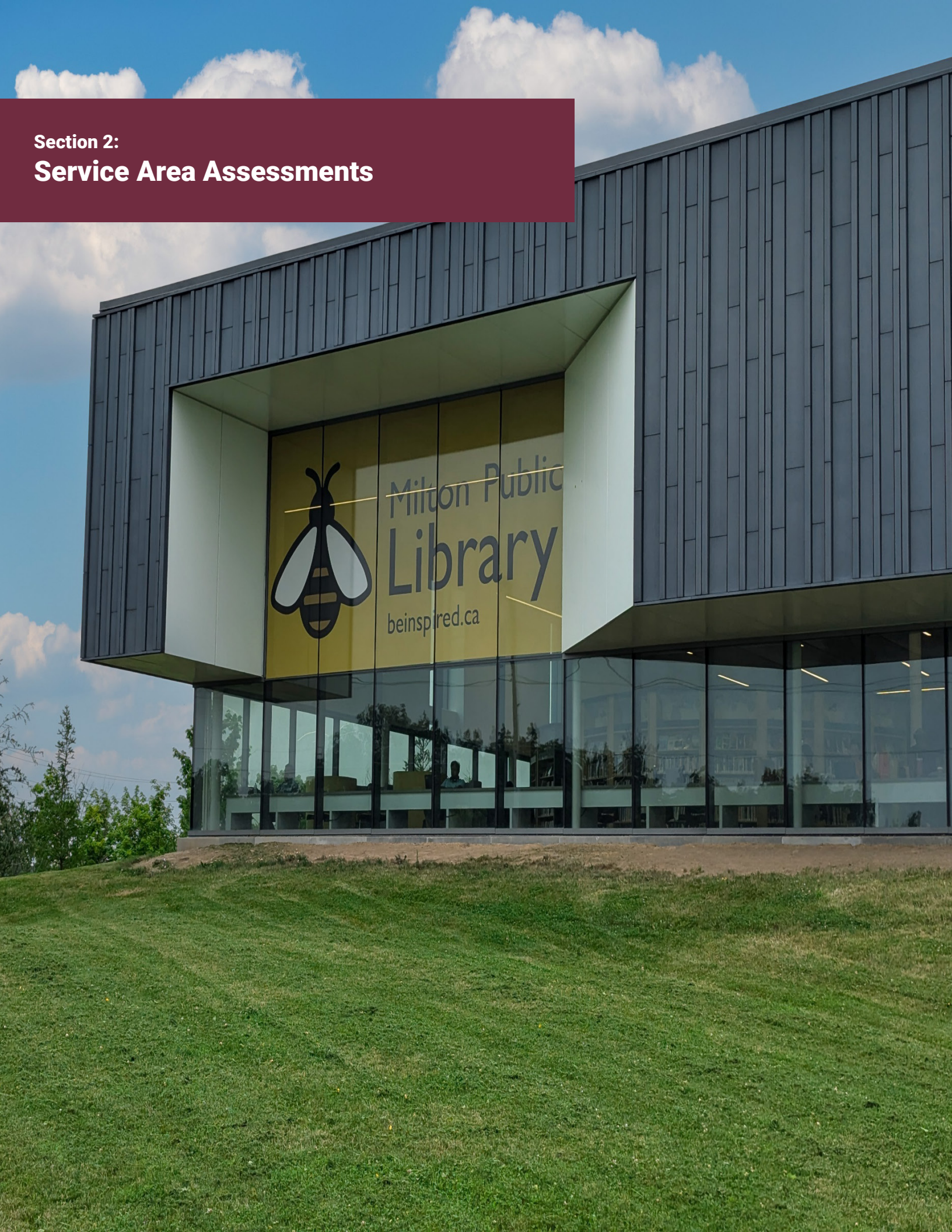
Beaty Branch pollinator garden. The Sherwood Branch has access to a concrete patio though the latter is not heavily used at present as access is via the multi-purpose room and it is situated in an unfenced area, which makes it less conducive to use by certain age groups in its present form.

Mississauga Library incorporated outdoor patios at the Meadowvale and Woodlands Libraries while incorporating gardens or landscaping, while its Port Credit Branch specifically incorporates pollinator gardens as MPL has done at the Beaty Branch. In London, Ontario, the downtown Central Library hosts weekly concerts hosting local artists during the office lunch hour in the Rotary Reading Garden; this semi-public garden extends from the library and also offers additional seating, walkways, water features, and a quiet retreat for users. Although a lack of space can be a barrier for libraries, maximizing outdoor spaces can be an ideal way to encourage time in nature for library users and free up space indoors.

Biophilic spaces are those that incorporate nature or elements of nature into the design of indoor spaces to bring nature inside. There are different strategies to incorporate biophilic design like bringing living features of nature like plants and flowers indoors, using analogues or colors and shapes that remind people of nature, or using inanimate features like natural sunlight to bring life into indoor spaces. There are many benefits that biophilic spaces provide people, such as an increased sense of relaxation and calmness. Greater exposure to sunlight can increase one's learning speed by 25% and biophilic design can increase office staff's performance by 10-25%.¹³ The large windows at Sherwood Branch allow plenty of natural light and a view to the outdoors, as do the back row of windows at Beaty Branch. Future MPL library developments and renewals should explore ways to integrate natural light but also indoor vegetation through living walls and other interior biophilic features.



Section 2:
Service Area Assessments



Section 2: Service Area Assessments



This section contains an assessment of areas of inquiry identified in the LMP's scope of work. MPL has historically focused upon these "areas of service" through the 2024 SDOR, past iterations of the LMP, and internal workplans. By focusing on these areas of service and orienting recommendations accordingly, MPL strives for efficiencies and excellence in how it serves the community and how it operates consistent with its vision, purpose and values.

The assessments incorporate evidence from the professional literature, data supplied by MPL, along with feedback from the Library Board and MPL staff. Data is also referenced from the 2021 Master Plan Update, the SDOR and the most recent workplan submitted to the Board in June 2024. This LMP builds on the recent and comprehensive assessments contained in the recent SDOR and it is not the intent to duplicate that work; instead, the LMP focuses on providing insight into priority setting and highlighting initiatives that are critical and integral to MPL's overall success with proposed goals and objectives.

2.1 Advocacy, Governance & Funding

Under the *Public Libraries Act*, public libraries in Ontario must be operated under the management and control of library board whose responsibilities, among others, are set out in Section 20(a) "to provide, in co-operation with other boards, a comprehensive and efficient public library service that reflects the community's unique needs." Whereas library boards are responsible for the governance of the organization and elements of its operation, a public library receives the majority of its capital and operating funding from the municipality and upper levels of government.

A regular component of governance is Library Board oversight. This is achieved, in part, through the installation and review of updated and timely policy. The SDOR provided high level guidance in this regard and the MPL Board's workplan should include a regular review of policies either through the Library CEO or through a Board Committee. Alignment with Town of Milton policies is also key and library-related issues such as Intellectual Freedom, Public Internet Policy and the Purpose/Mission should align with professional best practices and the Board's stated Values. Collaboration with the Town Clerk's office and a regular review of compliance gaps when legislation changes that affect libraries can provide a means of prioritizing policy review. Regardless, a biannual cycle of policy analysis could be a standing item on the Board agenda once each quarter.

The MPL Board has an important and significant role to set the course for the next five years and beyond. At the outset, this must consider the altered future of libraries post-pandemic. This "future" is more uncertain than any other time



in its history and more fraught than future predictions ten years ago. Disrupting factors such as climate change, culture wars, immigration, poverty, addiction, homelessness and mental illness have created an added layer of complexity around planning for the future. It is now more important than ever that devising a roadmap for the years ahead incorporate adaptability and flexibility but also can strike the right balance between innovation and preserving the foundational values that define what libraries have always been (Janes as cited in Hirsch, 2024).¹⁴

Successful governance will be reflected in a successful strategy comprised of goals related to staffing and training, technology, customer experience, facilities, collections, marketing and communication, collaboration and partnership, advocacy and governance, and funding. The objectives must consider the values, mission, and vision, but must also acknowledge the critical issues facing MPL in terms of growth and capacity.

Given the large number of recommendations coming out of the SDOR and the capital planning needs already identified, a priority setting Framework must be approved by the Board to ensure that resources are being directed to achieve maximum impact. The objectives established to meet these goals should be assessed in three categories:

- **critical** – must be accomplished within a set time frame;
- **important** – an effort that can have a significant impact on performance; or
- **desirable** – effort that is seen as desirable, but the organization cannot commit either specific resources or a specific time frame.

Additionally, precise objectives, adequate resources and a reasonable time frame are essential in fulfilling a future vision.¹⁵ MPL may need to adapt these definitions for its own setting; however, the crucial lenses for assessment in the short term include two main filters: compliance and capacity.

In other words, MPL would need to determine whether there is a legislative and/or whether there are risk-related factors that make an objective or initiative critical. MPL would also need to understand whether capacity exists to fulfill objectives or initiatives, and if not, resources must be either allocated or requested from the Town of Milton to fulfil the objective. Without added capacity, services enhancements cannot move forward and the potential for added risks may need to be assessed for the future.



MPL in 2029

The MPL Board and staff were asked to describe a preferred future over the next five years and the criteria that should be used for priority setting. The Library Board indicated that MPL should have adequate facilities, be leaders in the community, be fiscally responsible, be a collaborative environment and act as a community hub. The criteria for priority setting should include prioritizing wants versus needs, building capacity internally, and focusing on staffing resources.

The MPL Leadership Team identified a 5-year vision that included diverse and innovative services, a fully accessible library that connected the community and a library with staff who felt empowered, safe and prepared to serve the evolving needs of the community. The priority-setting criteria put forward included defining core services, ensuring long-term sustainability, assessing risk, ensuring a community-led approach, and implementing initiatives based on business case analysis. MPL's front-line staff were also asked to define what areas the Library should focus on in the next five years. The top responses were for staff, space, organizational structure, technology for the public and technology training for library staff. This is important insight into the various internal perspectives that help shape the LMP.

While many elements of a plan have been reviewed above, the most critical component is funding. In the words of Lidlow (2017), "...resources reign supreme. Resources are what enable an objective to be accomplished within a set time; without dedicated means, an initiative is pure fantasy." The need to be fiscally conservative is important based on the feedback outlined above. The challenge for the Library Board will be to set objectives that balance fiscal restraint with the need to deal with critical issues facing MPL now and into the future. The completion of a plan for the next five years will not only identify resource gaps and needs but will act as a platform on which board advocacy efforts can be facilitated.

