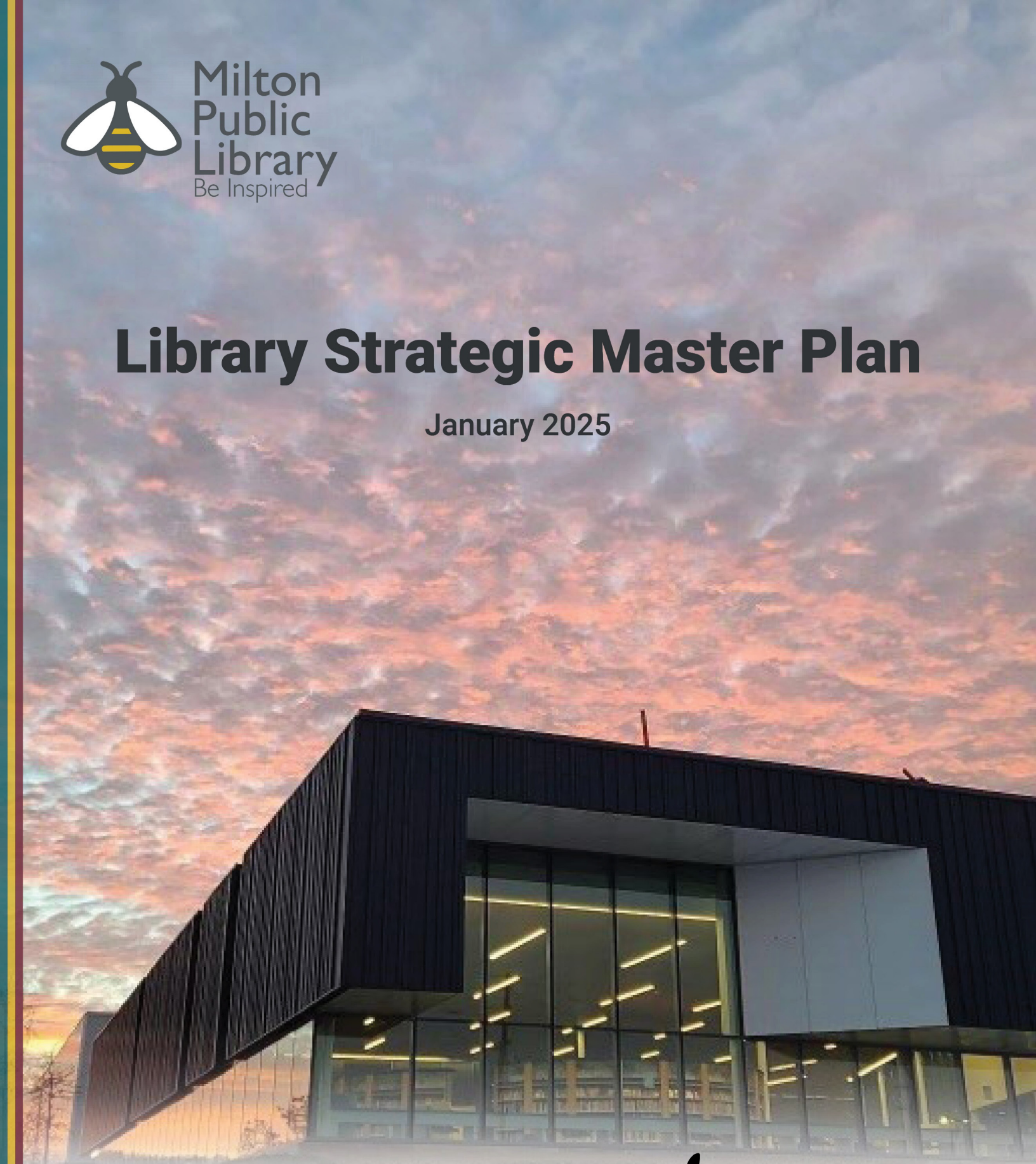
Milton Public Library
Be Inspired

Library Strategic Master Plan

January 2025



Monteith Brown planning consultants

Rose Vespa Consulting

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Library Strategic Master Plan

January 15, 2025

Prepared by:

mbpc
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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.

Project Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions and collaborations to this Plan. Their input, guidance, and leadership has been crucial in identifying future directions, and their ongoing involvement will be key to the successful implementation of this Plan.

Milton Public Library Board

Sana Malik, Chair
Sibyl Shen, Vice-Chair
Karen Wolnik
Ragy Sharkawy
Colin Best, Council Representative
Rick Malboeuf, Council Representative
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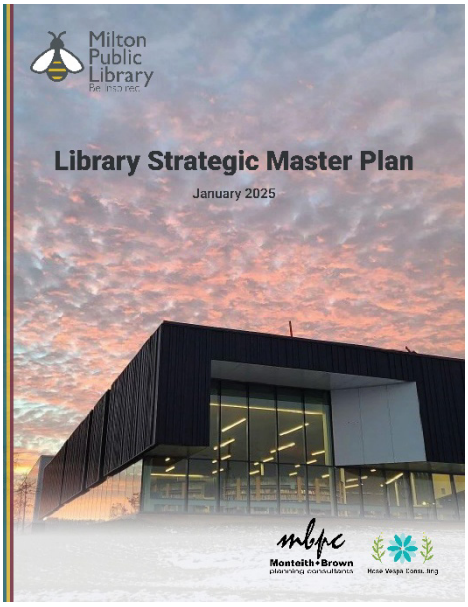
We also wish to acknowledge the Town of Milton Council and the Town of Milton Leadership Team for their contributions to this project.

Executive Summary

The Library Strategic Master Plan (the "LSMP") establishes a collective vision for library services and identifies future directions that reflect the needs of the community to the year 2029. The LSMP guides Milton Public Library and the Town of Milton through this period of ongoing population growth and socio-cultural change that requires the continual evolution for how library services are provided to the community.

Milton Public Library operates three library branches that collectively provide 56,471 square feet of floor space. As an important part of city-building priorities and complete communities, local libraries support virtually every aspect of the Town of Milton's 2051 Vision and Official Plan. Community consultations reinforce the high value that residents place on local libraries and visits to branches over the past year are on track to surpass pre-pandemic levels by over 200,000 visitors.



MILTON'S POPULATION

142,811 → **320,895**

Estimated Population, 2024 — Forecasted Population, 2041

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.

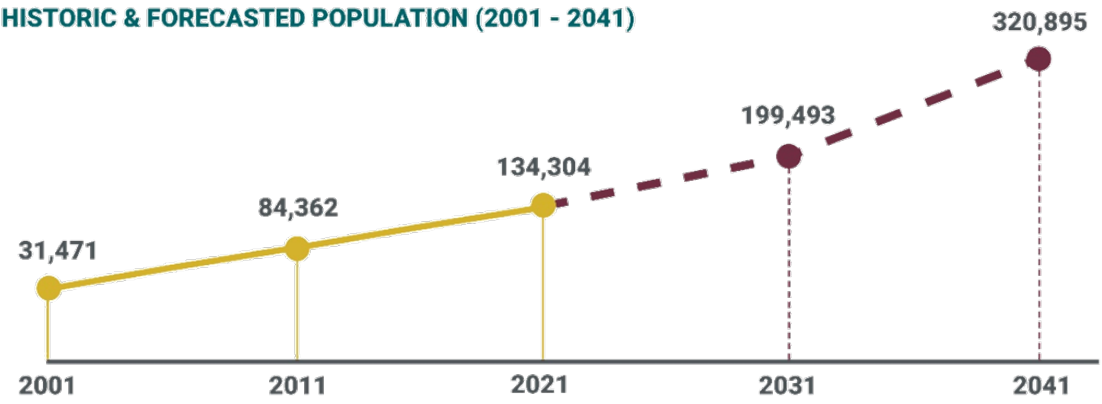
+69%

population increase since 2011

55%

of the population is racialized

HISTORIC & FORECASTED POPULATION (2001 - 2041)

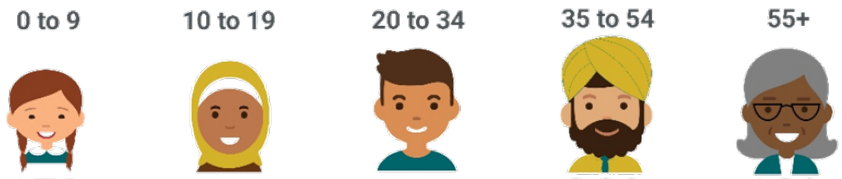


Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2001-2011; Town of Milton Growth Forecast Spreadsheet dated August 31, 2024.
Note: Population forecast based on 2025 Budget, adjusted to exclude net Census undercount.

AGE STRUCTURE, 2021

35.2

average age



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

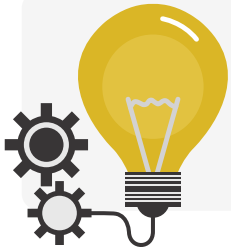
5.8%

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

MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

Vision

To inspire through discovery,
collaboration, creation and innovation.



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
Prioritizing transparency and fiscal responsibility in decision-making.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

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 role within the Town.
- Celebrate and amplify MPL's successes while demonstrating the value of libraries to the community.

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.

3. Creating a Robust & 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.

4. Delivering Quality Services

Objectives:

- Leverage MPL's community-led approach to service in the creation of inclusive, equitable and responsive programming and facilities 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 physical 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.

Strategic Pillar #1

Telling Our Story

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 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.
- Create a Community Engagement Librarian position to deepen the Library's engagement within the community as well as ensure outreach to underserviced areas and new residents.
- Continue to adapt Milton Public Library's community-led approach to programming to cultivate and assess other collaboration and partnership opportunities.
- 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.
- 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.

Strategic Pillar #2

Building Strong Infrastructure

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Work to incrementally build Milton Public Library's total gross floor area to reach the Library Board's space provision target of 0.45 square feet per capita.
- 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.
- Prepare a conceptual plan and floor space audit for the Main Branch to position it for population growth, and support objectives of the Town of Milton Official Plan and Strategic Plan such as innovation, economic development and community gathering. The audit of existing floor space should include an investigation into relocating back-of-house areas to another library and the repurposing for public-facing uses, along with assessing opportunities for a physical expansion of the branch.
- 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.
- 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.
- Extend the hours of the Beaty Branch in the short term.
- Repurpose existing library space to accommodate expansion of items and equipment belonging to MPL's "Library of Things" collection.
- 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.

