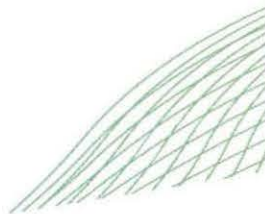
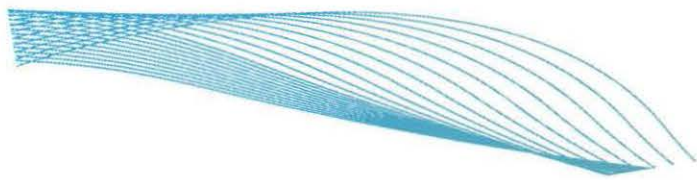


Lambton County Library

STRATEGIC CAPACITY PLAN

September 2013





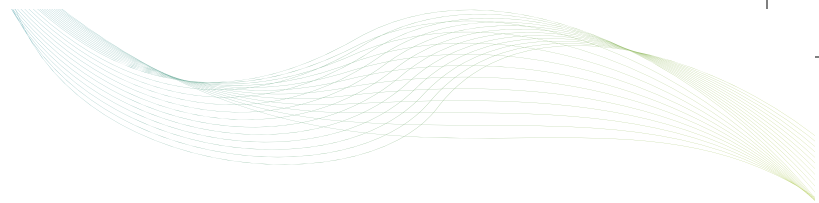


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Libraries around the world are making exciting changes to their collections, programs, services, physical spaces and community partnerships. These changes equip libraries to better respond to the changing needs of their communities, and to be as relevant as possible in the 21st century.

In May 2012, Lambton County Council endorsed the Lambton County Library's report, "Refocusing the Lambton County Library." In doing so, it began to direct strategic attention to better equip the Lambton County Library to address new challenges and to fully explore opportunities to build community engagement. To this end, and with the generous support of Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport through its Cultural Strategic Investment Fund, Lambton County Library engaged Pillar Consulting & Advisory Services to develop a Library Strategic Capacity Plan that would provide a creative, sustainable approach for community engagement and strategy development; a plan that would cultivate collaboration, enable vibrant and inclusive visioning, and promote shared partnerships. Specifically, the consulting team was directed to research best practices in community-led librarianship and determine how the model could be applied in the County of Lambton.

With the growing recognition of Culture as the fourth pillar in municipal planning and development, each of the departmental strategic plans of the Cultural Services Division include an intentional focus on being congruent with other strategic municipal frameworks, including the County of Lambton Strategic Plan and the Lambton Cultural Plan. This consistency throughout will ensure the alignment and positioning of the Library ideally to become a connected, inclusive and collaborative partner that municipalities, community members and groups desire to engage with.

Ultimately, these strategic directions are designed to make the Library proactive and responsive to the needs of community and empower branch libraries to make significant local contributions to the economic and social well-being of their host communities. The ultimate goal is to provide Lambton County residents with programs and opportunities for them to be expressive, informed and engaged contributors to the vitality of the local community.

For this reason, the framework of community-led librarianship is ideally suited to be the strategic model for Lambton County Library. In community-led librarianship, library services are shaped and guided by the needs and preferences of users, with the community fully involved in the design of programs, services and partnerships. This requires taking the library outside of its physical walls and into spaces, whether public or private, across the community.

In June 2013, the project consulting team, along with members of the project steering team, had the opportunity to engage the community about their lives, their needs, and their dreams for the library and beyond, through the facilitation of 12 community forums across the county, the collection of survey data from over 800 respondents, and through focused conversations with 8 community members identified as key stakeholders.

The greatest single theme, and not entirely unexpected, is the notion of the shifting landscape across the county, encompassed in the following key themes and opportunities, which are discussed within this report:

- Community programs, partnerships & engagement: create a proactive approach
- Pace, pressures and the changing rural landscape
- Mobile families and the evolving economy
- Demographics: The changing face of Lambton County
- Recreation and leisure: Finding and building niches
- Redefining ourselves: What is “library” and where does library “happen”?

This report contains a model of community-led librarianship that has been tailored to the unique assets and characteristics of Lambton County, including a focus on and responsiveness to the aforementioned themes. It also outlines a 10-year implementation plan that can be delivered in a phased approach, specifically supporting courageous organizational change that, for the most part, can be achieved by repurposing existing financial resources. Six guiding principles of community-led librarianship, consistent with the overall strategic values and directions of the County of Lambton creative and cultural frameworks, have been identified and are explored. They are: Innovation; Proactive Action; Promotion and Storytelling; Collaborative Approach; Inclusive and Responsive; Measureable Impact.

“Library programs will become true building-blocks of community, bridging assets by connecting people. The cumulative record of these experiences will become the library collection of the future”.

~ Robert Tremain, GM Lambton Cultural Services

While this process is only the beginning when it comes to engaging the community in a new way, the data collected indicate a clear “Top 10” of ideas, which the Library can implement to demonstrate its commitment to responsive, innovatively and timely action, including: strategic partnerships with local school boards, the implementation of library as place, and pilot programs to test key program opportunities.

While challenges to the implementation of community-led librarianship exist, there are significant immediate and long-term opportunities to build and strengthen a relevant, modern and prosperous county library system. Ultimately, a thriving Lambton County Library will support a thriving Lambton County – for current residents, for newcomers, for visitors and for the next generation of citizens.

SECTION 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND & APPROACH

Project background

In May 2012, Lambton County Council endorsed the Lambton County Library's report, "Refocusing the Lambton County Library." In doing so, it began to direct strategic attention to better equip the county's library to address new challenges and to fully explore opportunities to build community engagement.