Recommended Actions

- #1. Add a quarterly standing item on the MPL Board agenda that undertakes a biannual review of selected MPL policies as a means to ensure effective governance.**
- #2. Update this Library Master Plan in 2029 to reflect progress and continue to align with Town of Milton's planning initiatives.**



2.2 Communications & Marketing

The important work that MPL and its Board performs must be amplified as much as possible. Celebrating successes is key for recognition but it is also a means of tracking progress and demonstrating accountability. It also has the potential to garner community champions and to provide a strong rationale for increases in resources. Telling the story of the MPL – its successes, its challenges, and its aspirations for the community it serves – can strengthen the bond with its users, supporters, and funders. Sharing with the community and the library’s funders the value of its services, regularly, is key. The connection between engagement and telling the library’s story represents two-way communication that must be cultivated and managed regularly.

Engagement activities with MPL users is becoming an increasingly important function requiring specialized staffing. Today, engagement with library users involves multi-platform and channel communication; tailored and curated messaging and an almost 24/7 oversight of social media channels. MPL has leveraged social media channels, its newsletter and website to spread the word about the library’s services and resources. Library Board feedback indicated that Citizen Engagement Surveys and more organizational engagement could be key. Regardless, this area of MPL’s operations represents a growth opportunity and a Community Engagement Librarian position is recommended. This role should be leveraged strategically to deepen MPL’s engagement within the community.

Recommended Actions

- #3. Establish a Marketing and Communications vehicle for the public and Town Council to explain the MPL Board’s roadmap, advocate for library funding, and to demonstrate accountability and transparency.**
- #4. Create a Community Engagement Librarian position to deepen the Library’s engagement within the community as well as ensure outreach to underserved areas and new residents.**



2.3 Staffing & Training

The staffing landscape for public libraries has been changing since before the pandemic. While competencies and training are important factors in assessing future human resources requirements of MPL, increases to staffing levels is a critical and urgent need. In the pages that follow, the changing requirements for library skills will be addressed along with challenges specific to Milton.

Competencies

In a post-pandemic world, public library professionals and workers are called upon to be proficient in skills that have not traditionally been associated with library work. For example, the need to be a proficient evaluator of technology and of digital content has become a more regular requirement. Or navigating the culture wars associated with challenges to books and programming as long accepted principles of Intellectual Freedom are questioned by some members of the community. In addition, trends and community preferences are changing more quickly than ever requiring library staff to iterate more rapidly and offer new or modified services to respond to new demands.¹⁶ In addition, MPL has implemented a community-led approach to respond to diverse communities with increasing social service demands. Flexibility and adaptability for individual library staff as well as for the organization have proven to be important success factors.¹⁷

As MPL grows from an institutional perspective, its structure should continue to evolve and respond to future growth. While not imminent, the organizational preparedness for the management of additional library locations must be examined. While the SDOR provided recommendations for future structures, a continued analysis is required to proactively ensure MPL can demonstrate organizational resilience and adaptability going forward. Decision making structures must be able to respond to new and fast changing environments. Coping with uncertainty can be positively supported by an organizational structure that matches strategy to the way decisions are made.¹⁸ As MPL adds physical locations in the future, the current organizational structure should be reviewed to assess the capacity to deliver services at current levels.

A companion to the need for individual and organizational adaptability is the availability of adequate training for MPL staff. Staff training and education should be deployed at all levels of the organization. This level of commitment to professional development can only be achieved through appropriate operating budget allocations. The Administrators of Rural Urban Public Libraries of Ontario Guidelines (ARUPLO) recommends that not less than 1% of a library's staffing budget be allocated to staffing training.¹⁹ MPL currently funds staff training at an appropriate level and the continuation of this support for professional development is crucial. The training needs for staff in terms of technology, as an example, is significant. This will be covered more extensively later in this LMP. The investment in skills and knowledge of library



staff are integral to employee engagement as well as to the quality of service delivered to the community.

The 2021 LMP Update spoke to a concern to sustain the quality of service provided by MPL due to staffing. In particular, the 2021 LMP extensively covered the need to build a diverse and inclusive workforce; the need to cultivate a culture of innovation; and the need to recruit outside of the library sector. It also outlined that the current staffing level at 0.34 FTE (Full Time Equivalents) per 1,000 population was too lean to maintain service quality as the population increased.²⁰

The SDOR also noted that with population growth, MPL has lost ground as staffing levels have dropped to just 0.26 FTE per 1,000 using 2024 staff ratios/population. In this LMP's staff survey, respondents cited staffing levels as the biggest challenge facing MPL. Strategically, MPL's biggest challenge in this regard is that the library must address, simultaneously, staff increases for both population growth and to prepare for new facilities.²¹ These impending urgent situations will need to be addressed immediately. The SDOR provides many options to consider while Recommended Actions in the pages that follow also provide guidance.

MPL has an opportunity to participate in the Town of Milton's Strategic Workforce Planning Initiative in 2025. It aims to offer the:

- Creation of a strategy to close workforce gaps with feasible and realistic activities that the Town and Library can implement informing the Town/Library's talent management needs for today and in the future, optimizing its investment in MPL to achieve corporate priorities.
- Identification of at-risk/critical roles and development of a succession planning framework for these areas; includes a plan for identifying, developing and retaining talent for these positions.
- Creation of a competency framework that supports and informs talent-related programs such as recruitment, professional development, learning, recognition and performance management

This represents a valuable collaboration with the Town of Milton that may proactively address some of MPL's future staffing needs.

Future Staffing Needs

In addressing future staffing needs, there are some external factors to consider. The fiscal cautiousness and budget pressures of the Town of Milton must be acknowledged. This was heard through the consultations for this LMP and the SDOR.

MPL's biggest challenge is that it must simultaneously increase staff to account for population growth and prepare for new facilities.

There is simply not sufficient staffing capacity to sustain new services currently.



The SDOR identified a current gap in staffing as well as the need for MPL to increase staff incrementally with growth. The deficit of staffing going forward requires examination and analysis as to the most effective and fiscally responsible way to incrementally increase staffing in the next 5 years and beyond, not only to gear up for new facilities but also to address population growth. The positive impacts of this investment cannot be overstated.

- Increased levels of staffing will mitigate burnout, maximize retention and help with recruitment.
- Additional staff investment will allow front-line staff adequate time for training and development opportunities, including technology training.
- The investment will address staffing deficits in an incremental, fiscally prudent manner.
- An incremental approach to increase staffing will help mitigate large increases to MPL's operating budget in advance of opening new facilities.
- Investments would facilitate service enhancements such as longer hours, more technology and more programming.

Unless staffing levels can increase, the only changes to service going forward should only be ones that are either legislated or have risk implications for MPL or the Town of Milton. There is simply not sufficient capacity to sustain new services currently. A final question that must be posed revolves around MPL's stated value of Exceptional Public Service. The Library Board must consider if it can truly fulfill this value with the Library's current level of staffing.

Recommended Actions

- #5. Continue to reimagine the current organizational structure to accommodate new library facilities and a new facility/service delivery model that defines roles, structures and service levels for existing and future library locations.**
- #6. Leverage MPL's participation in the Town of Milton's Strategic Workforce Planning and Competency Framework.**
- #7. Continue to invest in staff training and professional development by ensuring that MPL budgets continue to meet ARUPLO Guidelines of a 1% staffing budget.**
- #8. Increase staffing for most critical gaps in 2025, with an initial focus placed on Information Technology and front-line positions.**
- #9. Develop a work force plan to incrementally increase staff in anticipation of ongoing population growth, the need to build capacity and to bring MPL closer to staffing levels of its public library comparators.**



2.4 Technology

Technology and digital services within public libraries have evolved and transformed from providing access to connectivity and skills training to exposure to new and emerging technologies. The user groups that libraries are aiming to serve have become just as diverse. The technology needs of entrepreneurs, new Canadians, lifelong learners, students, and marginalized populations are unique and represent substantial effort on the part of libraries to meet their requirements. The MPL staff survey for this plan cited growing technology and online use as the greatest change in the use of library services in Milton. The overarching goals for technology in libraries encompass providing access to connectivity, new and emerging technologies, and skills and training so all residents can fully participate in society and the economy. Libraries are also viewing technology through the lens of equity. Libraries have recognized the critical role that they play in advancing digital literacy but also digital inclusion. Without equity of access to technology, society risks a widening digital divide placing the library in an essential role as the bridge.²²

During the COVID-19 pandemic, libraries were unable to rely on their physical spaces to deliver technology. As months of lockdowns went by, public libraries everywhere had the ability to loan hot spots for Wi-Fi access at home or the ability to loan tablets and laptops to provide access to technology. While this was happening pre-pandemic, the added value of this service during the pandemic could not be denied. Clearly, for those who did not have the means to own hardware or to pay for internet access at home, this was crucial to their ability to continue to learn, work and communicate. According to the Urban Libraries Council, “In Canada, 66% of households with incomes less than \$32,000 don’t have broad band access or computers.”²³ The need to loan technology has continued post-pandemic and continues to evolve both as user needs both within the library and at home continue to expand.

Makerspace

Another distinction that has emerged in recent years is the sophistication of current and emerging technologies. At one time, libraries were focused on helping users to navigate word processing programs or showing users how to set up an email account or a social media account. Today’s technology is more complex and blends seamlessly with learning strategies, communication formats and employment expectations. Libraries have adapted and must continue adapting. The Maker movement is a great example of creating environments within library spaces that are more advanced, innovative and beyond the traditional offerings of public libraries. More than 10 years since the first Makerspace was introduced in libraries, it is evident that each library has created these spaces to reflect their own community’s needs as well as tailor them to available budgets and staffing.



MPL plans to repurpose the lounge at the Beaty Branch into its first Makerspace. This is an important foundation for replicating these spaces in other locations within the system in the future and speaks to the library responding to the need to build more complex technology offerings into their programming. It will be important, due to the accelerated pace of technological change, that MPL expedite plans for future makerspaces or maker experiences. MPL provides some services (e.g. 3D printing, Lamination, Access to Apple devices) but is limited by branch configurations and amount of space. Similar to MPL, some public libraries are opting for a more holistic approach to Maker by offering the equipment and technology in branch. Whitby Public Library has introduced “Discovery Zones” where items such as scanners, large format printers, and a sound booth are situated within its spaces while “Discovery Kits” with similar equipment can be borrowed. A mobile model can help enhance the flagship Makerspace at Beaty Branch.

