

Innisfil Public Library's Future: A Part of Your Life

A Four-Year Strategic Plan for

Innisfil Public Library

2007 – 2011



Published February 2007

by

Innisfil Public Library

967 Innisfil Beach Road,

Innisfil, ON L9S 1V3

Welcome

Welcome to Innisfil Public Library's new Strategic Plan, ***Innisfil Public Library's Future: A Part of Your Life 2007-2011***. It builds on the 2003 Strategic Plan which recognized the need for direction in one of the fastest growing communities in Ontario. This new plan addresses the many challenging changes and emerging trends that have occurred in the last four years

Our library system operates in an environment of rapid and constant change, driven by new technologies, changing demographics, evolving customer needs and expectations and resource constraints. To respond to change, to continue to be relevant in our customers' lives, and to sustain our support of quality of life in Innisfil, the Library Board is committed to continually redefining and repositioning library service. This goal of excellence in customer service will guide our innovations and organizational direction in the future.

Throughout the fall of 2006, a team composed of Library Board members and staff participated in a series of workshops to discuss challenges and opportunities for library services in the future. Our new Strategic Plan is the outcome.

During the strategic planning process, the team reviewed the library's mission statement and undertook a series of exercises designed to visualize future library services. From this process, the team selected four priorities which will provide the framework for making this vision a reality. They are *People, Spaces & Places, Infrastructure and Marketing & Communication*.

We envision a library system that will continue to support the community's goals and aspirations. Our facilities will be meeting places - destinations for those who live, work, and study in Innisfil. Staff will deliver the information expertise and information literacy skills required for success in today's knowledge-based economy.

Innisfil Public Library's Future: A Part of Your Life

Lillian Owen

Library Board Chairperson

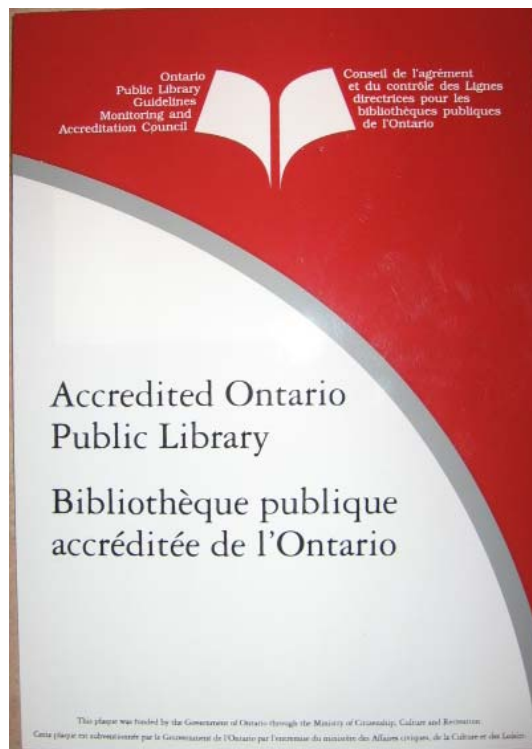
Creating Our Future

Like our community, Innisfil Public Library has come a long way. From very humble beginnings in 1898 when there was no designated library building, the Library has kept stride with our expanding, progressive municipality by providing branches in four locations – Lakeshore, Churchill, Cookstown, and Stroud. As our community continues to grow, so too will the Library.

*Li brari es
change
l i ves*

To grow effectively, and in the right direction, demands a plan with clear guideposts. During the past 20 years we have been guided by the Fox Jones Master Plan Report (1989), and the Board's Strategic Plan for 2003-2006. Under the guidance of these plans we have developed a firm foundation. In September 2006 we undertook an accelerated planning process to determine how we will continue to build on this foundation. The result is this Strategic Plan for 2007-2011.

Our thanks to all Board members, Library staff, and community members who invested their time, insights and energies into making this plan possible by contributing through surveys, meetings and e-mails.



Our Vision: Quality, Customer Service & Connections

Strategic planning is not a process in which one plan stops and another begins. Rather, the vision and strategies carved out in previous plans continue to be refined and shaped to fit the current and evolving conditions of today and tomorrow. The 2007 – 2011 Strategic Plan continues along the path initiated by those plans, fine-tuning the strategic elements of quality, customer service and connections, and adjusting the lens on the vision to bring the details more clearly into focus.