Aligned with the core community values of respect, inclusion and integration, the Terms of Reference for the present project specified these essential goals and metrics for success:

- The adoption of community-led librarianship across Lambton County (respect for public voice)
- Increased sharing of open data in support of community engagement; development of a cultural portal (information sharing, civic empowerment, and citizen articulation); continued cultural mapping (enhanced potential for community partnerships); and broader recognition of the cultural economy
- A dynamic community dialogue that informs a report to council and all 11 local municipalities
- More instances of public/private partnership in branch libraries
- Empowerment of branch libraries to assume the role of cultural anchor in their local downtown and heritage streetscape
- Recognition of Lambton County Library as the prime cultural hub in smaller, rural communities across the county
- Measured increase of collaborative off-site programs involving the Library
- Measured increase to the range of leisure-time options made by branch libraries
- Recognition of the community-building potential of library partnerships and programs
- Integration of the role of the Library into the formal planning framework of the city and the county

To support the development of a Library Strategic Capacity Plan, the Corporation of the County of Lambton engaged Pillar Consulting & Advisory Services to:

- Support and contribute to the work of the project steering team
- Review and analyze opportunities from best practice libraries in other communities
- Facilitate community conversations, in various forms (e.g., public forums, interviews) that will lead to the development of a community inventory and action plan

- Recommend a service delivery model that will meet the strategic objectives and capacity of the organization, and summarize it in a written report and presentation

The consultants' goal was to act as a strategic partner in supporting the County of Lambton to achieve its project objectives of providing a creative, sustainable approach for community engagement and strategy development that would cultivate collaboration, enable vibrant and inclusive visioning, and enable shared partnerships.

Pillar Consulting & Advisory Services' approach leveraged and empowered participants' wisdom, expertise and strengths and fostered a culture of shared leadership between system partners.

Project approach

PROJECT FRAMEWORK (PLANNING)	OUTCOMES AND DELIVERABLES (COMPLETED)
PHASE i: Communication & Project Initialization	
i.1 Meet with the project liaison to discuss the project goals, the draft project schedule, the critical success factors and key challenges.	Completed April 25; project scope approved – as outlined here in column one.
i.2 In discussion with the project liaison and the project steering team, determine which stakeholders should be involved with this project.	Identification of 12 forum locations; key community stakeholders; date for staff engagement session (May 22); and other partner organizations and potential opportunities to engage. Forum and stakeholder lists available in project overview section of the report.
i.3 Provide a sample introductory memo about the project for stakeholders.	Process brand (“future forward”) and key messages finalized in collaboration with project steering team. Additions to original project scope: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News release • Layout and design for promotional posters and bookmarks, website and email graphic
i.4 Provide progress reports and communicate with the project liaison and the project steering team throughout the project.	Ongoing, including project memos and project steering team meetings on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 13 • Jun 3 • Jul 8 • Jul 29

PHASE I: Lambton County Library Services Review

<p>1.1 Review internal reports, studies and service reviews of the Lambton County Library, recent county and municipal cultural and strategic plans as well as similar information and best practice information from other communities.</p>	<p>Highlights of resources reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County culture plan • Municipality strategic plan • Internal staff satisfaction surveys • Circulation statistics • Volunteer statistics • Community-led Libraries Toolkit (Vancouver, 2008) • Community-led Service Philosophy Toolkit (Edmonton 2013) • Developing community-led public libraries: evidence from the UK and Canada (Pateman & Willment, 2013)
<p>1.2 Prepare for facilitated planning session with project steering team. Outcomes of the session will include: review of current mandate, practices and system delivery; conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of Lambton County Library, identification of potential stakeholders and key influencers to this project, and capturing of key discussions, findings and learning agenda items resulting from the session.</p>	<p>Planning session agenda and presentation deck attached as Appendix A.</p>
<p>1.3 Facilitate planning session with project steering team.</p>	<p>Completed May 13.</p> <p>Additionally, facilitated staff engagement session on May 22. Agenda, presentation deck, and follow-up summary attached in Appendix B and C.</p>

<p>1.4 Summarize information collected via planning session with project steering team. Construct internal planning document, including learning agenda. Distribute follow-up documentation to project liaison and project steering team.</p>	<p>Project vision as defined in collaboration with project steering team:</p> <p><i>Working in partnership, we'll engage a broad cross-section of internal stakeholders, citizen and organizations (from influencers to marginalized populations)</i></p> <p><i>Where we want to arrive together in August...</i></p> <p><i>A vision for and practical, measureable model of, community-led librarianship in County of Lambton, with two key areas of focus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Creation of community-owned and community-driven hubs that are key cultural and social destinations;</i> • <i>Sustained community engagement and programming that meets needs of citizens beyond physical library walls.</i>
<p>1.5 Update internal planning document as well as other key items, such as intended impact statement, theory of change, and learning agenda, throughout process. Distribute updated information to project liaison and project steering team.</p>	<p>Session summary, notes and SWOT analysis attached as Appendix D.</p>