Strategic Pillar #3

Creating a Robust & Resilient Organization

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 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.
- Add a standing item on the MPL Board agenda that undertakes a review of selected MPL policies twice per year, or other interval set by the Board, as a means to ensure effective governance.
- Leverage MPL's participation in the Town of Milton's Strategic Workforce Planning and Competency Framework.
- Continue to invest in staff training and professional development by ensuring that 1% of the MPL staffing budget provides for continuing education and training in accordance with ARUPLO Guidelines.
- Increase staffing for most critical gaps in 2025, with an initial focus placed on Information Technology and front-line positions.
- Develop a workforce 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.
- Prioritize staff technology training for allocation of training budget resources immediately.
- Implement the immediate addition of 1.0 FTE to provide technology assistance to the Director, Support Services.
- Develop a Technology Plan in order to provide Library staff with a roadmap to follow and update.
- 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.
- Update this Library Strategic Master Plan in 2029 to reflect progress and continue to align with Town of Milton's planning initiatives.

Strategic Pillar #4

Delivering Quality Services

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 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.
- Initiate exploratory meetings to discuss areas of collaboration and partnership at the Milton campuses of both Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier University.
- Revisit the hours of service for all libraries in the medium term as the system grows, in conjunction with the role definition of each level of facility type and review alongside ARUPLO Guidelines.
- 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.
- 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.
- Increase the focus placed on programming for newcomer families.
- 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.
- 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.
- Monitor data and performance metrics used to track e-books and e-audio books in order to support annual expenditure increases and expand the number of titles for each format.
- Increase the acquisition of multilingual titles by 0.5% annually to the year 2029.
- Introduce incremental annual expenditure increases for streaming services to expand access to this resource for the community, based on usage and demand.

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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
LSMP	Library Strategic 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

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

As a high performing library system that is constantly striving to improve its effectiveness, MPL regularly prepares Master Plans to help navigate through the rapid changes in Milton. This LSMP updates a three-year plan last prepared in 2021 during the COVID-19 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 educational, professional and personal endeavours. This 2024 LSMP has re-engaged the community following the pandemic, re-affirmed MPL's Vision, and articulates 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 LSMP was initiated. The SDOR involved a comprehensive community outreach and consultation program that provides relevant insights for the LSMP, including those that reinforce the role and importance of MPL to residents of all ages and backgrounds.

MPL's Vision, Purpose (formerly referred to as the Mission) and Values have been reviewed and renewed in consideration of SDOR and LSMP consultations and conversations. The updated strategic framework reflects a desired focus on innovation and alignment with best practices.

This LSMP 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.

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Intellectual Freedom
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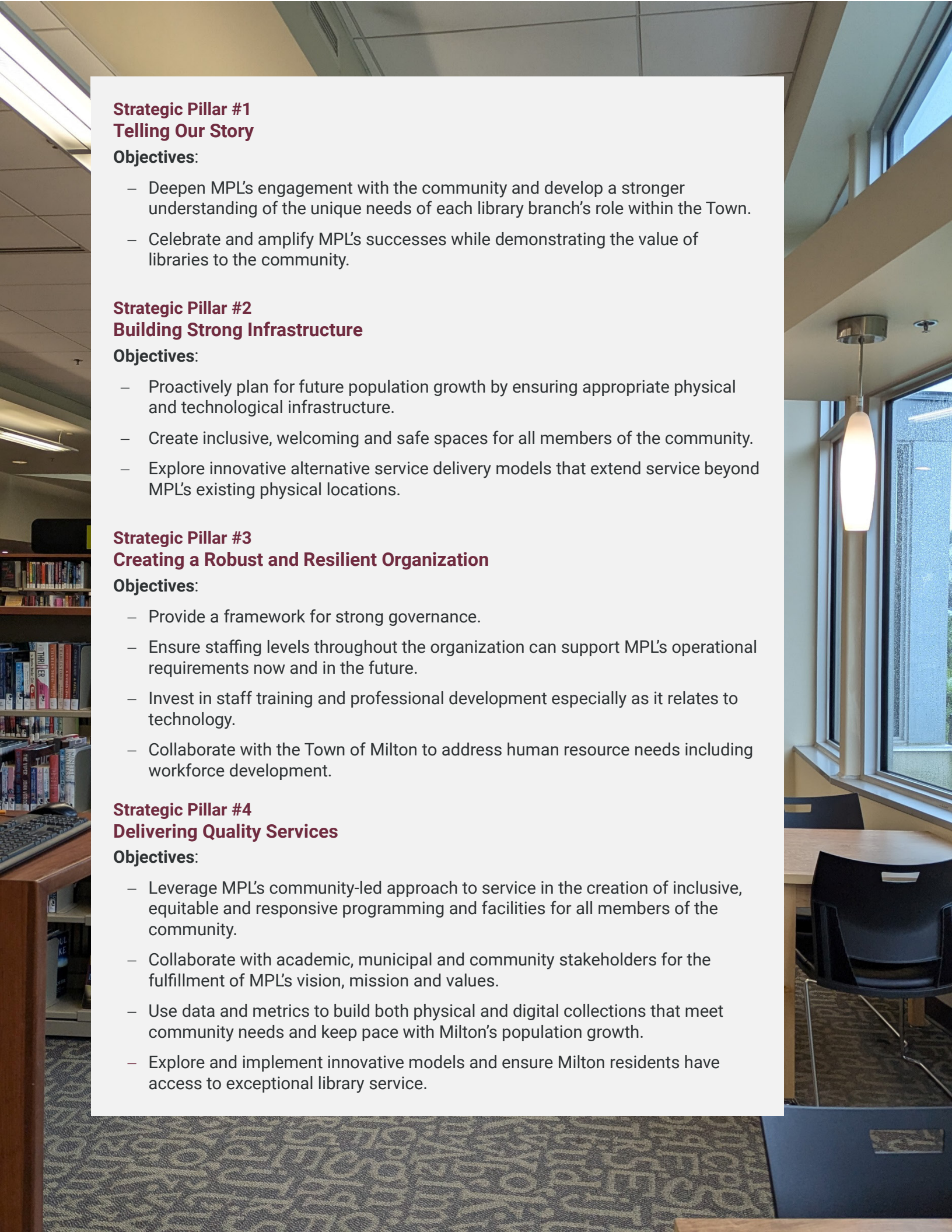

Strategic Pillar #1
Telling Our Story

Objectives:

- Deepen MPL's engagement with the community and develop a stronger understanding of the unique needs of each library branch's role 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.
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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 and facilities 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 physical 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 population and employment base. Each library branch provides a range of collections, workstations, areas for study and collaboration, and community programs. MPL also provides electronic materials and virtual services through its website (www.beinspired.ca).

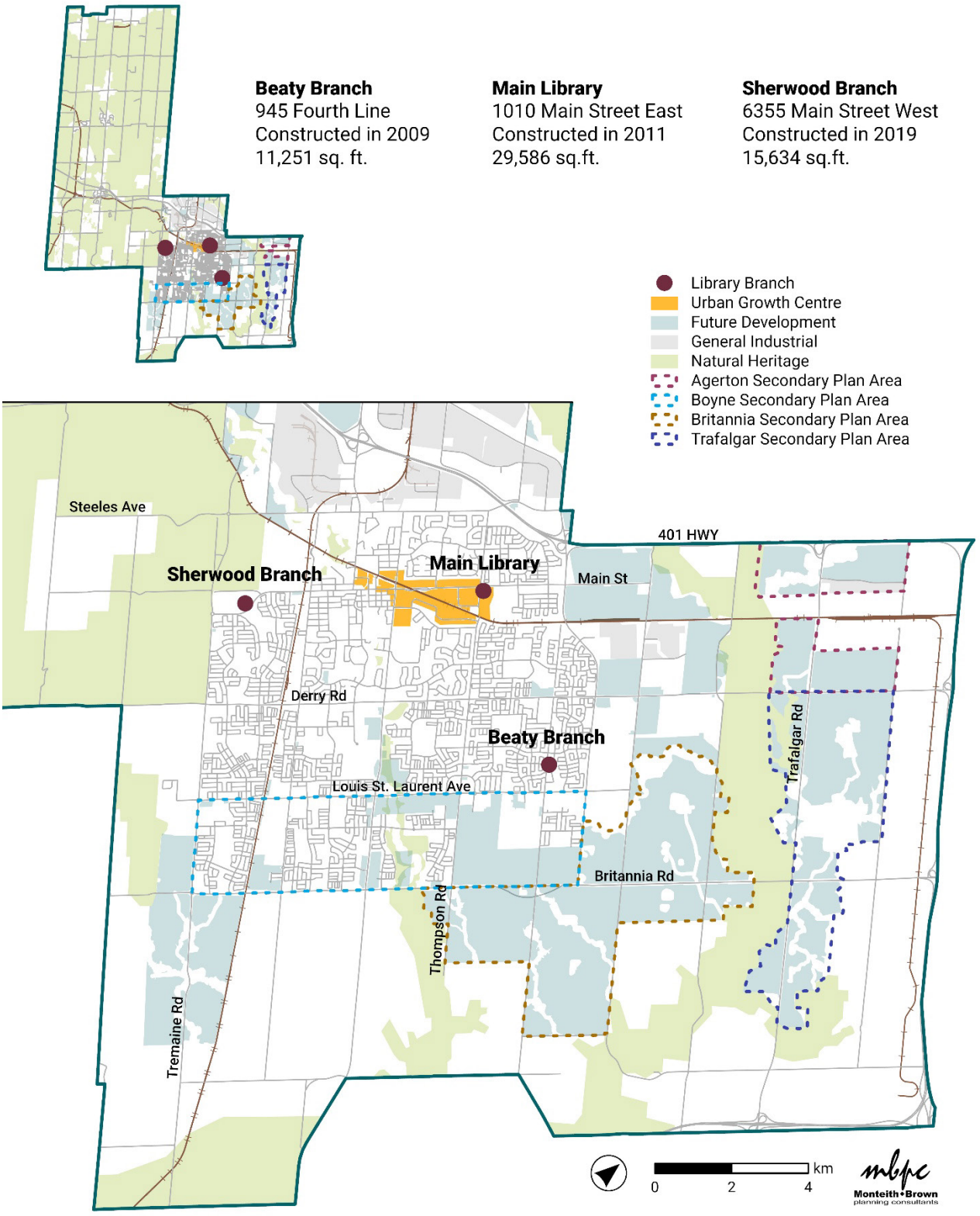
MPL's Main Branch, Sherwood Branch, and Beaty Branch collectively provide 56,471 square feet of library space.

The three library branches collectively provide 56,471 square feet of floor 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 range of partnerships with community 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 square feet that is shared with the community centre and is not available for library collections, study space, etc.

Table 1: Service Snapshot by Branch, 2024

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 (Square Feet)	29,586 (two levels)	11,251 (one level)	15,634 (one level)*
Meeting/Activity Room Space	group study rooms, silent study room, 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
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 Sunday)	68.5
Collection Size	115,854	32,809	25,391
Annual Circulation	453,034	120,786	186,558
In-Library Visits	355,219	71,791	210,222
Programs Held Annually**	1,326	853	899
Annual Program Participation**	42,804	16,227	45,726
Questions Asked	53,500	21,603	30,081

* The Sherwood Branch floor area includes approximately 5,000 square feet 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, 2025

1.3 Alignment with the Town of Milton

Libraries are built, staffed and programmed based on the needs of the population that they 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's Strategic Plan informs its priorities through a long-range vision to the year 2051, a practical vision for 2023 to 2027, and a set of five Priorities (Figure 2). MPL's community consultations reinforce elements of the Town's vision where 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." 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 and service points 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.