Now more than ever, libraries must work hard to plan services that integrate more advanced skill building for its community as Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality and other emerging technologies become mainstream.²⁴ The MPL Board’s feedback reinforces the need to be agile and adapt quickly regarding technology while also acknowledging the importance of Artificial Intelligence and digital literacy in programming and service delivery for youth. The challenge is and will continue to be MPL’s ability to build capacity, skills and knowledge on the staffing front while having a robust technology budget to update and acquire hardware and equipment to keep pace with future technology needs.

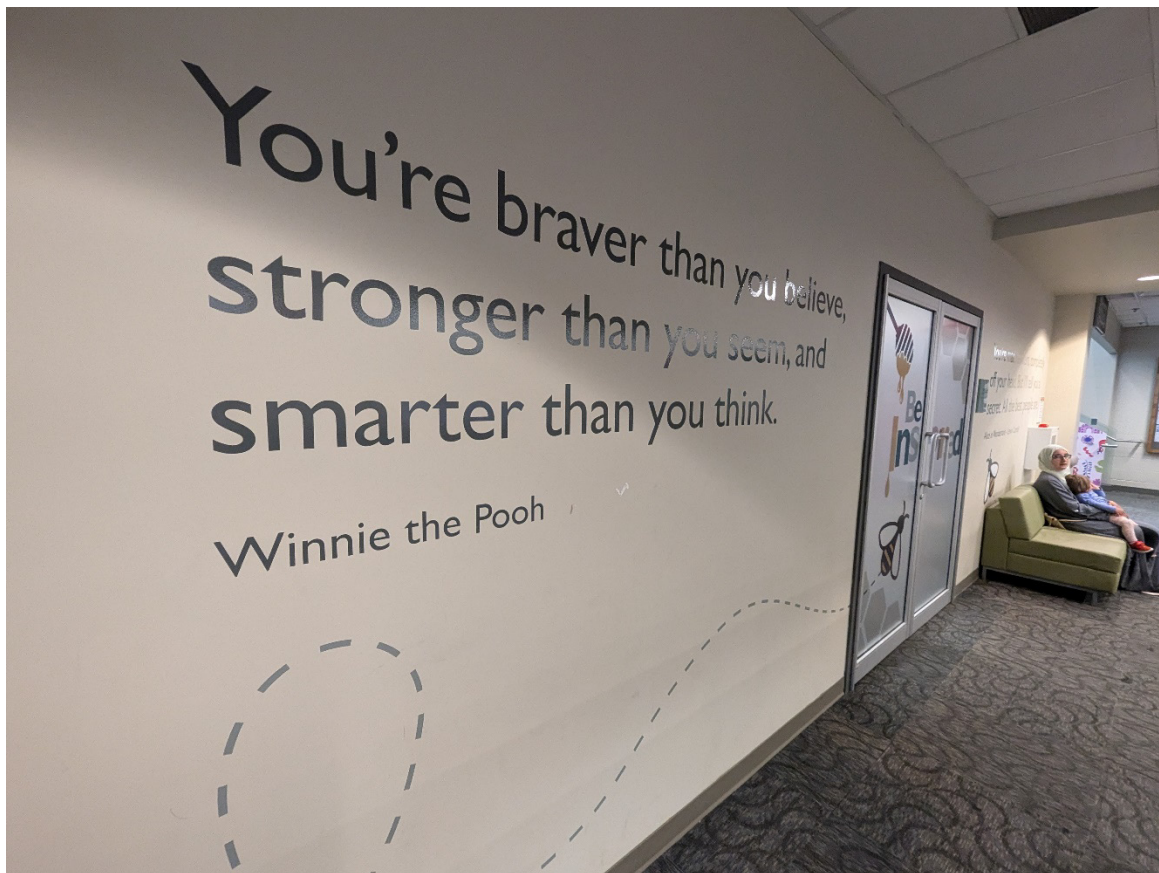
In the 2021 Library Master Plan Update, many technology enhancements in terms of software and hardware were documented that had been undertaken by MPL. The Update offered a significant recommendation around developing a Technology Renewal and Acquisitions Plan with the goal of prioritizing initiatives, addressing popular and emerging technologies, and to put a focus on staff training. SDOR recommends a similar action, however, it also highlights cybersecurity risks that need to be addressed to reduce current vulnerabilities.²⁵ Key elements of this latest recommendation include annual plans to budget for new equipment, equipment replacement and staff training, cybersecurity initiatives, disaster planning and the introduction of support agreements with vendors and the municipality.

The recommendations in the previous LMP and the SDOR highlight the urgent and critical need to create a technology plan. Furthermore, the necessary human resources must be put in place to implement, review and monitor each element of the plan to ensure organizational integrity and preparedness as well as to provide timely, high-quality services to the community.



Recommended Actions

- #10. Implement the immediate addition of 1.0 FTE to provide technology assistance to the Director, Support Services.
- #11. Continue to investigate shared services with the Town of Milton's Information Technology Department and develop a written agreement for accountabilities and potential shared services.
- #12. Prioritize staff technology training for allocation of training budget resources immediately.
- #13. Contract the drafting of a Technology Plan to a consulting service provider in order to give existing Library staff a roadmap to follow and update.



2.5 Facilities

Library Branch Classification & Hierarchy

Each MPL library branch has unique design and operating characteristics. ARUPLO Guidelines identify four types of library branches that are categorized by factors such as population served contributions to local economic activity, function or role (e.g. resource, technology, local history), and space offered for programming and/or community partners. These four types of branches in the ARUPLO Guidelines consist of Small, Medium, Large and Urban Branches.

MPL's Main Branch is the largest library in Milton and functions as the administrative centre where corporate services and centralized processing presently supports the entire library system. The Beaty and Sherwood Branches provide smaller floorspace and scale their collections and program offerings to the neighbourhoods located nearby.

The ARUPLO Guidelines make it clear that it is up to each library system to determine how it classifies each of its branches. However, the number of people living within a branch's catchment area and the size/area of a branch are good indicators to use to underpin a classification system in a community such as Milton. ARUPLO's Large Branch and Urban Branch types apply well to MPL's three branches.

- Main Branch, at 30,000 square feet, along with its location in the Town's designated Major Urban Centre and proximity to the designated GO Transit MTSA make this library characteristic of an Urban Branch.
- Beaty and Sherwood Branches are indicative of Large Branches as they range in size from 11,250 to 15,630 square feet; each of these branches serve a different population catchment as the stand-alone Beaty Branch is embedded directly into its neighbourhood while Sherwood Branch is integrated into a community centre located along the Main Street corridor.

Table 2: ARUPLO Guidelines for Branch Classification

Branch Type	Catchment Population	Net Library Space / Size	Hours of Operation per Week	Staff Complement
Urban (Main Branch)	35,000+	35,000+ ft ²	65+ hours over 7 days per week	17.5+ FTE
Large (Beaty Branch & Sherwood Branch)	10,000 to 35,000	10,000 ft ² to 35,000 ft ²	45 to 65 hours over 6 to 7 days per week	5 to 17.5 FTE

Source: ARUPLO Guidelines, 4th Edition



Geospatial Analysis

MPL's branches service localized catchment areas but depending upon the design and services offered at a given branch, a library's reach may extend further where people are willing or able to travel longer periods to reach it. With library systems operating under a premise to serve as many people as possible and be a place for all, the ability to reach a library is an important consideration. Equity for populations without regular access to a motorized vehicle must be factored, particularly where transit or active transportation infrastructure (bike lanes, trails, sidewalks, etc.) is deficient or not available.

Figure 3 on the following page illustrates the geographic coverage of each library branch using a catchment area of 2.0 kilometres; in Milton, this radius generally equates to a 7 to 12 minute drive depending on time of day, a 20 minute bicycle trip or a 30 minute walk. The three libraries adequately service established residential areas west of the Derry Road corridor. and north of Thompson Road. Residential areas in southwest Milton, including a large part of the Boyne Survey and the Milton Education Village, constitute the largest geographic gap in the designated Urban Area while there are no library branches in the Town's designated Rural Area and hamlets such as Campbellville and Brookville.