PHASE II: Community Inventory and Action Plan

<p>2.1 Deep exploration of library system best practices in other communities. In addition to document review (included in Phase I, Step 1), conduct interviews and other inquiries, as required.</p>	<p>See above list of documents reviewed. 11 individuals contacted for stakeholder interviews (with 9 respondents).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices examined included: • Vancouver Public Library • Edmonton Public Library • Halifax Central Library • Additional program and collection-based examples at a variety of libraries
<p>2.2 Design community engagement strategy, including 11 public forums in Lambton County communities, and interviews with key stakeholders and community groups.</p> <p>Specify outcomes and scope of discussion, including but not limited to: impact of library/ community/cultural sector on sustainability and quality of life, exploration of culture sector enrichment through the Library, opportunity for library programs to contribute to a creative, vibrant community, revitalization potential for libraries as community hubs, best practice samples of what libraries can mean to a community, and needs identification of library material.</p> <p>Develop tools, techniques and methods for data collection, such as facilitation plan and activities, interview and survey questions, multi-media approaches to information gathering (e.g., flipchart, video), etc.</p>	<p>Community engagement tactical plan available upon request.</p> <p>Engagement tools included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 community forums facilitating nearly 90 key community conversations • Online and paper survey (800+ responses) • In-depth with 9 key community stakeholders • Project communications completed via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public relations / earned media • Purchased media (county print and radio ads) • e-newsletters and e-blasts to county and Lambton County Library lists • Website homepage graphic and information page • Posters and bookmarks distributed at library and community locations <p>Forum facilitation design and survey questions available as Appendix E and F.</p>
<p>2.3 Facilitate public forums, stakeholder interviews and community conversations. Compile responses.</p>	
<p>2.4 Analyze and synthesize data and capture relevant findings that will contribute to the formulation of strategic objectives, potential partnerships and collaboration, and branding and marketing of library services.</p>	<p>Complete, as reflected in this report.</p>

Phase III: Project Team Support and Production of Final Document	
<p>3.1 In addition to regular communication updates (Phase i, Step 4) that will include updated versions of the project planning and related key documents (Phase I, Step 5), the consultants will participate in (approximately 5-7) regular meetings of the project steering team. The consultants' role will be to ask questions, facilitate discussion, and manage conflict with the aim of meeting project objectives.</p>	<p>Ongoing, per project schedule.</p> <p>Project steering team was instrumental in assisting with identification of best practices, key stakeholder groups, sharing of survey, and participation in forum conversations.</p> <p>Project steering team meeting agendas, memos and follow-up communiqué to staff attached as Appendix G, H, and I.</p>
<p>3.2 Facilitate a high-energy, informative public presentation to kick-off community engagement process. Collect and compile data from this event.</p>	<p>Complete, to County Council, on June 5.</p> <p>Presentation attached as Appendix J.</p>
<p>3.3 Presentation of best practices and successful model outcomes experienced by communities similar in scale and make-up to County of Lambton to project steering team.</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout the process.</p>
<p>3.4 Prepare draft report of Library Strategic Capacity Plan. Review draft for errors or omissions with project liaison. Revise draft report, as required.</p>	<p>Draft report to July 26; group review and feedback July 29.</p>
<p>3.5 Present final report of Library Strategic Capacity Plan to project steering team, which will identify long-term goals that are aligned with the core community values of respect, integration and inclusion.</p> <p>The report will highlight potential for partnerships with government, nonprofit organizations, for-profit sector, and individuals. Additionally, the report will offer recommendations for implementation across sites in Lambton County, engagement indicators and benchmarks that lead to a comprehensive evaluation of success as well as methodologies for creating two-way dialogue and the recording of challenges and selecting priorities.</p>	<p>Date TBA</p>
<p>3.6 Present final report to Lambton County Council</p>	<p>Date TBA</p>

Twelve community forums were held across the Lambton County in June 2013. The dates and locations are listed below. The advertising poster is attached as Appendix K.

Tuesday, June 11

Legacy Centre
16 Allen Street, Thedford
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Forest Legion
58 Albert Street, Forest
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Friday, June 14

Brooke Alvinston Community Center
3310 Walnut St., Alvinston
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Watford Library
5317 Nauvoo Road, Watford
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 18

Port Lambton Community Hall
507 Stoddard St., Port Lambton
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Florence Community Centre
6213 Mill St., Florence
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Friday, June 21

Point Edward Library
220 Michigan Ave
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Corunna Legion
350 Albert St., Corunna
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Wednesday, June 26

Camlachie United Church
6784 Camlachie Rd., Camlachie
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Oil Heritage District Community Centre
360 Tank St., Petrolia
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, June 27

Oil Museum of Canada
2423 Kelly Rd., Oil Springs
3:00-5:00 p.m.

Sarnia Library Theatre
124 Christina St. S., Sarnia
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The following stakeholders were contacted and asked for their input as part of this process:

Mike Bradley

Bev MacDougall

Warden Todd Case

Marty Raaymakers

Gayle Montgomery

Alison Mahon

Jane Anema

Vicky Ducharme

Lynn Brogden

Mayor of Sarnia

Councillor/CEO at Kiwanis Ctr

County of Lambton

Downtown perspective

Circles: Bridges out of poverty

Community Round Table

Sarnia Community Foundation

Sarnia Workplace Development Board

SLAC/ Lawrence House

Why Community-led Librarianship?

Libraries around the world are making exciting changes in their collections, programs, services, physical spaces and community partnerships to respond to the changing needs of their communities and to be as relevant as possible in the 21st century context. What this means is that library services are shaped and guided by the needs and preferences of users, with the community fully involved in the design of programs, services and partnerships. This includes taking the library outside of its physical walls and into new and unique community spaces.