MPL supports virtually every aspect of Milton's 2051 Vision, reinforcing that libraries are an important part of city-building and contribute to complete, healthy, resilient and attractive communities.

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

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 the 2015 and 2021 Library Master Plans which aligned with policies of the Town's former Official Plan, implementation of this 2024 LSMP 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.

Draft Milton Official Plan
Section 3.5.2, Objective 1

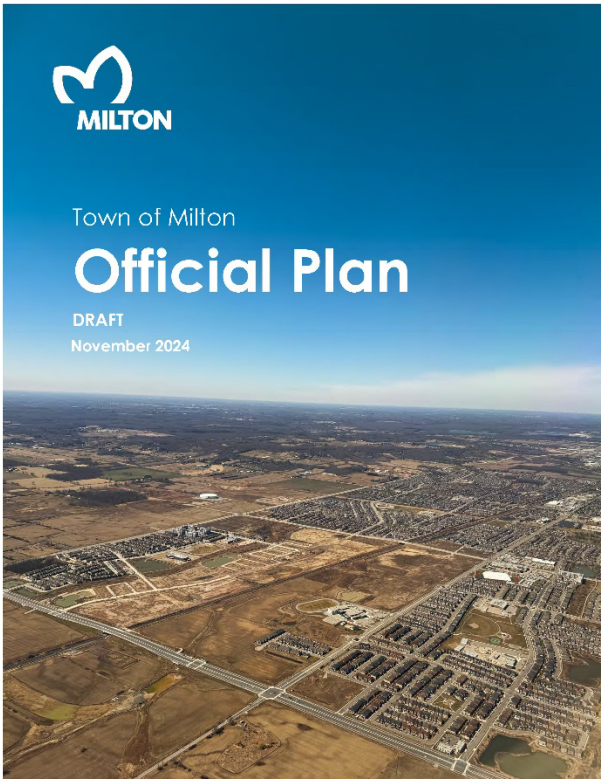
"Provide cultural and library facilities that offer a diversity of experiences to the public."

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 in the Urban Area and Rural Area.

iii. Support the implementation of the Milton Public Library facilities requirements as presented in the Milton Public Library Master Plan.



Town Council endorsement and Provincial approval of the new Milton Official Plan is presently targeted for 2025.[2]

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. 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 able to respond if residents are to obtain the many benefits that libraries bring. 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 is an important document to consider through this and future updates to the LSMP as facility development strategies should have regard for the future urban structure 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.

This means 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, each branch will be subjected to growth-related residential and employment pressures as well as the continued evolution of socio-demographic characteristics of residents living within their catchments. On this basis, these three library branches are integral parts in 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 be part of defining the intended quality of life through education,

and civic engagement. New library space may also be required to serve underserved areas resulting from changes to the urban structure.

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 142,811 persons and is projected to grow to 178,579 (excluding Census undercoverage rate) at the end of the LSMP planning period in 2029.[4] The rapid population growth will continue as the population is forecasted to exceed 320,000 persons by 2041, more than doubling the current number of residents, before reaching the Official Plan's year 2051 target of 400,400. As previously noted, 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 LSMP is focused on the next five years, clearly there is a need to begin planning how library services will respond to long-term growth as soon as possible. With growth management and infrastructure planning well underway, the Town of Milton and MPL need 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. Growth will also place pressures on MPL services, hours of operation, and staffing.

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 younger median and average ages in relation to Halton Region and Ontario. Nearly one out of three Milton residents are below 20 years of age (31%), half (50%) are between 20 and 54 years of age, and 19% of the population is 55 years of age and over.

- **Household Size**: The average household in Milton has 3.3 persons in 2021, which is greater than 2.6 persons per household for Ontario, and 19% of Milton households have five or persons compared to 9% of Ontario. In addition, Milton has more than 2,800 multigenerational households (as having at least one person who is both the grandparent and parent of someone living there), amounting to 7% of households which is nearly double the provincial rate.

- **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.

- **Education**: Milton is a well educated community with nearly two out of every three residents over the age of 15 (65%) having a postsecondary degree, diploma or certificate making it the fourth-most educated community in Canada. Attainment rates for people with Bachelor's and Master's degrees exceed that of the province.

- **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 that speak a language most often at home that is not English or French. In 2021, the top five non-official mother-tongues spoken in Milton were Urdu, Arabic, Spanish, Punjabi, and Tagalog.

142,811 → **320,895**

Estimated Population, 2024 — Forecasted Population, 2041

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.

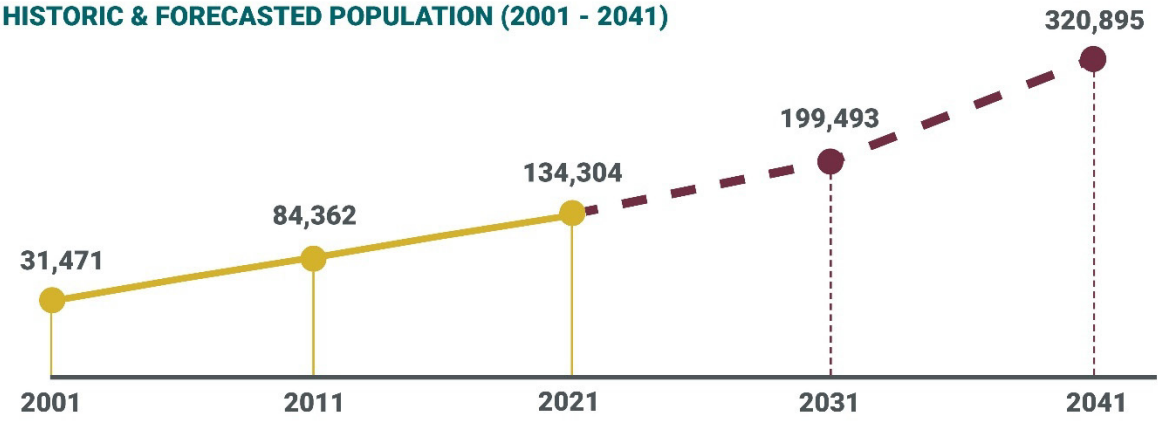
+69%

population increase since 2011

55%

of the population is racialized

HISTORIC & FORECASTED POPULATION (2001 - 2041)

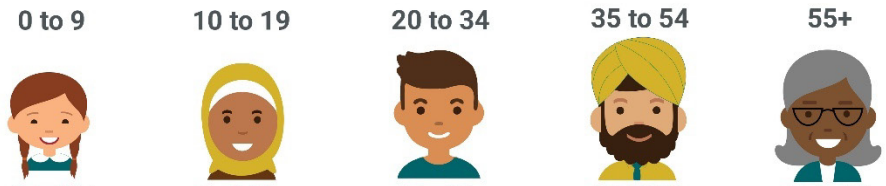


Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2001-2011; Town of Milton Growth Forecast Spreadsheet dated August 31, 2024.
Note: Population forecast based on 2025 Budget, adjusted to exclude net Census undercount.

AGE STRUCTURE, 2021

35.2

average age



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)

Population Sources: Town of Milton 2025 Budget; Statistics Canada Census

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.[5] 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 LSMP. 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 LSMP 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

Intellectual Freedom in 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 Federations 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 2SLGTBQIA+ 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.[6] 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.[7]

MPL makes technology and digital resources widely available and accessible for in-branch use through: laptops, iPads or MacBooks that can be borrowed; free 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 for use 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 help interpret data, produce and read 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. AI can lead to privacy concerns with its powerful access to vast amounts of data and may require more investments in educating the public in using it correctly.[8]

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, 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 as 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 crats 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.[9] 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.[10] 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.[11] 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 events[12].

The "lively" library does not negate the need for quiet spaces but means finding design solutions that accommodate 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 spaces that might conflict with one another.

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 design 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.[13] MPL has incorporated outdoor seating through patios and reading gardens at all three branches while some other library systems have designed branches to "bring the outdoors inside."

Public demands for outdoor seating and library programming grew during the COVID-19 pandemic as people searched for more outdoor areas with ample space, fresh air, and the ability to distance from others.[14] 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%.[15] 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.

1.5 Community Feedback

LSMP consultations were designed in a manner to avoid duplicating consultation efforts that were completed shortly before its planning process through the SDOR. Community and staff feedback obtained through the SDOR was considered as part of the LSMP's development and explored in greater detail through an Open House and Community Feedback Form as described in the pages that follow.

SDOR Consultation Summary

The SDOR involved a statistically significant telephone survey of 1,202 randomly selected participants, a self-selected community survey that collected 762 responses, 49 staff surveys, along with stakeholder interviews and focus groups. Carried out in late 2023 and early 2024, key findings of the SDOR consultations include, but are not limited to:

- People reported that MPL facilities are welcoming and that staff are friendly and helpful (95% or greater of telephone survey respondents).
- The most common reasons for not using the library reported through the telephone survey included not needing to, being too busy, or using other digital resources (31% or lower of telephone survey respondents).
- Community groups and partners report very positive relationships with MPL, and many are willing to have continued conversations with library staff.
- The lowest rated aspect of Main Branch is the lack of available quiet work and study spaces (62%).
- Over half of MPL staff surveyed are satisfied with the work environment and 85% are satisfied that it provides a supportive and inclusive atmosphere. Staff requested more front-line positions in order to meet community needs as well as cover illnesses.
- Areas for improvement include communications to increase awareness of library offerings as well as a placing a greater focus on serving youth and teen populations.

Community Open House

An Open House was held at the Main Branch in November 2024 to seek community feedback for the LSMP. Input was received from a number of people including those actively using the library for study, community programs, and general browsing. Conversations revolved around:

- the importance of MPL's educational and employment resources;
- MPL's function as a third space, with a number of those commenting that they live in medium or higher density forms of housing, and/or multi-generational households where it can be difficult to find "quiet time";
- appreciation and requests for additional information and programming for newcomers to Canada; and
- requests for more technology, a greater number of physical and digital collections to minimize time waiting for holds, and more library programs;
- needs being expressed for more library space in the form of new and expanded branches;
- requests for more library programs and dedicated program rooms, the latter so as not to disrupt other library users; and
- requests for extended hours of operation throughout the week.

Community Feedback Form

The LSMP's Community Feedback Form collected input regarding the strategic framework, levels of use and visitation, and needs for library services and programs. 365 responses were received with notable themes identified in the paragraphs that follow; tabulated responses for each question are contained in Appendix B. Due to the voluntary nature of the Community Feedback Form, the data should not be interpreted as being statistically representative of the entire population.