The library's vision hinges on those strategic elements – quality, customer service and connections. The 1989 Fox Jones Master Plan stressed quality, recommending accreditation of library branches, quality collections and services, highly trained staff, and facilities that meet the needs of the community. Why accreditation? Accreditation stamps our library as a place of quality information resources and services. We have achieved this quality stamp for three branches, and Cookstown's accreditation will be complete in 2007. All branches will be re-accredited by 2011.

Customer service is what makes libraries happen. It is the catalyst that brings our customers together with the resources that will enrich and change their lives – supporting their learning, entertaining them, helping them solve problems and make decisions. Customer service is also the enabler to developing community partnerships. Through active customer service we create communication bridges with our school boards and the business community, integrating our services and resources into their processes – becoming that one window for them.

Innisfil is a community of communities. The library is, by its very nature, a connector; it connects people with ideas, knowledge, services, activities, content, media, computers, and with other people. Our vision is to extend and further embrace this connection role, helping our community manage some of its unique challenges:

- Our geography and limited transportation network hinders people's ability to connect with the contacts, services and resources they need. The library is a repository or nucleus - like a living body of information
- Our community lacks a main "core", centre or focal point for the community. The library is a community gathering place in each of the hamlets. This gives us the unique opportunity to become that focal point of ideas, information and socialization, championing the interchange of information and offering activities and services that bring new people together to network.

*Libraries
open doors*

Libraries open doors for learning and imagination. Learning should be enjoyable with the library being a place of delight bringing together ideas and opposing view points.

*"Vision without action
is a dream.
Action without vision
is simply passing the
time.
Action with Vision is
making a positive
difference."*

Joel Barker

The Library's vision is to be an integral part of our community and of every life in our community, to be a virtual and physical destination and gathering place for activities, idea-exchange, learning, networking, connections, resources and services. We not only have the potential to realize this vision, we also have the collections, the skilled staff, the customer service.....and the plan.



Strategic Priorities

The library has defined four strategic priorities: people, spaces & places, infrastructure, and marketing & communication. The objectives established within each of these priorities will guide our actions during the next several months. Although we will review these priorities and objectives regularly to ensure that we are still in step with our community and with evolving technologies, we will never lose sight of the essential role of library staff and collaborative partnerships in achieving our priorities and overall vision.



Strategic Priority #1: People

All those involved in making the library “happen”, including staff, board and volunteers, will have the training and development opportunities to grow and strengthen the competencies needed to sustain the library’s success.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective that staff is highly skilled and:

1. Effectively performing their current job responsibilities
2. Fully participating in discussions regarding future library plans and programs
3. Realizing their career potential within the library.

ACTION PLAN

To realize this objective we will all work together to:

1. Create learning and development plans, including coaching and mentoring programs, for each staff member
2. Enable staff to participate in sessions that increase their understanding of specific groups within our community.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective is that staff, the Board and volunteers are all aligned, working together towards our strategic priorities.

ACTION PLAN

To realize this objective we will:

1. Create opportunities for the Board and staff to interact and better understand each other’s roles, responsibilities and perspectives
2. Identify opportunities for staff and volunteers to further their mutual and collective understanding of how their contribution strengthens the library’s position in the community.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective is that the person power and requisite funding are in place to enable staff to participate in development and learning opportunities, and to implement the objectives and actions of this strategic plan.

ACTION PLAN

To realize this objective we will:

1. Consult with an organizational development professional to identify the current strengths and weaknesses of our work environment, and, with all staff working together, implement ways of building on our strengths and minimizing and eliminating the weaknesses
2. Optimize our internal communication channels, with regular effective meetings, face-to-face discussions, and using collaborative on-line tools including an intranet, wikis, blogs, etc.

Strategic Priority #2: Spaces & Places

The library will be the “third place” for the people of our community (the first “two places” are their homes and work/school environments), in which services and materials enhance their knowledge, their know-how and their enjoyment of life in Innisfil. The community will experience the delight of learning and socializing in our library’s spaces and places.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective is to have the Cookstown Branch accredited and ensure the continued accreditation of all branches.

ACTION PLAN

To realize this objective we will:

Ensure Cookstown Branch Manager and staff have all the support required to fulfill the accreditation requirements.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective is that the library becomes “one window” that increases the library’s relevance in the lives of those living in our community, and encourages people to spend more time in both the physical and virtual spaces and programs.