Community-led librarianship “is predicated on the assumption that all people have needs and everyone has different needs. A needs-based library service has the strategy, staffing and service structures, systems and organizational culture which enable it to identify, prioritize and meet community needs” (Pateman & Williment, 2013, p.1). Community-led librarianship is a reframed perspective on how a library interacts with and serves its community. In doing so, all aspects of the library need to be aligned to this notion: recruitment of staff, job duties, program development and delivery, governance, collections, technology, and metrics and evaluation. The tables below illustrate the contrast between traditional library services and community-led librarianship.

	Community Assessment & Needs Identification		Service Planning and Delivery		Evaluation
	Community Assessment	Needs Identification	Service Planning	Delivery	
Traditional Planning	Staff reviews Demographic data Library use statistics Comment cards Community survey results	Staff identify service gaps or under-served communities	Staff review literature Staff consult with other staff and service providers Staff develop service response	Staff deliver service; develop the collection, hold the program, design facilities	Staff review various inputs Feedback forms Program attendance Collection use Library card enrolment [And] other statistics

Figure 1.1 Traditional planning
 Source: Pateman & Williment, 2013

	Community Assessment & Needs Identification		Service Planning and Delivery		Evaluation
	Community Assessment	Needs Identification	Service Planning	Delivery	
Community-Led Planning	<p>Staff reviews all of the traditional measures and staff spend time in community developing relationships with community members.</p> <p>Staff hear from community about what is important to them.</p>	<p>Staff discuss with community members and hear from the community what their priorities are.</p>	<p>Service ideas are the community's ideas.</p> <p>Community is engaged in the planning of the service.</p> <p>Staff act as partners and facilitators rather than as creators and teachers.</p>	<p>Community members and staff work together to deliver the service.</p> <p>Community partners involved in selecting collection materials.</p> <p>Community partners active in hosting the program.</p> <p>Community partners working collaboratively with the library to develop policy recommendations.</p>	<p>Staff review various inputs.</p> <p>All of the traditional measures and community and staff discuss:</p> <p>How did the process work?</p> <p>Did the service/ policy etc. actually address the need?</p> <p>What could have been done differently?</p>

Figure 1.2 Community-led planning
Source: Pateman & Williment, 2013

This means that building meaningful and sustained relationships with the entire community, and not just current patrons, is at the heart of community-led librarianship. As quoted in the Working Together project, Annette DeFaveri, British Columbia Library Association Executive Director, stated, “Librarians are not the experts on what our communities need or want in terms of library services – the community is the expert. It is our job to ensure that we develop a library service that reflects the community’s needs and vision. We do this with them, not for them” (“Community-Led Libraries Toolkit”, 2008). Community-led librarianship is an approach that works for all groups of people within a community: from key influencers to those who are or are at risk of being marginalized.

Two ground-breaking studies, *Open to All? The public library and social exclusion*, conducted in the UK, and Working Together, based in Canada, provide deep insight as to how to apply community-led librarianship models.

Community-led librarianship takes librarians out from behind their desks and away from books to interact with a wide variety of users. Library staff members become “the facilitators of knowledge exchanges between the community and the library. Each has something to learn from and contribute to the other. The community teaches the library about the community – its assets, its challenges and its needs – while, the library staff inform the community about library systems and where change can most readily happen” (Pateman & Williment, 2013, p. 217).

This notion is a departure from traditional service, outreach and program development in libraries, which are planned, designed, delivered and evaluated by library staff. In community-led librarianship settings, the aim is to co-produce library programs with community members who participate in every stage of development. This means programs and services inside of the library and outside of its physical walls – meeting community members where they are.

Many Ontario libraries, in both urban and rural settings, are adopting the community-led librarianship approach, some examples include:

- **DIGITAL MEDIA LAB, Innisfil Public Library**

This space is for musicians, bloggers, entrepreneurs, and other creative minds. The digital media lab is an interactive, collaborative space where users can work on media projects for free. Tutorials and workshops include Digital Media Tutorials (bring an idea or project to work on free of charge for an hour), Photoshop for Beginners (an interactive class where participants can use their own digital photo for practice), Bring Your Own Band (a collaborative musical session for bands), and Video Production (participants learn how to use digital video equipment).

- **HALIFAX PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The new library design is based on community collaboration in a five-storey building focusing on social spaces. The glass windows bring the outdoors in and show views of the city/harbour. There is a rooftop patio, and a café in the library. They have an open seating area used day and night for gatherings and performances. There are study pods and high-tech areas as well as adult literacy spaces and a book tree for children. It is positioned as place of gathering, of synergy and for inclusive use by the community, along with traditional library purposes.

Library systems that are not willing to engage with the community in new ways face continued challenges when it comes to patronage and support for funding that will lead to reduced branch hours and library locations and, ultimately, a tragic loss for the community. **Community-led librarianship is a path to growth, abundance and enduring relevance as libraries become a gathering place, a community partner, and a destination that is of priority value to a diverse group of community citizens, many of whom have never characterized themselves as library users before.**

Ultimately, community-led librarianship means changing how we conduct the business of libraries, and, how we measure the impact of library service and outcomes – beyond circulation numbers into true impact, neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood and audience-by-audience, as well as social change and community innovation.

“I love the libraries. I think that having a network of libraries right across the county is a bonus for all residents of the county, no matter where they live.” ~ Survey respondent

What is the modern library?

At its heart, community-led librarianship is predicated on the evolution of the library identity (how it is perceived and how it perceives itself) as seen through the lens of community need, challenge, opportunity and dreams.