MPL's Strategic Framework

The following feedback was offered Community Feedback Form with regard to MPL's Vision, Purpose, and Values as articulated in this LSMP.

- 78% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with MPL's Vision statement while 82% agreed in some form with its Statement of Purpose.
- Each of MPL's stated Values received a minimum of 82% agreement from respondents, with the strongest level of agreement (91%) attributable to Lifelong Learning.

Use of MPL

Vising libraries in person was the most popular way to engage with Milton Public Library (96%) while more than three out of four respondents (76%) also used the MPL website. Four out of five respondents (80%) reported using Main Branch as their usual branch or service followed by Sherwood Branch (47%) and Beaty Branch (30%).

The majority of Community Feedback Form respondents replied that when they are at the library, they like to borrow or check-out materials (82%) while another popular activity was to look through books and other materials (72%). Other uses included picking up holds (60%), attending programs (34%), and reading or studying (33%). With regard to technology use, 20% of respondents reported using the library to access Wi-Fi while 19% use the library to access printers or 3D printers and 15% use library computers.

Library Facilities & Services

The Community Feedback Form asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with a number of facility-related statements. 89% agreed in some form that investing in libraries should be a high priority for Town Council and the Library Board. Many respondents also agreed that Beaty Branch should be open six days a week rather than five (66%) while others agreed that Main Branch should be expanded and refreshed (66%). More than one out of four respondents (26%) disagreed with the statement that "there are currently enough library branches in Milton." In addition to the statements, 13% of respondents requested more quiet spaces within library buildings.

Similarly, the feedback form tested levels of agreement for various aspects of MPL's services. 90% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they are able to find library staff to help with their in-branch needs, while 80% agreed that they are aware of the services and programs that MPL offers. Further, a large number of people agreed that the Library services available reflect Milton's diverse multicultural makeup as shown in Figure 4. These results suggest that in regard to staffing and services, the majority of library users are satisfied with the library's offerings although other comments received included increasing the number of programs for adults and seniors (14%), growing the physical book collection (10%) and increasing hours of operation at one or all branches (9%).

Figure 3: Level of Agreement with Library Facilities

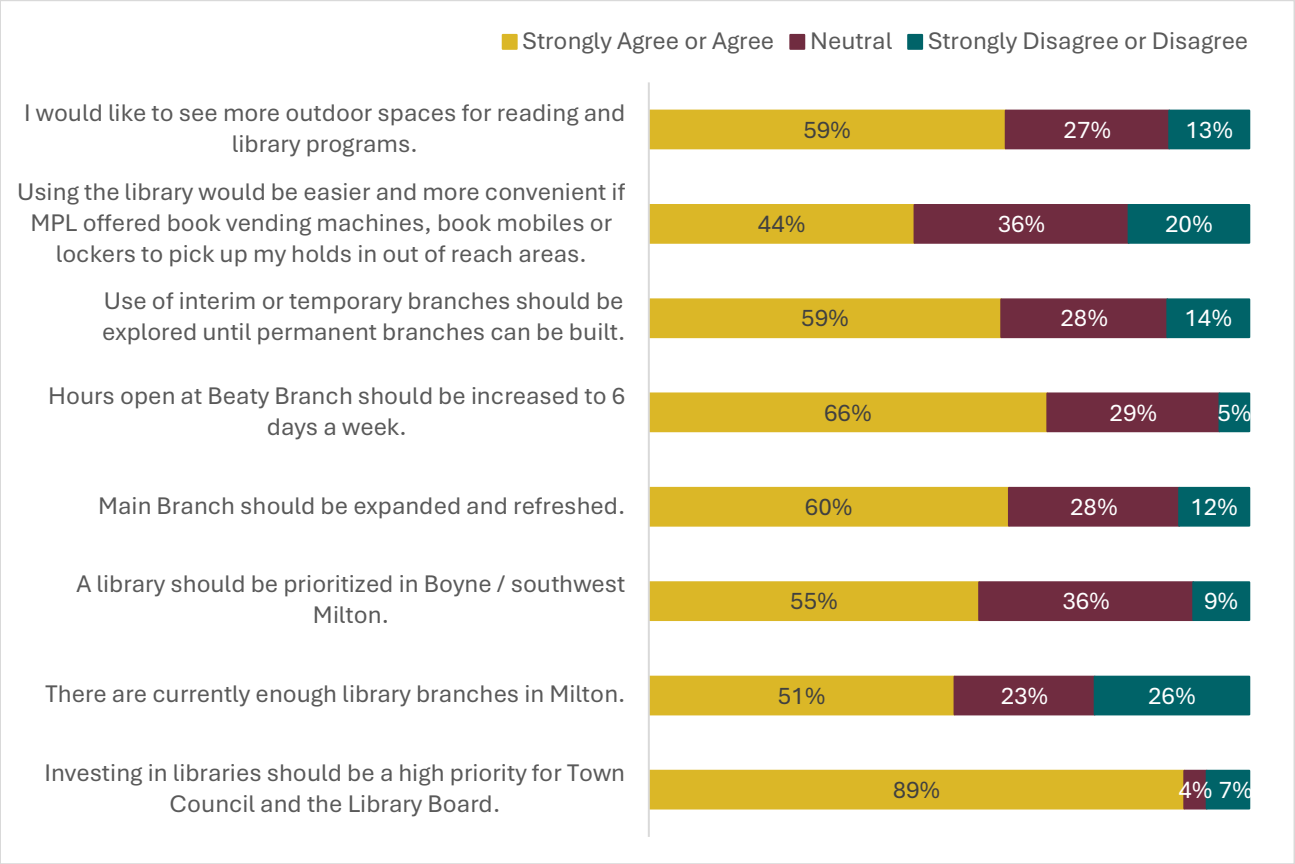
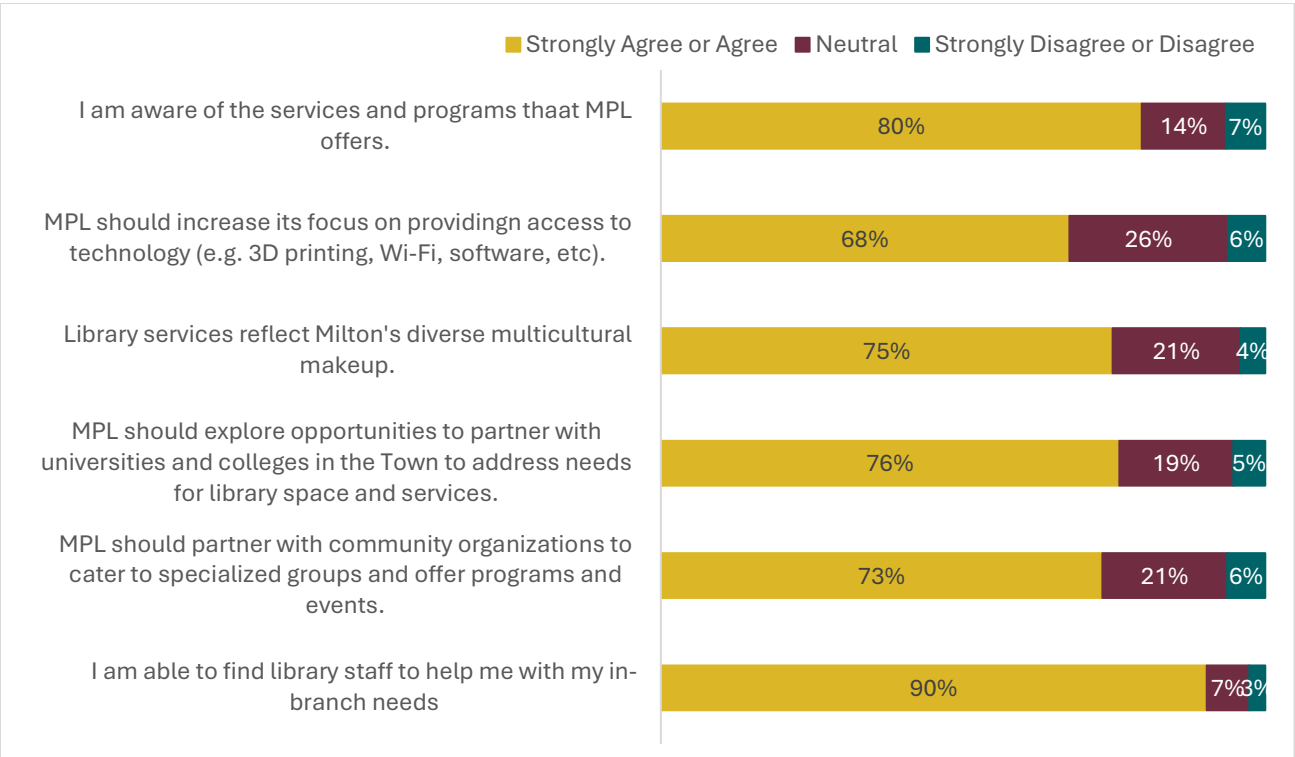
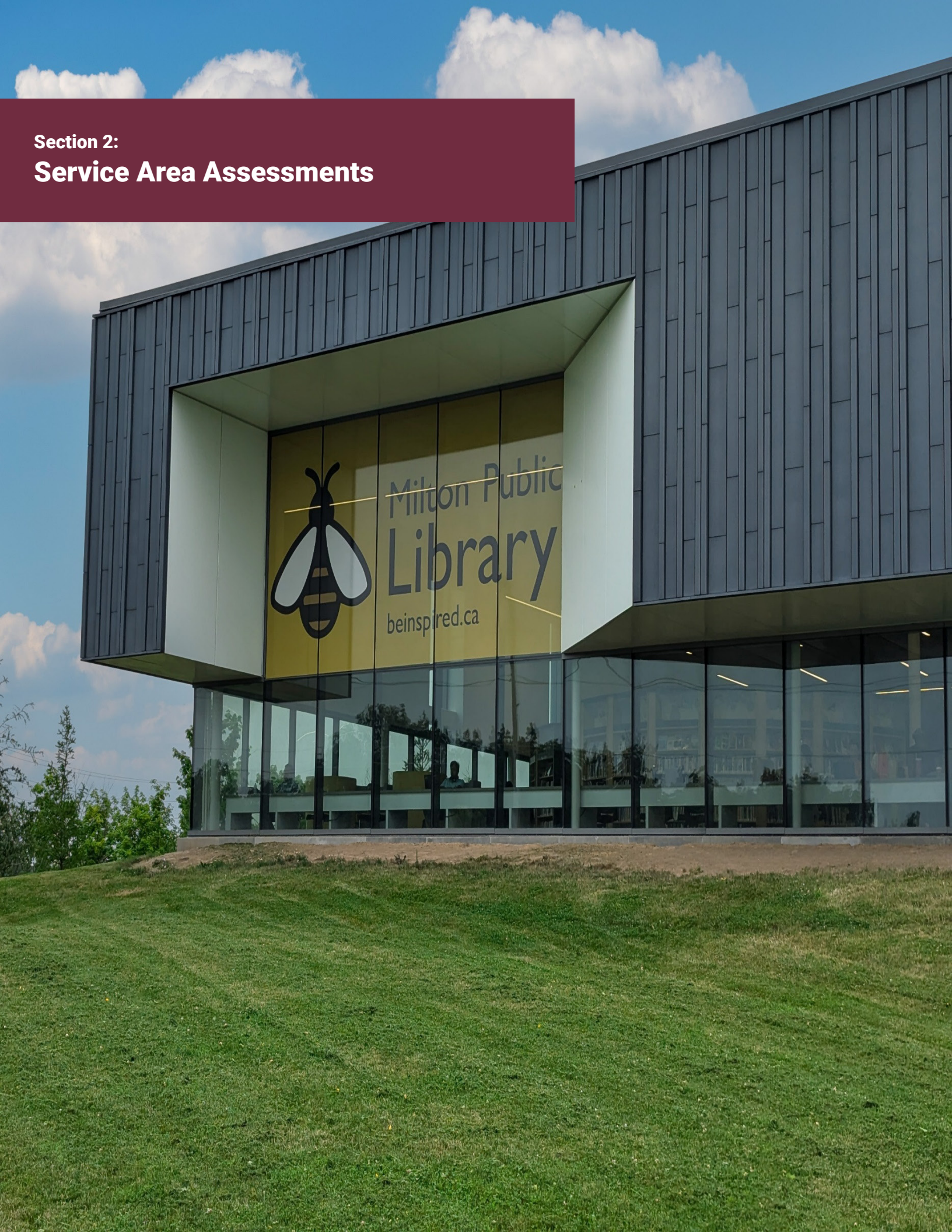