Per Capita Rates of Provision

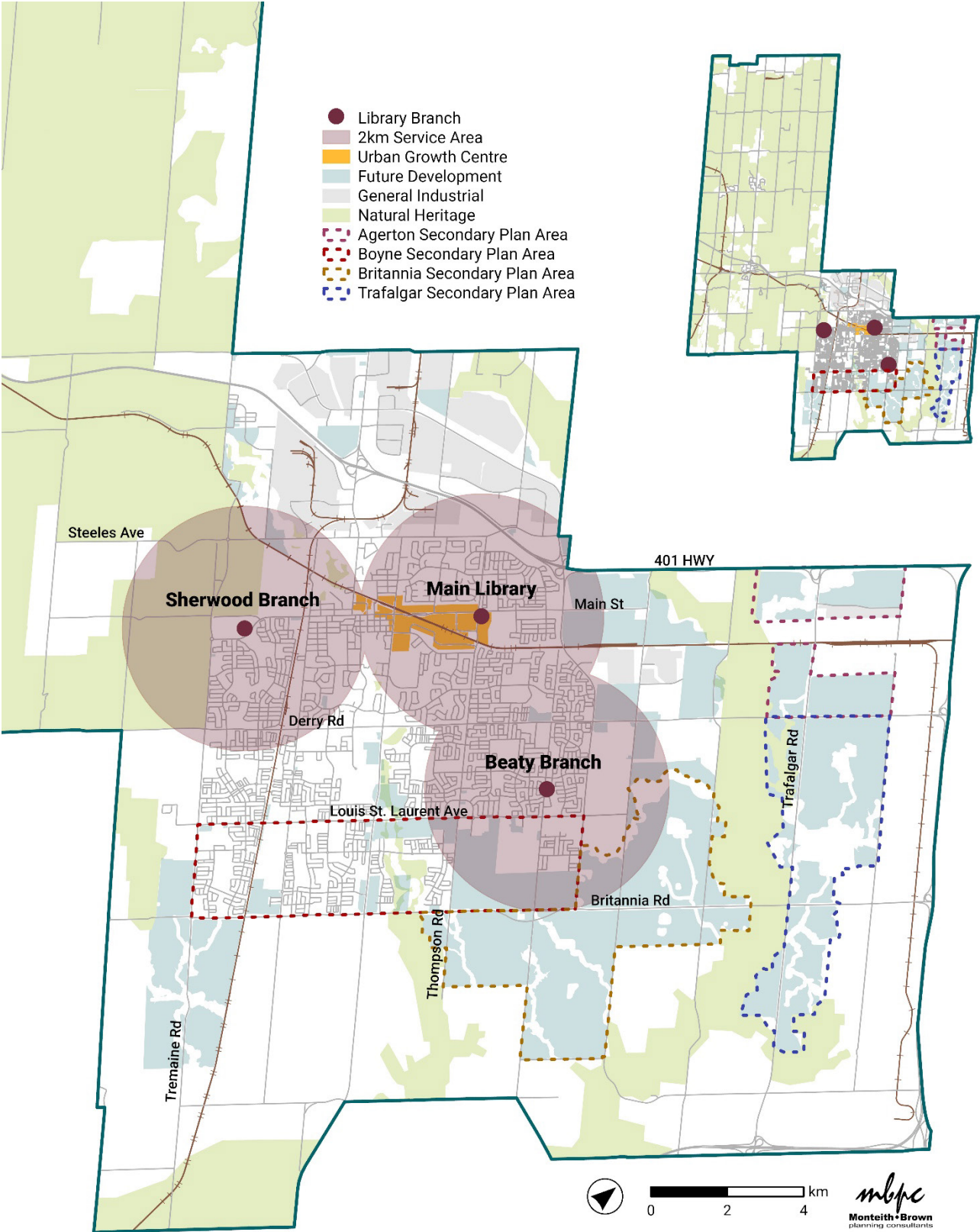
Use of per capita standards remains as a reasonable methodology for most library systems to project high-level needs. Despite the recent evolution of library holdings and roles, library usage levels remain strong and a standards-based approach endures. The amount of space required by a public library depends on the unique needs of the individual community.

The assessment of local needs may be assisted by documents such as the Ontario Public Library Guidelines²⁶ and ARUPLO Guidelines, which provide several measures to assist libraries in future space planning in areas such as staffing, space, collection size, collection use and hours.

A metric of 0.6 square feet per capita was traditionally advanced by provincial library bodies for system-wide space assessments. In more recent years, a higher measure of 1.0 square feet per capita has been promoted within the sector though the ability of a library system to attain any guideline is largely a function of: a) the size of their population; b) the amount of library space historically provided; and c) funding allocated by municipalities to their library system. It bears noting that these traditional guidelines do not convey quality, convenience, or user satisfaction. Therefore, regular public engagement is vital to identifying local measures of success.



Figure 3: Distribution of Milton Public Library Branches



The MPL Board historically supported a space provision level of 0.55 square feet per capita. MPL's 56,471 square feet of Gross Floor Area (GFA) in 2024 translates into 0.34 square feet per capita, which is lower than the 0.4 square feet per capita recorded 10 years ago despite having one less library branch. Erosion of the amount of library space per capita is illustrative of the growth-related pressures facing MPL resulting from the rapid expansion of the local residential base.

The current amount of space per capita is approximately 40% below MPL's historical standard and would require MPL to increase its gross floor area by 60% just to meet needs. Clearly, this will be difficult to achieve in the next five years due to fiscal constraints of not only constructing new library space but also in operating and staffing new and/or expanded library branches. However, if MPL's GFA were to remain unchanged over the next five years, then the space provision rate would fall even further to 0.26 square feet per capita and be less than half of industry guidelines.

MPL is not alone in its challenges. Many library systems in Ontario target 0.6 square feet per capita but have not been able to achieve this rate. In Milton, the degree of population growth has a direct impact on the amount of GFA required based on a per capita standard – with tens of thousands of people projected to arrive each year, there are inherent constraints on the ability to construct tens of thousands of square feet particularly with recent provincial legislative changes pertaining to growth-related funding (e.g. Development Charges and Community Benefits Charges). In addition, the Town of Milton funds the Library's capital projects but has other sizeable infrastructure commitments such as roads, community centres, public transit and more.

Future Space Needs to 2029

Table 3 articulates MPL's space needs to the year 2029 based on the service target of 0.55 square feet per capita. MPL would be deficient by approximately 26,500 square feet at present (and noting that the deficit would be 34,800 square feet using the previous target of 0.55 square feet per capita).

Table 3: Forecasted Library Space Requirements, 2024-2029

Year	Forecasted Population	Library Space Needs @ 0.55 ft ² per capita	Deviation from Current Supply of 56,471 ft ²
2024	166,000	91,300 ft ²	- 34,829 ft ²
2029	221,000	121,550 ft ²	- 65,079 ft ²

Note: Current supply includes approximately 5,000 ft² of space shared with the Town's Community Services Department at Sherwood Community Centre.

0.55 ft² per capita

Space provision target historically supported by the MPL Board.

0.34 ft² per capita

MPL's current space provision rate based on its supply of 56,471 ft²



With an additional 55,000 people projected to arrive over the LMP's planning period, MPL would require another 65,079 square feet of GFA by the year 2029. This would mean more than doubling MPL's existing GFA over the next five years which would be extremely difficult to do but highlights the urgency to invest in library services. Realistically speaking, the most plausible way to add a meaningful amount of library space in Milton would be to integrate a new library branch as part of the Town's next multi-use community centre; it is understood that the Town is contemplating design of a Boyne community centre and library in 2028 followed by construction in 2029/2030. Given that a library in Boyne is unlikely to be opened in the next five years, MPL should thus focus its short-term capital development strategy on expanding and reconfiguring Main Branch to increase capacity.

As will be discussed in the pages that follow, if an assumed 25,000 square feet can be added at a new library branch in Boyne along with a 15,000 square foot addition at Main Branch, MPL would still have a shortfall of 25,100 square feet at the end of this LMP planning period. The 2051 population would generate a growth-related need for nearly 125,000 square feet beyond the aforementioned GFA additions but there may be future-term opportunities to employ a smaller branch or alternative service points (also discussed in pages that follow). Additional GFA for library space should be negotiated with post-secondary institutions to reflect off-campus needs for library space and potential to be funding partners as discussed in Section 2.6 of this LMP.

In planning for new and renewed spaces and services, MPL is well positioned to incorporate engagement with local Indigenous organizations to create culturally appropriate spaces and programs aligned with the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's Calls to Action and the Canadian Federation of Library Association's follow up report for libraries. The recommendations in the CFLA Report provide valuable guidance on designing library collections, programs and spaces that are inclusive of the needs of local Indigenous community members.²⁷

MPL should focus its five-year capital development strategy on:

- i) working with the Town to address the urgent need for library services in Boyne as soon as possible,**
- ii) expanding and reconfiguring Main Branch to increase capacity.**
- iii) Exploring alternative service points such as kiosks, holds lockers, bookmobiles, etc.**



Boyne Branch (Future)

Land developments in Boyne are well underway with an estimated population of 30,000 living in an area where Figure 3 on Page 37 showed a geographic gap in library services. Boyne is forecasted to reach 55,000 persons by 2031 and ultimately 65,000 persons by 2051; as such, pressures are mounting for library services as Boyne's residential areas continue to develop along with the nearby Milton Education Village.

The 2015 LMP first proposed a 17,000 square foot library in Boyne, and the urgency for this branch has only been amplified now that population forecasts are substantially greater than originally envisioned. This LMP recommends that a future Boyne Branch be a minimum of 25,000 square feet to service the 65,000 people living there (noting that the area would still be deficient of space in 2051 based on the 0.55 square feet per capita target). A portion of the future Boyne Branch GFA should be allocated to MPL's corporate administration and staffing to relieve pressures on the Main Branch.

25,000 ft²

**Recommended size for
a new Boyne Branch.**

15,000 ft²

**Recommended space
addition at Main
Branch**

Main Branch

Main Branch is facing physical space constraints and is at capacity for certain programs. The 2015 LMP indicated that an additional 15,000 square feet was needed at Main Branch and since then residential and employment intensification targets have been increased. Even if 15,000 square feet could be added to Main Branch, that would reconcile less than 25% of the five-year space deficit but more importantly, would add the equivalent space of a medium-sized library branch.

Main Branch is the largest library in Milton and is central to MPL's administration, operations and service delivery. Despite being fairly early into its lifecycle having opened in 2011, tremendous pressures have been placed on it over the years as the neighbourhoods around it have grown. Further exacerbating pressures is a high volume of daytime and afterschool use by secondary and post-secondary students, including from a nearby secondary school that is over capacity. These pressures on Main Branch will only increase as mixed-use and transit-supportive land development projects are built in Milton. For perspective, populations in Main Branch's historical catchment area including Old Milton, the designated UGC and GO Transit MTSA could more than triple by 2051 approaching 70,000 persons (though some of these populations may use the Sherwood and Beaty Branches as traffic patterns and travel times change).

At 29,586 square feet distributed across two levels, Main Branch is considered undersized in relation to ARUPLO Guidelines for an Urban Library where a minimum of 35,000 square feet is recommended. Interestingly, the above noted 2051 population projection for the Main Branch historical catchment would necessitate a minimum of 35,000 square feet. This LMP recommends an expansion of the physical footprint in order to relieve current capacity



pressures as well as plan for future space needs to ensure optimal service levels for collections, programs, study and collaboration, other library services and anticipated demands for the library as a “third space” resulting from higher residential densities in surrounding areas.

There is presently an open space to the east of the Main Branch building towards the entrance lane off Main Street. Architectural analysis is required to confirm the feasibility of expansion and the amount of GFA that is possible.

Either prior to or in tandem with a physical expansion, an interior reconfiguration of Main Branch should also be completed as there are functional improvements that could result in more effective public services. At a minimum, certain furnishings are in need of a refresh and sound attenuation measures can mitigate the noise that is generated from being a busy library. Flooring replacements are needed that in turn will likely necessitate the removal of shelves and collections to complete the work; therefore, a relocation plan or contingency plan is required beforehand to minimize service disruption. Further, sightlines for staff supervision are impeded by the tall shelves (which are needed to house the collection in the absence of physical floor space) while these shelves do not meet current accessibility standards and best practices. As in other urban public library settings, social service needs will need to be addressed and accessibility retrofits will need to be completed.