Libraries have traditionally been couched by thought leaders as being the “living rooms of communities” (“Community-Led Libraries Toolkit”, 2008), that is, a source of information and, to a limited degree, of communication and gathering. Today, external factors such as technology and social change are pushing all traditional institutions to evolve or to risk the question of their very relevance.

It's good to see the LCL is willing to adapt in an age where the library continues to become less of a place for the storage of information and more of a portal to the wider world of resources. A vibrant and modern library can still be a great resource and asset to the community. ~ Survey respondent (via LinkedIn)

Modern and progressive library systems can and should be more – the whole home, if you will – a place for substantial conversations, for access to different points of view via conversation or collections, for borrowing of both traditional and remarkable items, for gathering with purpose or for no express purpose at all, for making, for gaming, for recreation and leisure, for learning, for access to lifestyles and life skills, for peer-finding, for friend-making, and for belonging.

The modern library is an equalizer. It is a resource, a friend and a destination.

This is the vision for a community-led county library system. Not simply a space, but a place – of education, entertainment, culture, gathering, community building, access and inclusion.

Lambton County: A shifting landscape - Key community conversations

During June 2013, the project consulting team along with members of the project steering team, had the opportunity to facilitate 12 key community conversations across the county.

Perhaps the greatest single theme, and not entirely unexpected, is the notion of the shifting landscape across the county. This includes economic and demographic considerations, technology penetration, the environment, the loss of in-community services, and the need for different, and more specifically targeted programs and services.

A shifting landscape necessitates a shift in philosophies, practices, and areas of focus. What this means for Lambton County Library, at a high level, is a shift in favour of the following broad categories of action:

- Proactive programming and program partnerships that leverage community interests and expertise
- More intentional presence of library in community (collections and programs, integrated into community spaces and gathering places)
- Re-imagination of physical spaces to create destinations/community hubs
- Focus on and access to local historical resources (collections, people, museums)
- Pronounced and intentional focus on access and inclusion
- Creation of programs and spaces specifically for young people (including cultural maker spaces, gaming clubs and other strategies for youth attraction)
- Literacy programming beyond traditional reading, writing, and arithmetic;
- Focus on individual economic and social support structures (e.g., job search resources and tools)
- Formalization of community engagement opportunities (Friends of the Library group, advisory councils)
- Marketing and promotional planning that is strategic, proactive and sustained

SECTION 2: STRATEGIC THEMES & OPPORTUNITIES

Guiding principles of community-led librarianship in Lambton County

Consistent with the guiding principals of County cultural planning – Accessibility; Diversity and Inclusion; Partnerships and Collaboration; and Accountability and Fiscal Responsibility – as outlined in the 2011 “Building a Creative Economy” Cultural Plan for Lambton County, the following guiding principals have been developed to frame community-led librarianship in the Lambton County Library system:

- 1. Innovation:** We will strive to provide opportunities for programming, services and spaces, which are beyond the norm of traditional library services, and think differently about how we plan, engage partners, and assess our success.
- 2. Proactive Action:** We will go beyond our physical walls and proactively engage with community partners and subject matters experts, rather than waiting for them come to us.
- 3. Promotion and Storytelling:** We will recognize that all library employees are ambassadors of a positive and exciting library story. We will empower our staff team to be champions in the community.
- 4. Collaborative Approach:** We will partner with our community (individuals, organizations, nations and businesses) and across branch locations, to ensure the sharing of resources (financial, talent) that create timely and relevant programs and services, and attractive spaces. We will not work in isolation and will view a thriving library as the privilege and responsibility of the entire community.
- 5. Inclusive and Responsive:** We will continually strive to include all members of our community, regardless of background or experience, recognizing and responding to a diversity of needs and acknowledging that a community-led library is first and foremost a place of access and inclusion.
- 6. Measureable Impact:** We will ensure our activities are measureable and will conduct measurement regularly to assess, evaluate, revise and improve programs, services and partnerships. We will move beyond collection of statistics to focus on impact and benefit for the people we serve.

Strategic themes and opportunities

Key themes and opportunities identified during these key community conversations were:

- A. Community programs, partnerships & engagement: A proactive approach
- B. Pace, pressures and the changing rural landscape
- C. Mobile families and the evolving economy
- D. Demographics: The changing face of the Lambton County
- E. Recreation and leisure: Finding and building niches
- F. Redefining ourselves: What is “library” and where does library “happen”?

The following is a summary of each along with recommendations on what the Library can act on immediately and in the shorter term, as it relates to community-responsive programs, services and spaces.

A. Community programs, partnerships & engagement: A proactive approach

Absolutely critical to the success of Lambton County Library in the implementation of community-led librarianship is the notion of a consistently proactive stance toward community engagement. Currently, those community members who have interests or talents, or who can bring expertise or resources to bear on the development of library programming, are welcomed when they come forward with an idea. However, these ideas and partnerships are not necessarily actively sought out in response to community need (nor is this community need systematically identified). As a result there is a strong culture of traditional interest-led recreational programming (e.g., knitting circles, book clubs) in a number of library locations. This existing programming provides a foundation upon which to solicit ideas and to build programs that are patron- and community-responsive and are innovative in the way they go beyond the traditional notions and use of the Library.

The following provides a selection of the most prominent opportunities for community programs and program partnerships:

1. Partners for strong children, families and communities

School boards: Partnerships in education represent the foremost opportunities for the library to develop and test a model of proactive engagement that meets direct community need. The streamlining of resources away from traditional in-school libraries has largely meant a compromised student experience and a lack of awareness about the value of libraries to lifelong learning, community building and literacy of all kinds. A partnership to provide in-house librarian services, an “every kid a card” free registration program, and the provision of rotating collections (from traditional print to technology lending) are just a few powerful entry points

into local boards and into an audience of new families. The Library need not be operating a stand-alone physical library space on school board property to realize these opportunities.