Figure 4: Level of Agreement with Library Services



Section 2:

Service Area Assessments



This section contains an assessment of areas of inquiry identified in the LSMP's scope of work. MPL has historically focused upon these "areas of service" through the 2024 SDOR, past iterations of the LSMP, 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 LSMP builds on the recent and comprehensive assessments contained in the recent SDOR and it is not the intent to duplicate that work; instead, the LSMP 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, largely through property tax collection.

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. 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. Analysis of selected policies could be a standing item on the MPL Board agenda twice a year (or in intervals set by the Board).

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.[16]

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 MPL's Vision, Purpose and Values, 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.[17] 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 five-year vision that included diverse and innovative services, a fully accessible library that connects 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 LSMP.

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 standing item on the MPL Board agenda that undertakes a review of selected MPL policies twice per year, or other interval set by the Board, as a means to ensure effective governance.

#2. Update this Library Strategic 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 underserviced 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. So has navigating culture wars associated with challenges to books and programming with long accepted principles of Intellectual Freedom being questioned by some people. In addition, trends and community preferences are changing more quickly then ever requiring library staff to iterate more rapidly and offer new or modified services to respond to new demands.[18] 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.[19]

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.[20] 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 then 1% of a library's staffing budget be allocated to staffing training.[21] 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 is covered more extensively later in this LSMP. 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 LSMP Update spoke to a concern to sustain the quality of service provided by MPL due to staffing. In particular, the 2021 LSMP 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.[22]

The SDOR noted that with population growth, MPL lost ground as staffing levels have dropped to just 0.26 FTE per 1,000 using 2024 staff ratios/population. In this LSMP'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.[23] These impending urgent situations will need to be addressed immediately and MPL has successfully been able to secure funding to add 2.0 new FTEs through its 2025 budget. The SDOR provides many options to consider while Recommended Actions in the pages that follow also provide guidance.

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.

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, something that was heard through the consultations for this LSMP and the SDOR. The SDOR identified a current gap in staffing as well as the need for MPL to increase staff resources incrementally with growth. Working with the Town of Milton, MPL has approved funding within its 2025 budget to add 2.0 FTE through new staff and conversion of part-time positions to full-time. As such, MPL has an approved staff complement of 44.48 FTEs for the year 2025.

The projected 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 introduce new services currently. A final consideration revolves around MPL's stated value of Exceptional Public Service; the Library Board should consider if it can truly fulfill this value with MPL'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 1% of the MPL staffing budget provides for continuing education and training in accordance with ARUPLO Guidelines.**

#8. **Increase staffing for most critical gaps in 2025, with an initial focus placed on Information Technology and front-line positions.**

#9. **Develop a workforce 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.[24]

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."[25] 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 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 is planning for a refurbishment and repurposing of the Beaty Branch lounge to a makerspace in 2026. 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 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 future flagship Makerspace at Beaty Branch.

Now more then 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.[26] 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. The SDOR recommends a similar action, however, it also highlights cybersecurity risks that need to be addressed to reduce current vulnerabilities.[27] 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 LSMP 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. **Develop a Technology Plan in order to provide Library staff with 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 floorspaces 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; ARUPLO's Small and Medium Branch typologies are less suited to Milton given they are oriented to smaller or rural communities.

- 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 serve 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 distances 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 5 illustrates the geographic coverage of each library branch using a catchment area of 2 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 serve established residential areas north of the Derry Road corridor and east 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. Presently, there are no library branches in the Town's designated Rural Area and hamlets such as Campbellville and Brookville.

Residential areas in southwest Milton, including a large part of Boyne and the Milton Education Village, constitute the largest geographic service gap in the designated Urban Area.

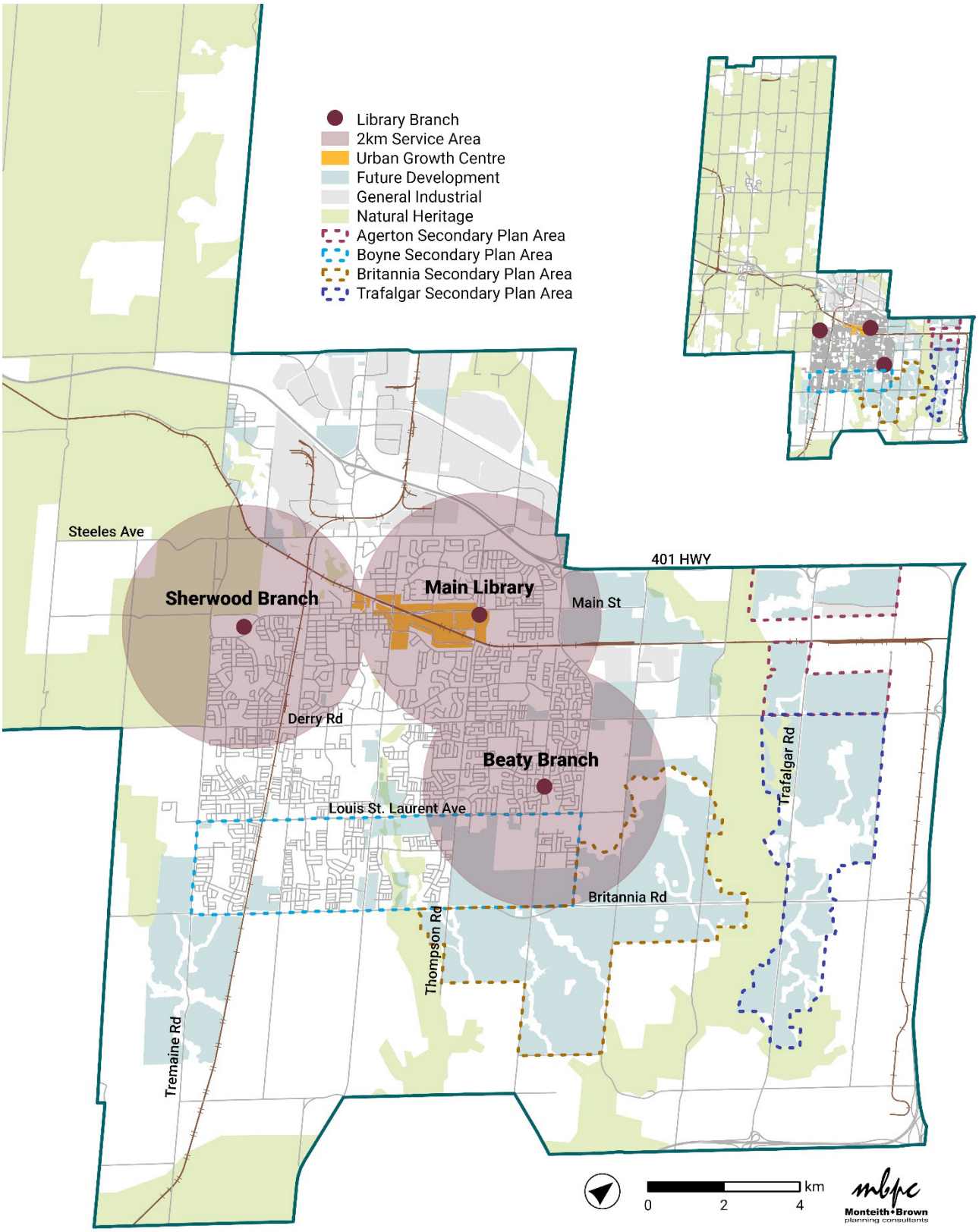
Per Capita Rates of Provision

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.

Assessments of local needs may be assisted by the Ontario Public Library Guidelines[28] 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 5: Distribution of Milton Public Library Branches



The MPL Board historically supported a space provision level of 0.55 square feet per capita until recently. In November 2024, the Board resolved to adjust its targeted level to 0.45 square feet per capita due to challenges in attaining the historical standard. Figure 6 illustrates that service levels from 2011 to 2024 ranged from a low of 0.34 square feet per capita to a high of 0.45 per capita when the Sherwood Branch opened. MPL's 56,471 square feet of Gross Floor Area (GFA) in 2024 translates into 0.40 square feet per capita, the same as recorded 10 years ago, continuing to illustrate the growth-related pressures facing MPL from rapid expansion of the local residential base.

The newly revised per capita target would require MPL to increase its gross floor area by 14% to meet current needs. This will be a challenge 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 0.32 square feet per capita and be approximately half of ARUPLO guidelines.