There appears to be an imbalance between public-facing and “back of house” spaces devoted to administration and staff operations. A full space audit should be completed to assess if there is an opportunity to reclaim public space from the non-public areas as well as to rationalize the space allocation for other public functions. These efforts may reclaim the additional 5,000 sq feet needed to meet the ARUPLO Guidelines; however, the necessary renovations will require the Main Library to be closed to the public.

It bears noting that reconfiguration or expansion associated with reimagining Main Branch could result in closure of all or a portion of the building. Any meaningful closure would be a major service disruption and with the Beaty and Sherwood Branches unlikely to fully handle displaced demand, a contingency is required while renovation/expansion is ongoing. MPL should work closely with the Town of Milton to undertake a temporary site selection from existing Town facilities that may be underutilized or may be able to accommodate the library’s needs. There are neighbouring public libraries that have undertaken this type of a renovation (Oakville Public Library recently used a modular building while construction of a new branch was ongoing), and the expertise garnered from their projects would provide valuable support to both MPL and the Town’s teams.



Beaty Branch

Beaty Branch was built in 2009, making it the oldest of MPL's facilities but is nevertheless still early into its lifecycle at 15 years of age. The branch has a warm and welcoming aesthetic, reflecting the neighbourhood-level catchment that it is intended to serve. It is located in the Bristol Survey whose residential populations are expected to grow only modestly over the next five years and beyond, and its existing GFA aligns with ARUPLO Guidelines for a Large Branch.

There is little opportunity to expand this branch due to natural heritage and environmental conditions onsite, and thus it would be difficult to leverage Beaty Branch to address system-wide GFA deficiencies. However, MPL is to be commended as it is adapting existing floor space to reflect modern library trends; a Makerspace is planned for the space currently being used as a lounge and will embed technology and associated programming into the neighbourhood. The outdoor Indigenous gardens and the space around it has the potential to enhance the library and to extend service for three seasons of the year; revitalization of the garden space within this LMP planning period would be a meaningful but cost effective way to enhance the branch, particularly if a greater degree of programming and seating can be enabled.

Sherwood Branch

The Sherwood Branch opened in 2019 alongside the rest of the multi-use community centre that it is housed, mere months before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, usage of this branch is just building up but early observations are that this 15,634 square foot branch is already busy as measured by in-person visits as well as circulation and selected programs.

The Sherwood Survey has an estimated residential population of 36,000 and its stable, mature neighbourhoods are projected to receive limited growth. This level of population would mean that the branch facility is undersized by ARUPLO Guidelines which would classify it as an Urban Branch and require 35,000 square feet of net library space. That amount of space might have been excessive to the needs of immediate catchment but would have provided flexibility to address system-wide deficits.

While Sherwood Branch would have optimally been 5,000 square feet larger than its existing GFA in relation to the Sherwood Survey's forecasted build-out population of 40,000, integration within the community centre has allowed for some shared space efficiencies through program rooms, washrooms and common seating areas in the hallway in front of the library's entrance. There are some functional challenges with shared spaces including a need for program rooms for MPL and Town programs, while community centre washrooms are a long enough distance from the children's area. In addition, the branch does not have a dedicated entrance and its outdoor patio is somewhat difficult to access and is immediately adjacent to a sloped area.



As the newest library branch in Milton and one that has just become fully operational after the pandemic, there are other priorities to address in Milton over the next five years. While not formal recommendations of this LMP, future considerations for Sherwood Branch could include growing its collection size (will require creative use of space) as the population approaches build-out as well as reviewing staff workspaces and back of house needs such as storage, material sorting areas, and dedicated staff kitchen and washrooms.

Alternative Service Points

In line with an evolving urban structure, a sizeable deficit in GFA, and emerging demands, MPL will need to explore alternative service delivery models to respond to a need within the community as portions of the population continue to become more mobile and rely less on their “local” library.²⁸

In surveying various provincial and international library guidelines for building and service standards, there is little guidance in terms of standards for providing alternative service delivery access for library services and materials. However, in general, it is acknowledged that, “a public library’s service offerings can be delivered in different ways to different users at different times.”²⁹ This represents an opportunity to innovate and experiment with different models and technologies to extend and expand services in conjunction with physical library spaces that will address Milton’s specific needs.

As introduced in Section 1.4 of this LMP, remote library services can take many forms including bookmobiles, book bikes, pop up library sites, vending machines and book lockers. The gaps that these service extensions fill are equally diverse. They include convenience, equity and providing service where no physical building currently exists. As new catchment areas are identified and current catchment areas are reviewed, it will be important to confirm the intended purpose of remote library services at MPL. For example, MPL will need to consider whether remote/alternative services are intended to be strictly for convenience or whether rationale exists to extend service for equity purposes or fill a need for library services - even temporarily - until a physical location is built. This examination could also open the possibility of placing remote library locations in places throughout the community beyond just community centres. In the cost/benefit analysis, staffing, funding, storage requirements and partnerships and collaborations should also be reviewed as potential challenges and opportunities.³⁰



Space Outlook beyond 2029

Whereas it is the scope of the LMP to focus on a five-year planning period, the Town of Milton's new Official Plan (Draft) articulates population growth and urban structure changes that will influence how MPL delivers library services into the future. With Milton's population set to more than double by 2051, needs for library services will increase in step and thus the LMP should be used to also being long-term thinking.

The following post-2029 discussion is intended to be cursory in nature so that they can be considered as part of MPL's long-range strategies and budgeting. The next update to the LMP will delve into needs for the subsequent planning period based on progress achieved during this term and any changes to population and library use trends over the next five years.

As shown in Table 4, attaining a service level of 0.55 square feet per capita would require MPL to more than triple its existing GFA to reach 220,220 square feet by 2051. The degree of population growth results in MPL needing to add approximately 40,000 square feet for each 10 year period between 2031-2041 and 2041-2051, or an average of 4,250 square feet per year.

Table 4: Forecasted Library Space Requirements, 2031-2051

Year	Forecasted Population	Library Space Needs @ 0.55 ft ² per capita	Deviation from Current Supply of 56,471 ft ²
2031	245,900	135,245 ft ²	- 78,774 ft ²
2041	333,900	183,645 ft ²	- 127,174 ft ²
2051	400,400	220,220 ft ²	-163,749 ft ²

Note: Space deficits assume no net change to MPL's existing GFA. Current supply includes approximately 5,000 ft² of space shared with the Town's Community Services Department at Sherwood Community Centre.

The Town of Milton is presently completing three Secondary Plans for future urban areas known as Trafalgar, Agerton and Britannia which were illustrated earlier in Figure 3 along with the Town's designated Urban Growth Centre (UGC). By 2051, populations and corresponding needs for library space at 0.50 square feet are as follows:

- **Trafalgar Secondary Plan:** a minimum of 26,000 residents³¹ are identified by 2031 while recent land use planning studies prepared to reflect Provincial Bill 23 suggest that the population could reach 85,000 by 2051. That level of population would require a minimum of 14,300 square feet by 2031 and growing to 46,750 square feet of library space by 2051, most realistically distributed across multiple branches.



- **Agerton Secondary Plan:** a minimum of 6,800 persons³² are forecasted by 2031 and recent studies estimate the population could exceed 14,000 persons by 2051 which would require 7,700 square feet of library space. This GFA could be shared with the GFA requirement for the Trafalgar Secondary Plan given that the close proximity of these two future residential growth areas.
- **Britannia Secondary Plan:** the Britannia Secondary Plan is still under development but unapproved population projections suggest that the area could be home to over 57,000 persons upon build-out. This level of population would require a minimum of 31,350 square feet of library space.
- **Milton Urban Growth Centre:** the Milton UGC – designated under the Provincial Growth Plan – is characterized by commercial, light industrial and other employment land uses but is planned for significant redevelopment anchored by the GO Transit station. Residential developments are forecasted to accelerate after 2031 and ultimately reach 25,000 persons by the year 2051, generating a growth-related GFA requirement of another 13,750 square feet based on 0.55 square feet per capita.

A Parks, Recreation & Library Analysis prepared as a background study to the Trafalgar and Agerton Secondary Plans (areas that are collectively referred to as the Trafalgar Corridor) identifies the need for a multi-use community centre and provides opportunity to integrate a library branch. That Analysis also supported allocation of some of the Trafalgar Corridor’s library GFA to Main Branch based on the Secondary Plans limited land budget for municipal buildings; however, such ‘offsite’ allocation would only be a short-term offset as significant long-term growth in the Main Branch catchment area will necessitate its own additional GFA.

A separate Parks, Recreation & Library Analysis supporting the Britannia Secondary Plan also speaks to the benefits of integrating a library branch within a recommended multi-use community centre to service that area. As previously noted in earlier pages, a library in the Boyne Survey will also be required and a community centre in Boyne it is understood that the Town will be developing a community centre there before similar facilities are built in Britannia and the Trafalgar Corridor.