Economic supports and job search: Economic stability and jobs are a key point of concern across the Lambton County. Building on the technology that currently exists in library branches, the opportunity to offer regular job search and employment capacity-building programs and services across the county is powerful and timely. Partnerships (with, for example, the Sarnia Lambton Workplace Development Board) to identify key issues and opportunities, as well as to offer workshops and events such as job fairs, would position the Library well as an economic support structure and could potentially attract new users, from under-employed youth to recently unemployed mature workers.

Related to this is the opportunity to continue to grow and to evaluate the outcomes of existing child-family focused partnerships such as Best Start and Organization for Literacy using the tools and measurements provided as part of the community-led librarianship recommendations.

2. Community subject matter experts

The Lambton County is rich with subject matter experts, from industry gurus and technology buffs, to gaming prodigies and knitting aficionados. The Library has the opportunity to tap into this richness of expertise by officially inviting the community to offer suggestions, participate in program development and share this rich talent via the Library. These include:

- **Life Literacy** (from fundamental skills like cooking and sewing, to etiquette, job skills, stress management, and interpersonal communication)
- **Technology Literacy** (for all ages, using and understanding technology in a rapidly changing world, including tech tutors than can be booked out as part of a living library)
- **Historical Literacy** (understanding the rich history and impact of the Lambton County area on the world, e.g., Lambton Oil Heritage, and leveraging programs for intergenerational engagement around this legacy)
- **Cultural Literacy** (understanding the importance of our cultural institutions to the fabric of community – from traditional museums to maker spaces; understanding of multicultural aspect of the County: and, understanding how to live in a world of diversity and with tolerance and compassion)

3. Linking generations

The County's shifting demographics – in particular the aging population and the disengagement of youth – presents a unique opportunity for the Library to bring together different generations for joint programming, storytelling/sharing of history, and learning of all kinds. This might include a formal or informal mentorship program and a reverse mentoring program, which would see youth bringing forward their knowledge and experience to help older adults understand technologies and other emerging trends in new ways.

4. Environmental stewardship

Given the widespread enthusiasm for the Lambton County's great natural beauty and outdoor recreational activities, the Library has an opportunity to offer programs and host or develop groups who share this passion. This may include the Library acting in the role of community catalyst for conversations around issues and projects that represent significant environmental impact, such as new wind turbine farms (as just one example which was identified as a key point of concern in many forum conversations).

5. Next generation engagement

Overall, the disengagement of youth and the migration of young talent out of the county is a key point of concern across the region, as in many rural communities across Canada. This audience group is key to library sustainability in a number of ways – as potential users, as champions within their own families, as future parents of library users, as community economic drivers (if retained) and, most importantly, as a source of exciting and innovative new ideas and uses for library spaces, some of which are explored here.

Building on work already completed via the 2005 Teen Endeavours and Teen Advisory Groups project, this would include the popular notion of maker spaces or maker labs, which attract youth to engage with state-of-the-art technology and undertake creative expression, collaborative projects and professional digital media production (notation: see Innisfil Public Library Digital Media Lab.). This is an investment that would not only build local culture, but also foster positive peer groups and lay a foundation for future career opportunities. Spaces of this kind would also attract community support and sponsorship and would be worthy of significant public relations attention.

If there were just one strategic opportunity that Lambton County Library could focus on in the coming years, it should be the engagement of youth.

One of the themes that emerged from consultation was the loss of graduates from Lambton County due to a lack of job opportunities and the lack of arts and entertainment options. ~ County of Lambton Cultural Plan

B. Pace, pressures & the changing rural landscape

Like all North American communities, the villages and neighborhoods that make up the Lambton County are changing, in some cases dramatically. The pervasiveness of technology, where available, connects people more frequently and allows them to gather in person less often. Those without access to technology are increasingly isolated. Communities are also experiencing the effect of technology on inter-generational relations – where social norms, expectations and even life skills are perceived to be affected, or even lacking, in the next generation.

The pace of life and stress resulting from economic pressures and social issues (joblessness, drug use, loss of services) are on the minds of many citizens. These concerns are largely based on a strong sense of community, pride of place, and an eye toward the future sustainability of small communities, around which the library is ideally suited to organize and provide programming and service.

The Lambton County is a region that values its green spaces and outdoor recreation. Parks, waterways and biking/hiking trails are a hallmark of pride and are enjoyed by residents of all ages and backgrounds. Naturally, many residents are also concerned about the effect of pollution in their communities.

While religious communities are strong, they are waning in numbers. More pronounced is the decline in active community service clubs that have traditionally supported volunteerism, philanthropy and cultivation of the next generation – most prominent amongst them: Women's Institute, Lions, Kinsmen, Rotary and 4H.

This changing environment presents an enormous opportunity for the Library to be:

- A social connector and gathering place for people with both similar and diverse interests
- An equalizer and access point to technology and services, including job search tools, resources and workshops (from the latest sophisticated hardware and software, to more basic phone and fax services)
- A hub of learning and literacy of all kinds
- An advocate and mobilizer around issues specific to rural Ontario

C. Mobile families and the evolving economy

The Lambton County is not alone amongst rural communities in being subject to a variety of mounting pressures, not the least of which are economic.