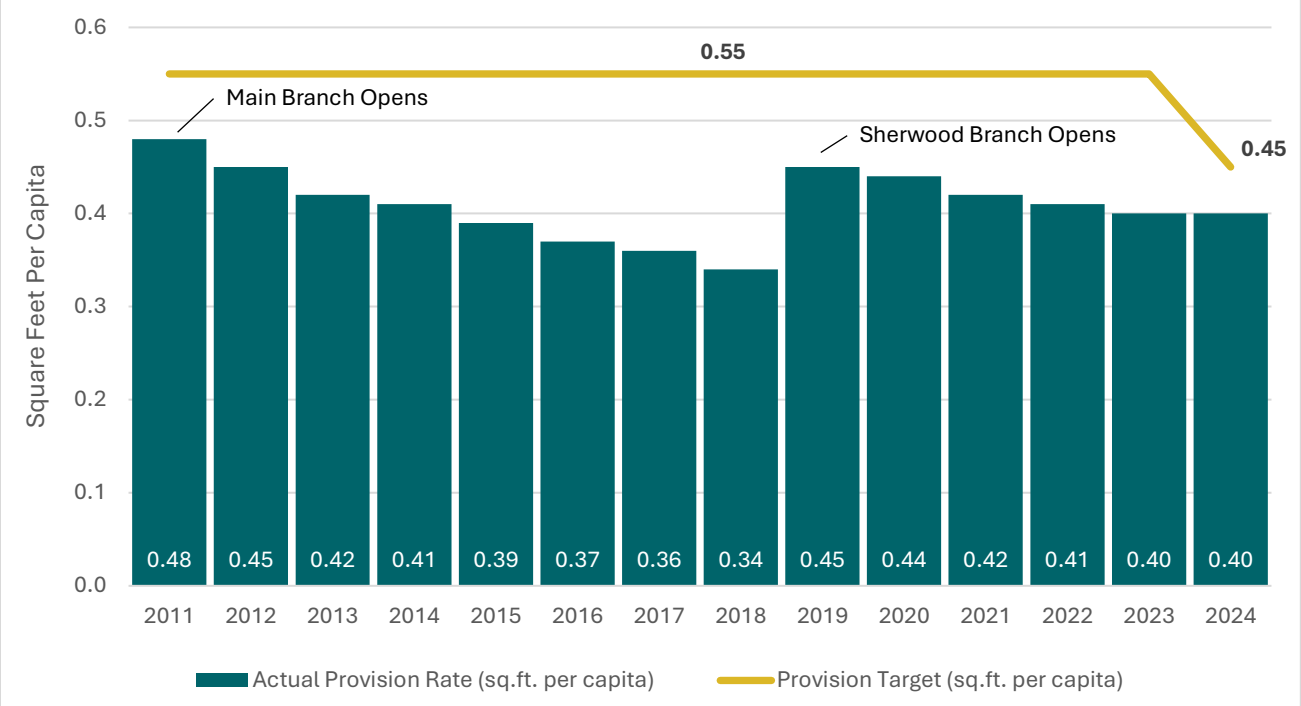
0.45 ft² per capita

Space provision target set by the MPL Board.

0.40 ft² per capita

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

Figure 6: Historical Rate of Space Provided Per Capita



Sources: Development Charges Background Study, 2021, p.B-25 (for years 2011-2020); Town of Milton 2025 Budget population estimates used to calculate years 2021-2024.

MPL is not alone in its space-related challenges. Many library systems in Ontario have adopted ARUPLO's 0.6 square feet per capita target 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 thousands of people projected to arrive each year, there are inherent constraints on the ability to construct thousands of square feet particularly with recent provincial legislative changes pertaining to growth-related funding (e.g. Development Charges). The Town of Milton funds the Library's capital projects but also has other sizeable infrastructure commitments such as roads, community centres, 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 0.45 square feet per capita. MPL is deficient by approximately 7,800 square feet at present time.

Table 3: Forecasted Library Space Requirements, 2024-2029

Year	Population Estimate	Library Space Needs @ 0.45 ft^2 per capita	Deviation from Current Supply of 56,471 ft^2
2024	142,811	64,265 ft^2	- 7,794 ft^2
2029	178,579	80,360 ft^2	- 23,889 ft^2

Note: Current supply includes approximately 5,000 ft^2 of space shared with the Community Services Department at Sherwood Community Centre. Population estimates supplied by the Town of Milton.

With an additional 35,800 people projected to arrive over the LSMP's planning period, MPL would require another 23,889 square feet of GFA by the year 2029. 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 in the short-term but construction will likely occur after the five-year planning horizon of this LSMP.

The focus of the LSMP's capital development strategy is geared to carrying out requisite studies to plan and design the Boyne Branch and expand Main Branch since construction for both projects is anticipated after the LSMP's planning period to align the Town's fiscal capacities. There may be future-term opportunities to employ alternative service points, building on MPL's entry into holds lockers in 2025 (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 LSMP.

MPL should focus its capital development strategy on:

i) Working with the Town to address the urgent need for library services in Boyne as soon as possible.

ii) Investigating how Main Branch could be expanded and reconfigured to increase capacity.

iii) Exploring alternative service points such as kiosks, holds lockers, bookmobiles, etc.

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.[29]

Boyne Branch (Future)

Land developments in Boyne are well underway with an estimated population of 30,000 currently living in an area[30] where Figure 5 on Page 42 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 develop along with the nearby Milton Education Village.

The 2015 Library Master Plan 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. Preliminary planning has been based on an 18,000 square foot branch, however this LSMP recommends that a future Boyne Branch be a minimum of 25,000 square feet to service the 65,000 people living there in 2051 based on the 0.45 square feet per capita target and ARUPLO Guidelines if capital funding can be secured (noting that the area would still be deficient of space at the minimum GFA specified). A larger GFA at a Boyne Branch is also necessary to alleviate pressures on Main Branch for MPL's corporate administration and staff workspace as well as to accommodate repurposing back-of-house space at Main Branch to public-facing areas depending on its space study discussed in the pages that follow.

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 Library Master Plan 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. This LSMP 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, the tall shelving impedes sightlines for staff supervision and do not meet current accessibility standards; however, these tall shelves are needed to house the collection in the absence of physical floor space. As in other urban public library settings, social service needs will need to be addressed and accessibility retrofits will need to be completed.

Additionally, there appears to be an imbalance between public-facing and "back of house" spaces devoted to administration and staff operations at Main Branch. 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 some of the space allocated to other public functions. These efforts may reclaim the additional 5,000 square feet (at a minimum) needed to meet the ARUPLO Guidelines.

Depending on the architectural complexity of reimagining Main Branch through reconfiguration and/or expansion, the work 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 be able to fully handle displaced demand, the most plausible option would be to wait until after the future Boyne Branch is operational. As previously noted, a Boyne Branch is not expected to be opened in this LSMP's five-year planning period and thus deferral of Main Branch expansion in the post-2030 timeframe would mean that growth-related pressures on all three library branches will continue to amplify and would not be addressed through short-term GFA additions.

Library systems have secured temporary spaces to deliver library spaces while branches are either being constructed or closed for redevelopment. Mississauga Library and Kingston Frontenac Public Library both utilized "pop-up" branches while their central libraries were undergoing renovations. Brampton Library has temporarily relocated a branch to a municipally operated ski chalet while it seeks a new building for a library that was repurposed for a post-secondary tenant and has also leased retail spaces for "interim" branches until it secures funding for permanent libraries. Oakville Public Library recently used a modular building while construction of a new branch was ongoing.

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 LSMP 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 still building up but early observations are that this 15,634 square foot library 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 concurrent need for program rooms for MPL and Town programs, while community centre washrooms are a significant distance from the children's area. In addition, the branch does not have a dedicated entrance and is located at the opposite end of the building from the main community centre entrance, causing challenges for quick pick-up of materials as well as for seniors and persons with disabilities. Consideration could be given to enclose one or both of the adjacent outdoor patio areas to increase the usability of these areas for library programs and other uses.

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 LSMP, 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.[31]

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."[32] 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 LSMP, 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 current 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.[33]

Space Outlook beyond 2029

Whereas it is the scope of the LSMP 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 LSMP 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 LSMP 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.

Table 4: Forecasted Library Space Requirements, 2031-2051

Year	Forecasted Population	Library Space Needs @ 0.45 ft^2 per capita	Deviation from Current Supply of 56,471 ft^2
2031	199,493	89,771 ft^2	- 33,300 ft^2
2041	320,895	144,403 ft^2	- 87,932 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 ft^2 of space shared with the Town's Community Services Department at Sherwood Community Centre. Population estimates supplied by the Town of Milton.

As shown in Table 4, attaining a service level of 0.45 square feet per capita would require MPL to more than triple its existing GFA to reach 220,220 square feet to meet Milton Official Plan's 2051 population target. 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 5 along with the Town's designated Urban Growth Centre (UGC). By 2051, populations and corresponding needs for library space at 0.45 square feet are as follows:

- **Trafalgar Secondary Plan**: a minimum of 26,000 residents[34] 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 11,700 square feet by 2031 and growing to 38,250 square feet of library space by 2051, most realistically distributed across multiple branches.

- **Agerton Secondary Plan**: a minimum of 6,800 persons[35] are forecasted by 2031 and recent studies estimate the population could exceed 14,000 persons by 2051 which would require 6,300 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 25,650 square feet of library space.

- **Milton Education Village Secondary Plan**: the Milton Education Village is being planned as a mixed use complete community with a population of at least 22,000 people and jobs by 2051.[36] The majority of residential growth is projected to occur between 2031 and 2041, with an estimated 13,400 people forecasted to live in the area by 2051. This population would generate a need for 6,030 square feet of library space, some of which could potentially be allocated to a future library in the Britannia Secondary Plan.

- **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 11,250 square feet based on 0.45 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, 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 in this area 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. **Work to incrementally build Milton Public Library's total gross floor area to reach the Library Board's space provision target of 0.45 square feet per capita.**