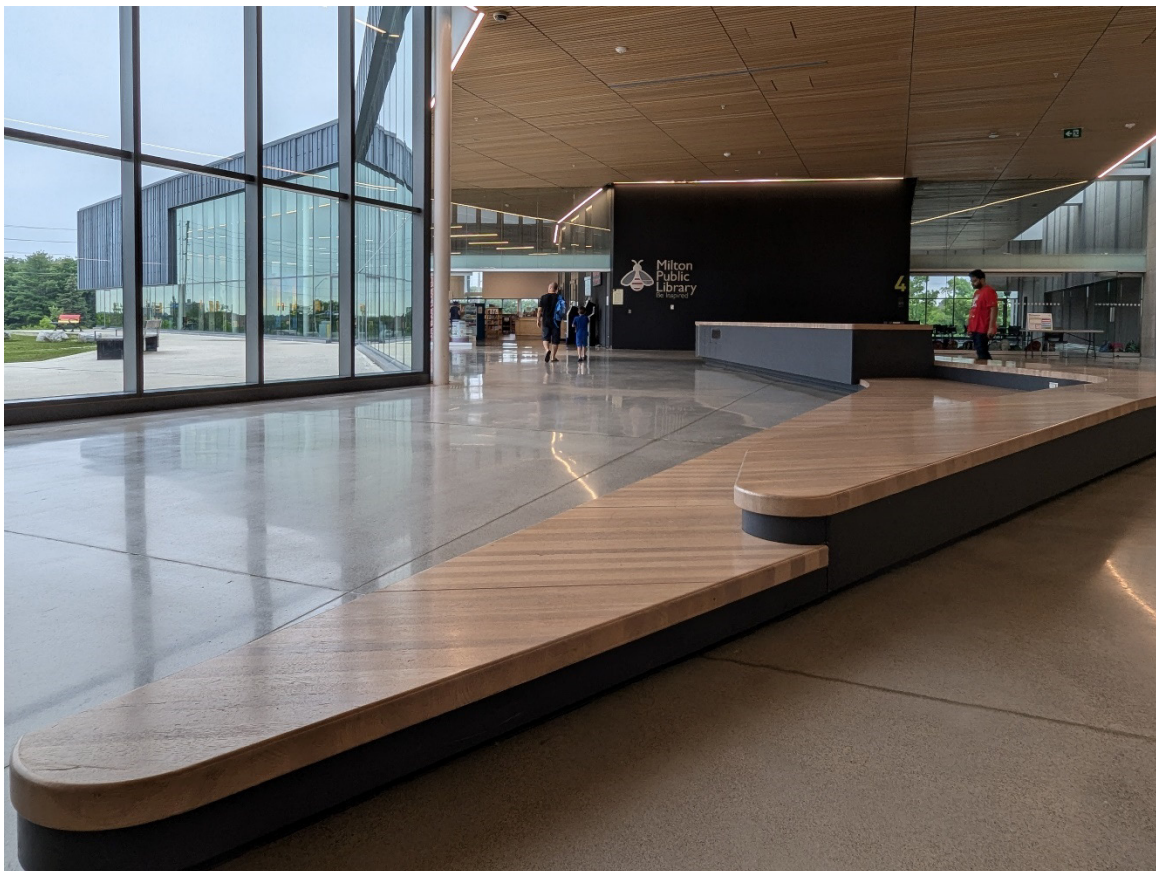


Recommended Actions

- #14.** Adopt a Library Facility Classification System that aligns with the ARUPLO Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems and organizes Milton Public Library branches based on catchment area, population served and the unique functions of each library branch. The Classification System should inform facility design, geographic distribution, service delivery and operational decisions.
- #15.** Continue to engage area First Nations and Indigenous communities in discussions about how new and existing Milton Public Library branches can be more welcoming of Indigenous Peoples. The role of the Library in addressing applicable Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission should be examined with Indigenous communities and should include, but not be limited to, raising awareness of Indigenous history and culture through the design and programming of library space
- #16.** Continue to target library space provision at a rate of 0.55 square feet per capita and work to incrementally build MPL's total gross floor area to reach this level.
- #17.** Pursue a minimum 25,000 square foot library branch as part of a future multi-use community centre in Boyne at the earliest possible opportunity. A space needs study and service delivery plan should inform the design of this future branch.
- #18.** Prepare an architectural feasibility study that explores how to position the Main Branch to respond to the high degree of pressure it is currently facing as well as supporting objectives of the Town of Milton Official Plan (Draft) and Strategic Plan. The feasibility study should assess opportunities for a physical expansion, reconfiguration of existing floor area, as well as contemplate how to bolster services geared to innovation, economic development and community gathering. The feasibility study should also be informed by an audit of the existing floor space.
- #19.** Target expansion and redevelopment of Main Branch to commence shortly after completion of the feasibility study (per Recommendation #18).
- #20.** In consultation with local Indigenous communities, carry out a revitalization of the Beaty Branch outdoor gardens that considers opportunities to integrate a greater degree of library programming as well as increase outdoor seating.



- #21. Investigate the use of “Interim” library branches to temporarily address needs for services “third spaces” until new libraries can be built as well as to minimize service disruptions when the Main Branch is being expanded (per Recommendation #18). Interim branches could employ modular structures or leased space in commercial/retail settings.
- #22. Initiate a pilot project to test public support and usage of alternative library service points such as, but not limited to, vending machines, kiosks and/or holds lockers. Potential locations for the pilot project should target southwest Milton such as the Milton Sports Centre or the Milton Velodrome as well as areas of intensification and major transit stations where there may be opportunities to partner with the private sector. The pilot project should assess the requisite human, financial and physical resources needed to provide these alternative services.
- #23. Explore options, costs and staffing requirements associated with purchasing and operating a bookmobile vehicle that combines mobile library outreach services with more frequent couriers between branches.



2.6 Customer Experience

The customer experience for library users encompasses a range of services and amenities including hours of service, collaborations/partnerships, programs and collections. It is clear from the Library Board’s feedback that it believes programs and collections are highly valued by the community. Usage data supplied by MPL affirms the strong and, in many cases, escalating usage for most of its lines of business. Footfall numbers for the end of the second quarter of 2024 demonstrate a 21% increase from the same period in 2023. If these projections hold, 2024 could surpass annual foot fall totals dating back to 2017 by over 200,000 visits. This is very good news; however, there must be analysis around the sustainability of this trend with existing approaches and resources as customer expectations change and the library continues to expand both physically and because of population growth.

Changing Expectations of Customers

The concept of customer service has evolved from more transactional functions to the employment of more retail like tactics in public libraries. However, the concept of customer service now includes the ‘experience.’ As one scholar has described it, “Nowadays the last best experience that the customer has anywhere becomes the minimum expectation for the experience he wants everywhere”.³³ This creates an added dimension to the development of future customer service strategies in public libraries as a library user’s desires, behaviors and beliefs are now at the centre. The intended result is more engagement with library users, to amplify their emotional connection to the library. Library users have returned to their local libraries post-pandemic but still want robust, responsive virtual services as well.³⁴ The tension between the virtual and physical space requires a balance to be achieved according to the resources and community needs of each local library.

Hours of Service

Extending hours of service has been a constant theme since the 2015 LMP. The 2021 LMP Update recommended specifically to extend the Sunday hours at the Main Library. The ARUPLO Guidelines state that, “The single greatest barrier to library use as reported in community needs assessments is open hours of operation.” Overall, the hours of service align with the ARUPLO Guidelines except for the Beaty Branch because it is not open between 6 and 7 days a week. Consideration should be given to extending the hours of the Beaty Branch to include Sundays in the short term. This will require an increase to the staffing complement; however, with the addition of the Makerspace at Beaty and the possibility of increased usage due to future housing developments, there should be a solid rationale presented in any business case or budget request to the Town of Milton. In the medium term, the hours of service for all library branches should be revisited as the system grows, in conjunction with the role definition of each level of facility type and reviewed alongside ARUPLO Guidelines.



Collaboration and Partnerships

Public libraries have generally aimed to leverage their mission to create alliances and play active roles in community networks and MPL is no exception. Libraries are presented with opportunities through partnerships and collaborations to deliver services that are closely aligned with their expertise and professional skills. This activity has served to increase access to library services and resources and has allowed the libraries to be a contributor in meeting the needs of their communities.

In recent years, formal partnerships have been established between libraries and non-library entities depending on the unique circumstances of each community. For example, partnerships with post-secondary institutions could be considered to offer enhanced services to residents and students alike. The Town of Milton has two post secondary institutions situated within the municipality and this presents an opportunity for the library to liaise with Conestoga and Wilfrid Laurier to discuss potential collaborations and partnerships within the Milton Education Village. Exploratory meetings could be initiated to provide feedback to this plan or for the library to discuss this plan and its implications with both post secondary institutions as a starting point. Brantford Public Library is an example of a public library of a similar size that has had an agreement with Wilfrid Laurier and its Brantford campus since 1999.

Libraries can embody a community development mindset and provide potential models or pilots to build library capacity and extend its reach in a more agile way. As new MPL branches are planned and existing facilities are being renewed, this is a perfect opportunity to review, assess, and identify if there are formal partnerships or collaborations within each catchment area that MPL can initiate to extend service and perhaps also to offset operating costs. MPL is perfectly positioned as it already employs a community-led approach to programming. Many of the guidelines and principles found in their program planning documents and policies can be applied to collaboration and partnerships. One might say that programs and collaborations/partnerships go hand-in-hand.

Programming

The significant value of programming in public libraries cannot be underestimated. Not only do public library programs augment collections, but they also provide huge benefits in terms of enhancing traditional literacy skills as well as digital literacy skills. The content developed by libraries for programming can often be seen as the “on ramp” to topics and interests that might be otherwise unattainable to members of the community. Skills and interests such as photography or creative writing are introduced by library programs in a way that break down barriers and foster inclusion within a community.



Milton's growing population creates an opportunity for MPL to diversify its approach to programming. Currently, MPL has strong attendance for children's programs and staff believe this is one of the library's greatest strengths. Notwithstanding MPL's community-led approach to programming, however, consideration should be given to expanding efforts to include more adult and teen programs. According to usage data, children's programming accounts for 65% of activity while adult and teen make up the remainder. It is plausible to question whether there is a strategic value in expanding MPL's reach to more segments of the community. Such a change would entail building a framework for programming that focuses on local strengths while engaging the community on global, national, and local topics. The potential for enhanced collaboration and partnerships locally would also widen MPL's audience while leveraging its programming activities to amplify inclusion efforts. Newcomer families would benefit greatly from community-led programming; as an example, MPL's current offerings for recent immigrants could be enhanced in addition to Conversational Circles. A more defined programming strategy may be required for newcomer families as Milton's population increases.

During the pandemic, public libraries adapted to lockdowns and closures by offering programs online for all. Using online platforms, digital content was also created by library staff as an on-demand option for library users. Now that libraries have reopened, public libraries are assessing their experiences with virtual programming to identify any best practices that have emerged that can be applied to current program planning. The format – live versus virtual – will now need to be given a heightened level of consideration along with the content and age category. Online programming may be appropriate in some circumstances but may not be efficient or effective in other situations. The added value to adopting hybrid programming is the ability to expand access by offering online options alongside in person. This feature can also be seen to increase inclusion and break down geographic barriers.