That said, the fabric of community remains strong in much of the County – pride of place and of family legacy is evident in conversations – as much as does concern about the future, jobs, the loss of talent, and the closing up of main streets and the services they've traditionally housed.

Outside of the theme of jobs and business closures, which was by far a most prominent concern across all county communities, was the concern over loss or disengagement of young, talented people.

At the same time, access to services is changing. In an area where families are increasingly required, by necessity, to drive out of their communities to access services – from medical clinics to dance programs for their children – there can be a loss of connection with the core community and a belief within the next generation that they will eventually, inevitably, have to leave to find opportunity.

As with technology, those who do not have ready access to transportation must fare in isolation.

In this way, the Library has the opportunity to be the catalyst for access, inclusion and community building: to make a place for children and families to gather and to come to them with innovative programs and service partnerships. These may include:

- Community recreation programs (e.g., dance instruction, 4H clubs)
- Rotating collections in community locations (hockey arenas, ball diamonds, local farmer's diners)
- Family movie and game nights
- Meals hosted in community kitchens – for cooking instruction and compassionate hospitality
- In-library clinic hours with travelling nurse practitioners

“We have lost a lot of stores/industry/churches in the rural community forcing us to travel if we wish to take part. Because of this people are pulling away from community living...The Library has been here for many generations and is important to us...If not for the library we would not be in contact with many of our neighbours.” ~ Survey respondent

D. Demographics: The changing face of the County of Lambton

Several key themes are evident across the county related to demographics:

- A largely aging population
- Declining/disconnected youth
- Smaller family sizes overall but multiple generations to be supported (e.g., by the family farm)
- Isolation of retired farmers and their partners, and/or female farm owners
- Diversity, primarily represented by western and eastern European backgrounds

Library programming and services targeted at specific demographics is absolutely crucial to meeting the needs of a number of diverse populations – from knitting clubs and maker spaces, to interest groups, specialized book clubs and collections (non-English language, youth, etc.). And, while demographics are an excellent way to segment and attract the audiences, the ultimate goals of these programs are relatively consistent:

- To offer inclusion and belonging
- To demonstrate relevance and an innovation culture in the Library
- To become a community hub and gathering place that is rich with all age groups and backgrounds

“We were stay-at-home moms. Now we’re stay-at-home grandmas.”

~ Camlachie resident

E. Recreation and leisure: Finding and building niches

Sports are by far the most prominent feature in the spectrum of recreational activities in the county. Hockey, baseball, dance and, to a lesser degree, soccer, are the focus of many families throughout the year. Service clubs and community programs (such as those offered by 4H) continue to hold importance, but participation by volunteers and enrollees is waning. Both casual interest clubs (e.g., knitting, book clubs) and informal but regular gatherings (e.g., breakfast in the local diner) are staple activities for the older adult population.

There are very few opportunities to attract youth and so they are often seen hanging around in public places, or rarely seen at all (suggesting in-home activities such as gaming), with the exception of communities that have skateboard parks, which are popular destinations for the 12- to 18-year-old population.

“We should have Lego club all the time!”

~ A mother from Florence (on behalf of young son)

The dependence of many community activities on volunteers is cited as a key obstacle to new or continued community recreation programs.

The Library has a unique opportunity in this regard to provide a “full service” experience as it relates to special interest or niche programming. Specifically, the Library can bring together program experts (volunteers and staff members) and resources (collections of all kinds) and be the place to gather and meet. This can quite literally include everything from gamer nights, to sports equipment swaps, to travel clubs.

Additionally, during peak times in the sports season, the Library must come to the teams and their families, offering rotating collections at arenas, diamonds, recitals and pitches.

F. Redefining ourselves: What is “library” and where does library “happen”?

Three truths are critical to the success of community-led librarianship in Lambton County:

1. When library begins in childhood, it lasts for a lifetime (a love of libraries starts with babies)
2. We need to redefine what library is in the minds of users and non-users alike (beyond collections, beyond space)
3. In order to ensure continued relevance, libraries must evolve in lockstep with social trends, including focusing a lens on users that extends beyond seeking patronage, to delivering impeccable customer service

Marketing and communication is a central issue for Lambton County Library. While tactical promotional work is of good quality, in terms of informing the user population of programs and services, Lambton County Library is like many other library systems in “preaching to the choir.” The ability to move beyond traditional user populations, and to reposition the Library “beyond books” is absolutely critical. In the long term this should involve a rebranding of the library system (visually, verbally and experientially); in the short to medium term, this means an evolution in the values and perceptions associated with the Library and what “library is” in the 21st century context. (For example – Appendix L – *MyLife.MyLibrary. Campaign at LPL.*)

It is no surprise that the use of libraries has changed dramatically in the last two decades, with the evolution of technology, shifting demographics, and the rise of retail bookshops and coffee houses. The behaviours and expectations of those who would traditionally be library patrons have now shifted to be the preferences and purchasing habits of consumers. Ready-access to information at one’s fingertips is coupled with the fact that a true understanding of literacy, beyond basic reading and writing, continues to evade the majority of citizens. These are key threats to the viability of library systems and this is particularly true amongst young people who are neither using the library themselves nor bringing up their children to use the system.

Looking at library programs and services in a new way, through a community-led librarianship lens, helps us to examine the question of “where library happens” – that is, library is not just a community space and gathering place, but **library happens everywhere**.

This vision for community-led librarianship in Lambton County extends far beyond the physical walls – making the Library synonymous with community, with friends and peer groups, and with home and family:

Library happens at school.