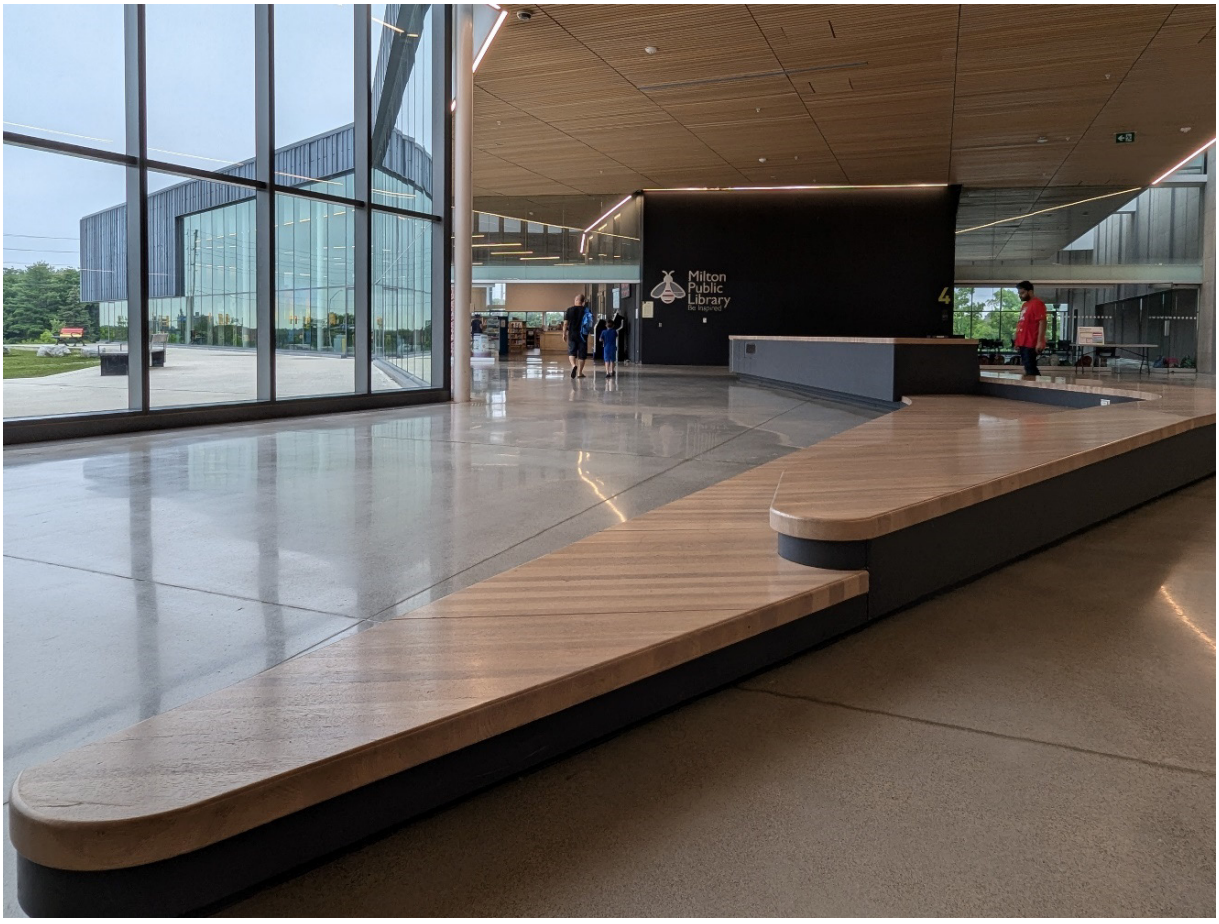
#17. **Pursue a minimum 25,000 square foot library branch as part of a future multi-use community centre in Boyne at the earliest possible opportunity. A space needs study and service delivery plan should inform the design of this future branch.**

#18. **Prepare a conceptual plan and floor space audit for the Main Branch to position it for population growth, and support objectives of the Town of Milton Official Plan and Strategic Plan such as innovation, economic development and community gathering. The audit of existing floor space should include an investigation into relocating back-of-house areas to another library and the repurposing for public-facing uses, along with assessing opportunities for a physical expansion of the branch.**

#19. **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.**

#20. **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.**

#21. **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 and partnerships, programs and collections. The Library Board believes programs and collections are highly valued by the community, and MPL data affirms the strong and escalating usage for most of its lines of business. Footfall numbers for 2024 demonstrate a 25% increase from the prior year and surpasses annual footfall totals dating back to 2017 by 220,000 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.

637,0000

Visits to MPL branches in 2024.

220,0000

More visits to MPL in 2024 compared to 2017.

Changing Expectations of Customers

The concept of customer service has evolved from transactional functions to the employment of more retail-like tactics in 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."[37] This creates an added dimension to the development of future customer service strategies in public libraries users' 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.[38] 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 Library Master Plan. The 2021 Library Master Plan 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 additional days and operating hours to maximize use of its floor space and available services. 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 postsecondary institutions situated within the municipality and this presents an opportunity for the library to liaise with Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier University to discuss potential collaborations and partnerships within the Milton Education Village. Exploratory meetings should be initiated to provide feedback to this plan or for the library to discuss this plan and its implications with both postsecondary 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 University 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 their 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

#22. Extend the hours of the Beaty Branch in the short term.

#23. Revisit the hours of service for all libraries in the medium term as the system grows, in conjunction with the role definition of each level of facility type and reviewed alongside ARUPLO Guidelines.

#24. Initiate exploratory meetings to discuss areas of collaboration and partnership at the Milton campuses of both Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier University.

#25. 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.

#26. Increase the focus placed on programming for newcomer families.

#27. 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.

#28. Continue to adapt Milton Public 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 growing 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 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. All library systems are trying to balance the high costs of e-resources compared to physical print; digital materials may be subject to licences, subscriptions, pay-per-use royalties, etc. whereas print materials may have only incurred a one-time purchase fee. However, physical space limitations and eroding space per capita service levels (see Section 2.5) may necessitate greater use of e-resources and thus investments in digital and physical items need to be balanced with fiscal sustainability. 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 LSMP 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.[39]

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.[40]

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 nonprint 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."[41] 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.[42] 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 digital 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

#29. Repurpose existing library space to accommodate expansion of items and equipment belonging to MPL's "Library of Things" collection.

#30. 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.

#31. 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.

#32. 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.

#33. Monitor data and performance metrics used to track e-books and e-audio books in order to support annual expenditure increases and expand the number of titles for each format.

#34. Increase the acquisition of multilingual titles by 0.5% annually to the year 2029.

#35. 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

This LSMP builds on the accomplishments of the last master plan along with 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 the LSMP 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 to the development of MPL's capital and operating budgets. Many factors 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 LSMP contains 35 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 LSMP'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		LSMP Section Reference
#1	Add a standing item on the MPL Board agenda that undertakes a review of selected MPL policies twice per year, or other interval set by the Board, 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 1% of the MPL staffing budget provides for continuing education and training in accordance with ARUPLO Guidelines.	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	Work to incrementally build Milton Public Library's total gross floor area to reach the Library Board's space provision target of 0.45 square feet per capita.	2.5 Facilities

Recommended Action	LSMP Section Reference
#20 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
#25 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
#26 Increase the focus placed on programming for newcomer families.	2.6 Customer Experience
#27 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
#28 Continue to adapt Milton Public Library's community-led approach to programming to cultivate and assess other collaboration and partnership opportunities.	2.6 Customer Experience
#29 Repurpose existing library space to accommodate expansion of items and equipment belonging to MPL's "Library of Things" collection.	2.7 Collections
#32 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
#34 Increase the acquisition of multilingual titles by 0.5% annually to the year 2029.	2.7 Collections

Recommended Actions – 2025

Recommended Action		LSMP 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
#6	Leverage MPL's participation in the Town of Milton's Strategic Workforce Planning and Competency Framework.	2.3 Staffing & Training
#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
#9	Develop a workforce 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
#10	Implement the immediate addition of 1.0 FTE to provide technology assistance to the Director, Support Services.	2.4 Technology
#12	Prioritize staff technology training for allocation of training budget resources immediately.	2.4 Technology
#13	Develop a Technology Plan in order to provide Library staff with a roadmap to follow and update.	2.4 Technology
#24	Initiate exploratory meetings to discuss areas of collaboration and partnership at the Milton campuses of both Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier University.	2.6 Customer Experience
#30	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
#31	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
#33	Monitor data and performance metrics used to track e-books and e-audio books in order to support annual expenditure increases and expand the number of titles for each format.	2.7 Collections
#35	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

Recommended Actions – 2026

Recommended Action	LSMP Section Reference
#4 Create a Community Engagement Librarian position to deepen the Library's engagement within the community as well as ensure outreach to underserviced 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 a conceptual plan and floor space audit for the Main Branch to position it for population growth, and support objectives of the Town of Milton Official Plan and Strategic Plan such as innovation, economic development and community gathering. The audit of existing floor space should include an investigation into relocating back-of-house areas to another library and the repurposing for public-facing uses, along with assessing opportunities for a physical expansion of the branch.	2.5 Facilities
#21 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
#22 Extend the hours of the Beaty Branch in the short term.	2.6 Customer Experience

Recommended Actions – 2027

Recommended Action	LSMP Section Reference
#19 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

Recommended Actions – 2028

Recommended Action	LSMP 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
#23 Revisit the hours of service for all libraries in the medium term 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	LSMP Section Reference
#2 Update this Library Strategic 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, 2023

Table 1

Library System	Population	Total Sq. Ft. per Capita	Public Access Workstations per 1,000	Total Staff (FTE) per 1,000
Mississauga	810,200	0.27*	1.23	0.38
Brampton	673,960	0.26	1.85	0.24
Hamilton	579,000	0.66	1.63	0.47
Markham	349,007	0.43	1.22	0.53
Vaughan	329,000	0.56	0.57	0.64
Kitchener	261,610	0.59	1.82	0.55
Richmond Hill	212,798	0.52	1.55	0.39
Oakville	231,000	0.44	2.12	0.43
Oshawa	184,938	0.51	0.84	0.60
Burlington	194,179	0.55	0.86	0.49
Barrie	159,521	0.39	0.68	0.28
Waterloo	154,440	0.49	1.92	0.45
Whitby	151,500	0.45	1.35	0.39
Guelph	143,740	0.44	0.95	0.55
Cambridge	152,130	0.62	0.58	0.46
Ajax	126,666	0.44	1.26	0.42
Pickering	96,998	0.53	1.49	0.62
Average	**282,982**	**0.48**	**1.29**	**0.44**
Milton	**140,260**	**0.38**	**2.27**	**0.30**

* Mississauga Public Library data does not appear to include its Central Library which was closed for redevelopment in 2023

Table 2

Library System	# of Library Programs per 1,000*	Program Attendance per capita	In-Person Visits per capita	E-Visits per capita
Mississauga	6.7	0.15	2.8	1.9
Brampton	7.3	0.17	2.4	2.7
Hamilton	14.7	0.27	4.6	8.0
Markham	9.3	0.20	7.2	12.8
Vaughan	10.1	0.29	5.0	10.2
Kitchener	14.5	0.25	4.6	8.5
Richmond Hill	4.9	0.13	3.7	7.7
Oakville	7.1	0.09	2.8	3.5
Oshawa	8.9	0.19	2.6	4.0
Burlington	19.2	0.41	5.7	5.4
Barrie	17.0	0.38	3.2	2.6
Waterloo	7.2	0.25	4.0	5.1
Whitby	11.1	0.20	3.3	2.9
Guelph	9.0	0.18	5.6	3.8
Cambridge	19.9	0.70	4.2	4.5
Ajax	14.8	0.38	5.1	5.9
Pickering	10.7	0.26	4.1	7.9
Average	**11.3**	**0.26**	**4.2**	**5.7**
Milton	**9.4**	**0.27**	**5.1**	**3.5**

Table 3

Library System	Holdings (Items) per capita*	Annual Circulation per capita	Turnover Rate
Mississauga	1.3	5.1	2.6
Brampton	1.1	3.7	2.9
Hamilton	1.9	5.6	3.5
Markham	3.0	8.5	3.5
Vaughan	1.7	7.2	2.4
Kitchener	3.1	4.6	6.7
Richmond Hill	1.9	5.8	3.4
Oakville	1.3	6.3	2.1
Oshawa	1.7	4.1	4.3
Burlington	2.1	6.7	3.1
Barrie	1.7	4.4	3.8
Waterloo	3.3	8.1	4.1
Whitby	2.0	5.5	3.6
Guelph	2.9	13.1	2.2
Cambridge	1.7	4.1	4.3
Ajax	2.2	5.9	3.8
Pickering	3.2	5.7	5.6
Average	**2.1**	**6.1**	**3.6**
Milton	**1.3**	**5.4**	**2.3**

*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
Kitchener	$47.16	$5.00	$44.18
Richmond Hill	$48.29	$4.07	$45.68
Oakville	$55.66	$5.50	$52.47
Oshawa	$53.08	$4.69	$50.17
Burlington	$68.18	$6.54	$65.12
Barrie	$61.90	$8.79	$57.95
Waterloo	$56.67	$8.75	$54.05
Whitby	$45.95	$7.31	$70.82
Guelph	$76.72	$8.53	$51.28
Cambridge	$59.23	$4.73	$54.58
Ajax	$58.85	$6.73	$51.03
Pickering	$66.67	$6.25	$63.31
Average	**$51.43**	**$5.84**	**$48.92**
Milton	**$46.05**	**$7.89**	**$44.05**

Sources: Province of Ontario, Ontario Public Library Statistics, 2024

Appendix B:
Community Survey Results

Total number of responses: 365

Q1 Please indicate all the ways that you or anybody in your household has visited a Milton Public Library branch and if you have used our website in the past 2 years.