A 2023 report by the Canadian Urban Institute estimated that investment in programming generates over six times more economic and social benefits: "That is, for every \$1 invested in Canada's urban libraries, \$6 is generated in community economic impact, a return of over 600%". Programs that go beyond the traditional offerings of story times and book clubs can address community and societal issues and solidify the role of public libraries in providing a safe place for individuals to discuss controversial and timely topics. Public libraries can help to identify opportunities to proactively engage their community on timely topics such as climate change, freedom of speech, and other world issues through regular programming.

There are many options for MPL to examine in terms of program delivery. The levels of service and programming offered will need to be reviewed in the context of future service delivery models and the community profiles of the library's catchment areas. Regardless, MPL's community-led approach should be continued and amplified to offer robust programming to a wider audience including adults and newcomer families – if staffing levels are increased from the present situation.



Recommended Actions

- #24. Extend the hours of the Beaty Branch to include Sundays in the short-term.
- #25. In the medium term, the hours of service for all libraries should be revisited as the system grows, in conjunction with the role definition of each level of facility type and reviewed alongside ARUPLO Guidelines.
- #26. Exploratory meetings should be initiated to discuss areas of collaboration and partnership at the Milton campuses of both Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier.
- #27. Continue to supplement Milton Public Library's community-led approach to programming by exploring opportunities to expand adult and teen programs when library staffing levels increase.
- #28. Increase the focus placed on programming for newcomer families.
- #29. Continue to identify opportunities to proactively engage the community on timely topics such as climate change, freedom of speech, and other world issues through regular programming.
- #30. Continue to adapt the Library's community-led approach to programming to cultivate and assess other collaboration and partnership opportunities.



2.7 Collections

Milton Public Library’s strong usage rates for print resources alongside stable use of digital and increasing streaming resources is a reality that will require a balancing act of space versus demand in both existing and future library locations. ARUPLO Guidelines state that libraries are decreasing the size of their physical collections due to several factors:

- the growing use of digital.
- decreasing usage of print and formats such as CDs and DVDs because of costs and/or availability.
- the requirements of providing accessible shelving; and
- the need to repurpose space for other functions.

The reality of offering both print and digital formats not only puts a strain on physical space, but it also puts pressure on the MPL budget. Combined with Milton’s population growth, future expansion of facilities will require priority setting in terms of spending decisions for MPL’s collections.

Repurposing existing library space is a growing imperative as Milton Public Library considers expanding its “Library of Things.” This collection makes available items such as loanable kits for Storytimes, sports items, radon detectors, hotspots, sensory kits and park passes. Future additions to the collection include gardening tools and musical instruments. MPL staff report that these items are very popular and often have long waiting lists. The items offered can break down barriers for members of the community by providing access to amenities they may not otherwise be able to afford. The Library of Things will require increased storage space as well. Due to Milton’s already limited stacks, it must rely on its strong turnover rates and digitization efforts of the local history collections to mitigate the space pressure. This offering is an important resource that must be reviewed in terms of the library’s existing capacity and collection formats.

MPL’s Collection Management Policy lays out the overarching consideration for acquisition and management of library resources. However, what is less clear is the library’s overall Collections strategy. This strategy will need to address broadly the direction for future resource procurement, the ratio of print versus nonprint, selection, and deselection in a rapidly changing environment.

An example of a changing environment would include Milton’s community demographics. Earlier narrative in this LMP indicated that presently 42% of Milton residents were born outside of Canada. With estimates of 500,000 of newcomers immigrating to Canada annually until the end of 2026, MPL will need to continue to assess the impact of the influx of newcomers on public library services (Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada, 2023). These statistics will need to be monitored to identify additional needs for the Library’s multilingual collections in the future.³⁵



MPL is acquiring increasing numbers of multilingual titles each month and this will likely continue and accelerate in the future. A Collections Plan that reflects the acquisition targets for materials in the languages most frequently spoken, besides English, would assist collection development activities while providing benchmarking data to measure outcomes.

Borrower trends can be monitored with library software products such as Collections HQ. MPL is already utilizing these tools and they are invaluable to drill down and analyze circulation of formats according to location and can create linkages to information for selection and deselection decision making. Consideration must also be given to reducing the footprint for legacy formats such as DVDs/Blu ray formats, CDs and physical audio books.

Leveraging other mechanisms such as consortium purchasing and reciprocal borrowing (already in place with library systems in Halton, Hamilton and Guelph) will help MPL's collection dollars stretch farther but may also relieve some space pressures in the short term – especially as it relates to the Main Library's footprint for collections. MPL is already deploying these tactics on a day-to-day basis. A formalized 5-year strategy would enhance current activity and provide the basis for measurable outcomes.

Digital Collections and Streaming

Use of digital collections increased considerably during the pandemic, and it is likely that strong demand for non-physical resources will continue. According to Booknet Canada, borrowing rates for e-books in Canada increased from 21% in 2022 to 23%; interestingly, e-audio book borrowing has increased by 20% in 2023 over 2022.³⁶

While this still represents a small percentage of overall library circulation, this is a trend that MPL must continue to monitor. Currently, e-books and e-audio book usage is about 10% of total circulation and both formats are reported together. This rate is not in line with the overall borrowing trend outlined above by Booknet Canada and is largely due to the changes in platforms for acquiring and borrowing e-resources at MPL in 2023. MPL is now actively acquiring more digital titles to give their users increased choice and access to this format. As population growth continues and MPL continues to acquire more digital titles, the borrowing rate will likely increase significantly. A Collection Strategy would allow the library to set targets and prepare for the future.

The review of non print material should also speak to the impacts of "Streaming." According to an Angus Reid poll, "more than four-in-five Canadians (85%) say they subscribe to at least one streaming service. A majority (65%) of Canadians subscribe to more than one."³⁷ Quite apart from e-book circulation, streaming is a newer offering that presents many challenges to public library collection development strategies – not the least of which is estimating use and cost. In the United States, budget allocations



for streaming services increased to 6% in 2021 from 3% in 2020. Different forms of 'caps' were placed on a user's ability to stream content from the library's collections to contain costs.³⁸ This has a significant impact on spending for libraries. MPL's usage data for second quarter of 2024 shows e-video usage has increased by 51% over the same period in 2023. As indicated above, streaming is a cost pressure for the materials budget. MPL is monitoring streaming usage and recently placed usage limits on individual users to allow for greater access for all residents. Data shows that 4,000 patrons are being turned away from its Hoopla platform every month due to usage caps resulting from budgetary constraints. Future material budget increases will need to accommodate streaming expenditures as demand and the number of MPL users grows.

Physical collections will continue to coexist with emerging digital formats for the foreseeable future and illustrates the necessity of maintaining a diverse collection to meet the needs of the entire community. This will continue to require robust and sustained funding for MPL's collection budget as the population increases and new locations are built. In addition, the acquisition of e-book titles has created added pressure on library material budgets due to the circulation limits per e-book that each publisher imposes on the library.

A collective comprised of the Hamilton, Mississauga, Burlington, Kingston Frontenac, London, and Ottawa Public Libraries have partnered to share their digital catalogues and give their users the ability to place holds and borrow from each other's libraries. Working together allows these libraries to enable a wider range of access to titles and collections.

The future collection budgets for MPL should consider the trends in publisher pricing models for digital resources as well as the benefits of resource sharing with other library systems. For communities across Canada including Milton, this represents increased resources for library collections and represents an investment in Canada's future prosperity. A recent report on public libraries in Canada estimates that for every 1% increase in literacy for adults, an annual benefit of \$67 billion could be created; this is the equivalent of an extra \$1,800 in the pocket of every Canadian (Canadian Urban Institute, 2023).



Recommended Actions

- #31. Repurpose existing library space to accommodate expansion of MPL's "Library of Things" collection.
- #32. Formalize current practices into a Collection Strategy that defines core collections and addresses the deselection of legacy formats, ratio of print versus nonprint material, targets for digital and streaming collections, acquisition targets for multilingual collections for newcomers, and footprint plans for the physical collections of new and existing library branches.
- #33. Continue to utilize library software products such as Collections HQ to understand and analyze circulation of formats according to location, as well as create linkages that inform selection and deselection decision making.
- #34. Continue to leverage mechanisms such as consortium purchasing and reciprocal borrowing to help the Library's collection budget stretch farther and to relieve some physical space pressures in the short term, especially as it relates to the Main Library's footprint for collections.
- #35. Usage data and performance metrics that track e-books and e-audio books should be monitored to support annual expenditure increases to expand the number of titles for each format.
- #36. Increase the acquisition of multilingual titles by 0.5% annually to the year 2029.
- #37. Introduce incremental annual expenditure increases for streaming services to expand access to this resource for the community, based on usage and demand.



Section 3:
Implementation



Section 3:

Implementation



This LMP builds on the accomplishments of the last master plan along with recent assessments contained in the recent SDOR, including carrying forward selected recommendations that are deemed to be of priority over the next five years. MPL will regularly monitor and review the actions identified in this LMP to ensure they remain reflective of local conditions and are responsive to community needs. In many cases, more detailed implementation strategies will be required. Implementation is an iterative exercise that should be embedded within the MPL's regular course of business, such as through management team and planning meetings.

Major directions requiring funding should be revisited each year prior during the development of MPL's capital and operating budgets. It is recognised that there are many factors that may influence priorities, such as:

- funding availability;
- capital lifecycle and considerations of safety;
- legislation and mandated requirements;
- changes to service standards;
- public input and community interests;
- emerging trends and changes in use;
- participation of partners; and
- socio-demographic changes and growth forecasts.

To assist with implementation and illustrating the true impacts of its services, MPL is encouraged to develop metrics that speak to the qualitative benefits of its services. Qualitative measures that illustrate impact and outcomes must continue to be emphasised to support the case for investment and innovation.

3.1 Timing of Recommended Actions

The LMP contains 36 Recommended Actions for implementation between 2025 and 2029. Timing should be considered synonymously with priority; that is, the sooner the timing proposed, the higher the priority. **Timing assigned to respective Recommended Actions denotes the year that implementation should begin** – certain Actions may be ongoing over multiple years and in some instances may span the entire duration of the LMP's planning period.

The timing suggested herein is offered as a guide to inform decision-making. MPL reserves the right to adjust implementation schedules based on decisions of the MPL Board, funding available from internal and external sources, changes to population forecasts, and other factors.