ACTION PLAN

To realize this objective we will:

1. Investigate integrating social areas within the library by adding eating areas, colours and music, learning from other libraries and community service organizations
2. Implement ways of merchandising areas of the library and/or collection, again by learning from others, and through our own innovation and experience
 - a. Explore the option of working with Georgian College design students or students in other programs
3. Purchase and integrate a collection management system that supports and manages merchandising processes
4. Use the ideas captured as part of the Master Plan preparatory work to identify:
 - a. Innovative specialized programming for all types of groups (i.e. simultaneous programs for children and adults that enable parents to learn research or technology skills while their children are involved in another program)
 - b. Ways of increasing convenience for people in the use of our services
 - c. How to configure our current and planned facilities to be welcoming, effective places.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective is that the library leaves no resident behind, and is responsive to what is happening in our community and in the world around us.

ACTION PLAN

To realize this objective we will:

1. Implement the recommendations of the Master Plan, as deemed appropriate, to:
 - a. Ensure our physical facilities and multi-formatted materials are not just relevant, but are inviting, accessible and situated – physically and virtually, in the best locations for our community
 - b. Sustain and extend our meeting rooms and spaces for community events and gatherings
2. Continue, add and enhance programs and collections supporting the curriculum and educational experience of students
 - a. Continue and improve 'Assignment Assistant' for the secondary schools
 - b. Implement 'Assignment Assistant' for Grades 4 – 8 in the elementary schools
 - c. Maintain the strength of our curriculum-related resources
3. Work with business and employment organizations to develop and implement programs to strengthen the local community such as job finding, resume writing and technology savvy workshops.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective is to be recognized by our community for our incredible services and collections.

ACTION PLAN

To realize this objective we will:

1. Never lose focus on our reference services and readers advisory
2. Use our internal intranet and other communication venues to help staff keep current on topics and materials in which our patrons may be interested, as well as ideas and techniques for enhancing our reference and readers advisory
3. Leverage our collection budget to grow our electronic resources without weakening our physical materials collections.



Strategic Priority #3: Infrastructure

Our physical and virtual spaces and places will be built in partnership with our municipal, school, business and community colleagues, and will balance the practicality and ability of today's technology and construction with tomorrow's realities.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective is to collaborate with other community partners to provide enhanced services and resources to the community.

ACTION PLAN

To realize this objective we will:

1. Have an agreement with the Board of Education and the schools to:
 - a. Extend the 'Assignment Assistant' homework program to grades 4 – 8 in the elementary schools
 - b. Continue to offer 'Assignment Assistant' for the secondary schools
 - c. Work together to identify curriculum-related resources that can be integrated into our physical and electronic collections
 - d. Train educational institutions in the use and potential of on-line databases and resources
2. Work with the Chamber of Commerce and businesses to:
 - a. Expand and market the Economic Development Database
3. Work with other community organizations, including the health units, to facilitate marketing their information materials and various campaigns
4. Engage community partners to develop a long-term strategy in 2009 regarding community resources and programs; this strategy will define the roles and responsibilities of all partners, including the library
 - a. Position the library as a community business information centre.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective is to enable our community to easily find and use community resources in whatever format works best for them.

ACTION PLAN

To realize this objective we will:

1. Acquire and integrate the technology needed to deliver virtual information, using both free web tools and commercial products
2. Join and participate in the business associations, teacher librarian groups, and other municipal and community groups
3. Purchase and implement a collection management system that integrates and manages relationships and resources with partners.

Strategic Priority #4: Marketing & Communication

The library is known throughout our community, and through their experience with us, our community recognizes our place in their lives.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective is to have a focused, cost-effective marketing plan that builds people's understanding of both the collective library and local branches and furnishes us with a coordinated look and identity.

ACTION PLAN

To realize this objective we will:

1. Develop a marketing plan that includes:
 - a. A timed roll-out
 - b. Ways to involve and train staff to ensure that marketing becomes an integrated process in customer service, program development and all library functions
 - c. A signage plan and physical design elements that reflect the character of the local branch and yet involve a common identifier to represent the library identity
 - d. A schedule for 2009 to develop additional visible elements (e.g. signage, flags, banners, etc.).

OBJECTIVE

Our objective is that the library's brand resonates with the community, is recognized throughout the community, and draws people to our services and programs.

ACTION PLAN

To realize this objective we will:

1. Develop an implementation plan and long-term strategy for managing the branding process and overseeing the reinforcement of the plan
2. Develop a logo and slogan.

***"A voyage of discovery
consists not in seeking
new lands, but seeing
with new eyes."***

Proust