	#	%
Library Branch	349	96%
MPL Website	275	76%
I / We Have Not Used MPL	6	2%
Answered Question	362	

Q2 Which MPL branch or digital service do you usually use?

	#	%
Main Branch	289	80%
Sherwood Branch	171	47%
MPL Website (downloadable eBooks or audiobooks, online resources)	160	44%
MPL Mobile App	122	34%
Beaty Branch	109	30%
Answered Question	362	

Not Sure	2	1%
I do not use MPL	2	1%

Q3 What do you like to do at the library?

	#	%
Borrow / check out material	296	82%
Look through books and other materials	261	72%
Pick up holds	217	60%
Go to library programs	124	34%
Read / relax	118	33%
Work or study	94	26%
Use Wi-Fi	72	20%
Use printers / 3D printers	67	19%
Socialize with friends or family	59	16%
Use Library computers	53	15%
Stay warm or keep cool	27	7%
Local history or genealogy searches	20	6%
Meet with co-workers or clients	16	4%
Connect with local agencies and partners	13	4%
I do not use or visit Library branches	6	2%
Other (please specify)	0	0%
Answered Question	362	

Q4 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements related to library facilities.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Answered Question
	%	%	%	%	%	#
Investing in libraries should be a high priority for Town Council and the Library Board.	63%	26%	4%	2%	5%	351
There are currently enough library branches in Milton.	12%	39%	23%	21%	5%	334
A library should be prioritized in Boyne / southwest Milton.	17%	38%	36%	7%	3%	278
Main Branch should be expanded and refreshed.	27%	33%	28%	8%	3%	342
Hours open at Beaty Branch should be increased to 6 days a week.	27%	39%	29%	4%	1%	303
Use of interim or temporary branches should be explored until permanent branches can be built.	15%	44%	28%	11%	2%	322
Using the library would be easier and more convenient if MPL offered book vending machines, book mobiles or lockers to pick up my holds in out of reach areas.	15%	29%	36%	14%	6%	323
I would like to see more outdoor spaces for reading and library programs.	23%	37%	27%	10%	3%	345

Q5 Is there anything else that the Draft LSMP should consider in relation to library facilities?

	#		#
Implement Quiet Spaces	16	Additional Library Branch	3
Increase Library Hours	11	Updated Technology Access	3
Expand Book Collections	10	E-books and Audiobooks	2
Expand Children's Collections and Programming	9	Physical Collections (Magazines, newspapers, etc.)	2
Expand Adult Programming	6	Additional Seating	2
Remove Late Fees	5	Implement More Parking	2
Designated Food Spaces	5	Public Transportation	1
Add Creative Spaces	4	Improve Accessibility	1
Answered Question	128		

Q6 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements related to library services.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Answered Question
	%	%	%	%	%	#
I am able to find library staff to help me with my in-branch needs	45%	46%	7%	2%	1%	341
MPL should partner with community organizations to cater to specialized groups and offer programs and events.	28%	45%	21%	4%	2%	334
MPL should explore opportunities to partner with universities and colleges in the Town to address needs for library space and services.	28%	48%	19%	4%	1%	323
Library services reflect Milton's diverse multicultural makeup.	23%	51%	21%	3%	1%	317
MPL should increase its focus on providing access to technology (e.g. 3D printing, Wi-Fi, software, etc.)	23%	45%	26%	5%	2%	327
I am aware of the services and programs that MPL offers.	18%	62%	14%	5%	1%	338

Q7 Is there anything else that the LSMP should consider in relation to library facilities?

	#
More Adult Programming	11
Greater Awareness of Library Offerings and Programs	5
Foster Partnerships	5
Designated Food Spaces	5
Increase Audiobooks and E-books	3
Update Printing Technology	3
Increase Library Hours	3
Expand Book Collections	3
Offer Passes to Town Events or Recreation Spaces	2
Expand Children's Collections and Programming	2
Increase Study Spaces	2
Implement Quiet Spaces	2
Increase Youth Programming	2
Improve Technology Access	2
Implement Fines	1
Create Meeting Spaces	1
Physical Collections	1
Nothing else to consider	17
Answered Question	81

Q8 Please help us prioritize where we focus our collections, programs and services by indicating the level of importance for the following items.

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Somewhat Unimportant	Not Important	Don't Know	Answered Question
	%	%	%	%	%	%	#
Physical Print Items (e.g. books)	65%	27%	6%	1%	1%	1%	340
CDs / DVDs	7%	31%	33%	15%	13%	1%	340
eBooks and eAudiobooks	42%	39%	13%	3%	3%	0%	336
Technology (Wi-Fi, laptop lending, tech, programs, makerspace)	41%	40%	15%	1%	1%	1%	341
Digital streaming content	27%	35%	26%	4%	3%	5%	338
Multilingual collections	27%	34%	27%	5%	4%	3%	341
Accessible collections, technology and software	35%	42%	17%	1%	2%	3%	339
Services and programs for newcomers to Canada.	29%	42%	21%	3%	3%	1%	341
"Library of Things" like passes to parks and art galleries, sporting equipment, etc.	49%	31%	13%	3%	2%	1%	341

Q9 Is there anything else that the LSMP should consider in relation to library collections, programs or services?

	#
Expand Book Collections	7
Expand the Library of Things	6
Foster Partnerships	4
Offer Passes for Town Events or Spaces	4
Greater Awareness of Library Offerings and Programs	3
Improve Staff Audit / Training	3
Implement Digital Books or resources	2
Create More Volunteer Programs	2
Add More Audio and e-books	2
More Youth Programming	1
Provide Book Recommendations	1
Expand Children's Spaces	1
More Adult Programs	1
Physical Collections (i.e. magazines, newspapers, etc.)	1
Improve Website	1
Offer More Outdoor Programs	1
Improve Available Technology	1
Entrepreneurship Spaces	1
Nothing else to consider	11
Answered Question	58

Q10 The Draft LSMP slightly updates the MPL Vision "To inspire through discovery, collaboration, creation and innovation". Please tell us your level of agreement with our proposed Vision and what MPL aspires to be in the future.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Answered Question
%	%	%	%	%	%	#
28%	50%	15%	2%	0%	5%	340

Please share any comments about our Vision.

	#
Vision is agreeable	22
Vision is missing a piece	7
Vision is unclear	2
Vision is unimportant	2
Vision is acceptable	1
Answered Question	40

	#
Vision is too short	1
Vision is too long	1
Unsure	1
No further comment	3

Q11 The Draft LSMP slightly updates the MPL's Statement of Purpose to "MPL empowers the community to: Read. Learn. Innovate. Connect." Please rate your level of agreement with our proposed Purpose.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Answered Question
%	%	%	%	%	%	#
34%	48%	12%	2%	0%	4%	330

Please share any comments about our Purpose.

	#
Purpose is agreeable	8
Purpose is missing a piece	3
Purpose needs definition	2
Purpose is unimportant	2
Original purpose was better	1
No further comment	2
Answered Question	18

Q12 Please indicate your level of agreement for each of our existing Values that guide how library services are delivered. These Values have not changed since the last LSMP.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Answered Question
	%	%	%	%	%	%	#
Intellectual Freedom	38%	47%	10%	1%	0%	4%	329
Inclusivity	37%	48%	10%	2%	1%	3%	329
Accessibility	46%	43%	7%	0%	1%	3%	329
Exceptional Public Service	43%	44%	8%	1%	0%	3%	325
Lifelong Learning	48%	43%	6%	0%	0%	2%	327
Accountability	39%	44%	13%	1%	0%	4%	328

Please share any comments about our Values.

	#
Values are agreeable	5
Values are inaccurate	2
Answered Question	11

No further comment	4

Q13 Please share any additional thoughts or comments that you have about the Draft LSMP.

	#
LSMP is good	7
Expressed appreciation for MPL	5
Remove Library Fees	2
Accommodate different cultures	2
Library is too loud	2
Increase Library Hours	2
Increase Staff	1
Expressed Dissatisfaction for LSMP	1
Add Prayer Space	1
More reading programs	1
Answered Question	67

	#
LSMP is unimportant	1
LSMP is too broad	1
Children's Programs and Spaces	1
Expand Library of Things	1
Adult programming	1
Digital Books	1
Infrastructure Fixes	1
Expand MPL	1
Accessibility	1
None	3

Q14 Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

	#	%
1	21	9%
2	80	35%
3	64	28%
4	79	34%
Answered Question	288	

	#	%
5	48	21%
6	13	6%
7+	4	2%

Q15 How long have you lived in Milton?

	#	%
Less than 5 years	94	28%
5 to 10 years	61	18%
11 to 20 years	81	24%
Answered Question	332	

	#	%
More than 20 years	92	28%
I do not live in Milton	2	1%
Prefer not to answer	2	1%

Q16 What languages are most commonly spoken in your home?

	#	%
English	313	95%
Urdu	34	10%
French	26	8%
Hindi	22	7%
Punjabi	13	4%
Arabic	10	3%
Spanish	13	4%
Portuguese	6	2%
Polish	5	2%
Cantonese	4	1%
Mandarin	4	1%
Answered Question	329	

	#	%
Tagalog	4	1%
Tamil	4	1%
American Sign Language	4	1%
Malayalam	3	1%
German	2	1%
Gujarati	2	1%
Marathi	2	1%
Dari	2	1%
Prefer not to answer	3	1%
Other	13	4%

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