Recommended Actions – Ongoing between 2025 and 2029

Recommended Action	LMP Section Reference
#1 Add a quarterly standing item on the MPL Board agenda that undertakes a biannual review of selected MPL policies as a means to ensure effective governance.	2.1 Advocacy, Governance & Funding
#5 Continue to reimagine the current organizational structure to accommodate new library facilities and a new facility/service delivery model that defines roles, structures and service levels for existing and future library locations.	2.3 Staffing & Training
#7 Continue to invest in staff training and professional development by ensuring that MPL budgets continue to meet ARUPLO Guidelines of a 1% staffing budget.	2.3 Staffing & Training
#14 Adopt a Library Facility Classification System that aligns with the ARUPLO Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems and organizes Milton Public Library branches based on catchment area, population served and the unique functions of each library branch. The Classification System should inform facility design, geographic distribution, service delivery and operational decisions.	2.5 Facilities
#15 Continue to engage area First Nations and Indigenous communities in discussions about how new and existing Milton Public Library branches can be more welcoming of Indigenous Peoples. The role of the Library in addressing applicable Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission should be examined with Indigenous communities and should include, but not be limited to, raising awareness of Indigenous history and culture through the design and programming of library space	2.5 Facilities
#16 Continue to target library space provision at a rate of 0.55 square feet per capita and work to incrementally build MPL's total gross floor area to reach this level.	2.5 Facilities
#21 Investigate the use of "Interim" library branches to temporarily address needs for services "third spaces" until new libraries can be built as well as to minimize service disruptions when the Main Branch is being expanded (per Recommendation #18). Interim branches could employ modular structures or leased space in commercial/retail settings.	2.5 Facilities



Recommended Action	LMP Section Reference
#22 Initiate a pilot project to test public support and usage of alternative library service points such as, but not limited to, vending machines, kiosks and/or holds lockers. Potential locations for the pilot project should target southwest Milton such as the Milton Sports Centre or the Milton Velodrome as well as areas of intensification and major transit stations where there may be opportunities to partner with the private sector. The pilot project should assess the requisite human, financial and physical resources needed to provide these alternative services.	2.5 Facilities
#27 Continue to supplement Milton Public Library’s community-led approach to programming by exploring opportunities to expand adult and teen programs when library staffing levels increase.	2.6 Customer Experience
#28 Increase the focus placed on programming for newcomer families.	2.6 Customer Experience
#29 Continue to identify opportunities to proactively engage the community on timely topics such as climate change, freedom of speech, and other world issues through regular programming.	2.6 Customer Experience
#30 Continue to adapt the Library’s community-led approach to programming to cultivate and assess other collaboration and partnership opportunities.	2.6 Customer Experience
#31 Repurpose existing library space to accommodate expansion of MPL’s “Library of Things” collection.	2.7 Collections
#34 Continue to leverage mechanisms such as consortium purchasing and reciprocal borrowing to help the Library’s collection budget stretch farther and to relieve some physical space pressures in the short term, especially as it relates to the Main Library’s footprint for collections.	2.7 Collections
#36 Increase the acquisition of multilingual titles by 0.5% annually to the year 2029.	2.7 Collections



Recommended Actions – 2025

Recommended Action	LMP Section Reference	
#3 Establish a Marketing and Communications vehicle for the public and Town Council to explain the MPL Board’s roadmap, advocate for library funding, and to demonstrate accountability and transparency.	2.2 Communications & Marketing	Yellow
#6 Leverage MPL’s participation in the Town of Milton’s Strategic Workforce Planning and Competency Framework.	2.3 Staffing & Training	Red
#8 Increase staffing for most critical gaps in 2025, with an initial focus placed on Information Technology and front-line positions.	2.3 Staffing & Training	Red
#9 Develop a work force plan to incrementally increase staff in anticipation of ongoing population growth, the need to build capacity and to bring MPL closer to staffing levels of its public library comparators.	2.3 Staffing & Training	Red
#10 Implement the immediate addition of 1.0 FTE to provide technology assistance to the Director, Support Services.	2.4 Technology	Blue
#12 Prioritize staff technology training for allocation of training budget resources immediately.	2.4 Technology	Blue
#13 Contract the drafting of a Technology Plan to a consulting service provider in order to give existing Library staff a roadmap to follow and update.	2.4 Technology	Blue
#26 Exploratory meetings should be initiated to discuss areas of collaboration and partnership at the Milton campuses of both Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier.	2.6 Customer Experience	Yellow
#32 Formalize current practices into a Collection Strategy that defines core collections and addresses the deselection of legacy formats, ratio of print versus nonprint material, targets for digital and streaming collections, acquisition targets for multilingual collections for newcomers, and footprint plans for the physical collections of new and existing library branches.	2.7 Collections	Grey
#33 Continue to utilize library software products such as Collections HQ to understand and analyze circulation of formats according to location, as well as create linkages that inform selection and deselection decision making.	2.7 Collections	Grey
#35 Usage data and performance metrics that track e-books and e-audio books should be monitored to support annual expenditure increases to expand the number of titles for each format.	2.7 Collections	Grey
#37 Introduce incremental annual expenditure increases for streaming services to expand access to this resource for the community, based on usage and demand.	2.7 Collections	Grey



Recommended Actions – 2026

Recommended Action	LMP Section Reference
#4 Create a Community Engagement Librarian position to deepen the Library's engagement within the community as well as ensure outreach to underserved areas and new residents.	2.2 Communications & Marketing
#11 Continue to investigate shared services with the Town of Milton's Information Technology Department and develop a written agreement for accountabilities and potential shared services.	2.4 Technology
#18 Prepare an architectural feasibility study that explores how to position the Main Branch to respond to the high degree of pressure it is currently facing as well as supporting objectives of the Town of Milton Official Plan (Draft) and Strategic Plan. The feasibility study should assess opportunities for a physical expansion, reconfiguration of existing floor area, as well as contemplate how to bolster services geared to innovation, economic development and community gathering. The feasibility study should also be informed by an audit of the existing floor space.	2.5 Facilities
#23 Explore options, costs and staffing requirements associated with purchasing and operating a bookmobile vehicle that combines mobile library outreach services with more frequent couriers between branches.	2.5 Facilities
#24 Extend the hours of the Beaty Branch to include Sundays in the short-term.	2.6 Customer Experience

Recommended Actions – 2027

Recommended Action	LMP Section Reference
#17 Pursue a minimum 25,000 square foot library branch as part of a future multi-use community centre in Boyne at the earliest possible opportunity. A space needs study and service delivery plan should inform the design of this future branch.	2.5 Facilities
#19 Target expansion and redevelopment of Main Branch to commence shortly after completion of the feasibility study (per Recommendation #18).	2.5 Facilities



Recommended Actions – 2028

Recommended Action	LMP Section Reference
#20 In consultation with local Indigenous communities, carry out a revitalization of the Beaty Branch outdoor gardens that considers opportunities to integrate a greater degree of library programming as well as increase outdoor seating.	2.5 Facilities
#25 In the medium term, the hours of service for all libraries should be revisited as the system grows, in conjunction with the role definition of each level of facility type and reviewed alongside ARUPLO Guidelines.	2.6 Customer Experience

Recommended Actions – 2029

Recommended Action	LMP Section Reference
#2 Update this Library Master Plan in 2029 to reflect progress and continue to align with Town of Milton's planning initiatives.	2.1 Advocacy, Governance & Funding



Appendix A

Comparator Library Data, 2022

Table 1

Library System	Population	Total Sq. Ft. per capita	Public Access Workstations per 1,000	Total Staff (FTE) per 1,000
Mississauga	779,100	0.28	1.23	0.38
Brampton	696,975	0.29	2.24	0.20
Hamilton	579,000	0.66	1.63	0.47
Markham	349,007	0.43	1.43	0.50
Vaughan	329,000	0.57	0.56	0.61
Richmond Hill	215,316	0.47	1.37	0.37
Oakville	211,000	0.48	2.00	0.45
Burlington	176,802	0.60	3.61	0.55
Cambridge	135,060	0.70	0.58	0.52
Ajax	127,400	0.43	0.94	0.42
Average	359,866	0.49	1.56	0.41
Milton	120,500	0.45	2.27	0.36

Table 2

Library System	# of Library Programs per 1,000	Program Attendance per capita	In-Person Visits per capita	E-Visits per capita
Mississauga	4.3	0.10	3.0	10.4
Brampton	3.9	0.09	1.8	2.6
Hamilton	5.7	0.11	3.0	6.5
Markham	5.8	0.11	3.1	7.1
Vaughan	6.1	0.30	3.2	7.6
Richmond Hill	5.7	0.12	3.6	7.6
Oakville	7.7	0.15	2.4	3.3
Burlington	8.7	0.16	5.4	3.6
Cambridge	11.1	0.44	4.5	2.7
Ajax	11.4	0.31	2.7	2.7
Average	7.0	0.19	3.3	5.4
Milton	8.2	0.23	4.1	15.6



Table 3

Library System	Holdings (Items) per capita*	Annual Circulation per capita	Turnover Rate
Mississauga	1.2	3.2	2.6
Brampton	1.2	2.3	1.9
Hamilton	2.0	4.5	2.2
Markham	2.9	3.4	1.2
Vaughan	1.8	6.5	3.5
Richmond Hill	2.1	5.3	2.6
Oakville	1.5	6.5	4.3
Burlington	2.2	6.9	3.1
Cambridge	1.9	4.4	2.4
Ajax	2.2	5.0	2.3
Average	1.9	4.8	2.6
Milton	1.5	5.9	4.1

*Includes physical and eResources

Table 4

Library System	Municipal Revenue per capita	Materials Expenditures per capita	Operating Budget per capita
Mississauga	\$38.03	\$4.69	\$35.09
Brampton	\$29.31	\$3.15	\$28.14
Hamilton	\$60.16	\$4.76	\$56.78
Markham	\$49.14	\$9.93	\$47.22
Vaughan	\$65.29	\$10.04	\$64.31
Richmond Hill	\$48.29	\$4.07	\$45.68
Oakville	\$55.66	\$5.50	\$52.47
Burlington	\$68.18	\$6.54	\$65.12
Cambridge	\$59.23	\$4.73	\$54.58
Ajax	\$58.85	\$6.73	\$51.03
Average	\$53.21	\$6.01	\$50.04
Milton	\$46.05	\$7.89	\$44.05

Sources: Province of Ontario, Ontario Public Library Statistics, 2022



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