Library happens at home.

Library happens on the field or in the arena.

Library happens on the screen.

Library happens at the local coffee shop.

Library happens in virtual worlds.

Library happens in my life, every day.

Today, thanks to the work of many Lambton County Library staff, the Library already happens in schools, baby play-groups, nursing homes and community centres.

For the future, library can happen absolutely anywhere – local businesses, coffee shops, grain elevators, at home on our screens and on our patios, in neighbourhoods and on street corners.

SECTION 3: A VISION OF THE LAMBTON COUNTY LIBRARY

Future Forward >>

A vision of the Lambton County Library for the 21st century

“My library is a place for....”

- **Gathering** – for sharing of knowledge, of recreation and leisure, for interest clubs, and to simply be in comfortable chair.
- **Culture & Entertainment** – for performances, both formal and impromptu, for sharing of County history and heritage from around the world.
- **Education** – for discovering the world and discovering my community, for learning new things and learning to read, regardless of age.
- **Community-Building** – bringing together partners who can do more for citizens together than in silos, and who have a passion for a prosperous and creative Lambton County.
- **Access** – to resources and tools, to experts and collections, and to one another, to welcoming smiles.

“My library changes lives...”

- By **welcoming babies** and their parents of all ages and experiences.
- Through **literacy programs** that range from technology and life skills to early reading and adult learning.
- Through job search tools and resources that **enrich economic opportunity** and empower confidence and economic self-sufficiency.
- By providing **inclusive access** to technology, collections and space.
- By simply being an open door, and a place that is warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

“My library values...”

- ***Community expertise*** – drawing on the richness of talent and resources in the county and sharing them via library programs and services.
- ***Diverse heritage and rich history*** – connecting residents, young and old, to community history, to each other and to the rich diversity in the new faces of Lambton.
- ***Children and youth*** – recognizing the perspectives and talents they can share today, and helping to shape their literacy and leadership skills for future contributions to our neighbourhoods and communities.
- ***Welcoming spaces*** – the creation of a physical place that illustrates all Lambton County Library has to offer: resources, expertise, safety, inclusion and gathering.

“I was in ‘7th heaven’ when I found out what an adult library card was for...a book from anywhere in the library. Incredible.”

~ Alvinston resident

“By the community, for the community”

It is important to note that a future expectation on behalf of the Library that the community itself will take ownership of, pride in, and accountability for developing a thriving and relevant Library system is just as important as the Library’s vision of community engagement and support. As the implementation of community-led librarianship gets underway at Lambton County Library, this will include active participation by the community – individuals and organizations – in the identification of needs, shaping of programs, and the development of resources (both human and financial) to support bold and innovative new programs, services and partnerships.

Community engagement Top 10 priorities and low-hanging fruit

1. Formalization of strategic partnerships with the Boards of Education
2. Development and implementation of a youth engagement strategy
3. Proactive programming and community expert recruitment, including a focus on programming for youth, inter-generations, economics/jobs, life literacy, and the environment
4. Implementation of library-curated and managed mobile community collections in unexpected places (ball diamonds, local coffee shops, skate parks)
5. Creation of access points (technology, communal phone, fax and television services) in all library locations, and exploration of other opportunities to enhance inclusion, including the lessening or elimination of Library fines;
6. The beginning of library as place, including the realignment over time of physical environments to mirror retail and coffee shop atmospheres, and the exploration of the viability of coffee stations in libraries
7. An intentional focus on family programming, in-library and in-community
8. A focus on marketing and awareness and promotion, beginning with key messages and an annual tactical action plan
9. Creation of hubs for service clubs and niche interest groups, including the cultivation of new volunteer people-power
10. Up to three focused pilots in multiple locations and based on geography and demographics, built on opportunities identified during this initial community engagement process. Recommendations include:
 - In-school programs, including mobile collections, visiting librarian and “every kid a card” sign-up program
 - Youth engagement and a maker space, in partnership with local business
 - Digital literacy and life literacy programming, including tech tutor program and intergenerational mentoring/reverse mentoring program

A Model of Community-Led Librarianship for Lambton County Library

Re-Imagining Community Relationships & Community Impact in Lambton County



Let's walk through how the community-led librarianship model can be successfully introduced in the Lambton County

1. A community member or community group expresses an idea or a need.
2. A library staff member hears about this idea or need directly or indirectly. A library staff member proactively initiates follow-up with the community member or community group to gather more information about the idea or need.

3. Accessing the Library's deep relationships with a diverse set of community individuals, groups and organizations, a library staff member assesses whether existing community assets may be applied and examines how the Library may be able to support the need. To be considered, an idea or need must:
 - a. Be driven by the community and not by library staff. This includes a minimum threshold of leadership by one or a group of community members.
 - b. Be representative of a community need, preferably a diverse set of community groups.
 - c. Lead to increased engagement by the community of the Library.
4. A library staff member presents information to library decision-makers to gain support for moving forward and to be responsive to the community in a timely fashion. Branches should be empowered to make decisions about a certain number of community-led projects, while other decisions would be made by a committee at the system level that meets monthly. For example:
 - Branch staff can approve initiatives that utilize existing branch resources, such as space, collections, and allocated staff time. For example, community clubs using meeting space within regular branch hours, developing a cultural program that is aligned with a local event or anniversary.
 - The committee at the systems level can approve initiatives that require additional investment of library resources and projects that could be expanded to all 26 or multiple branches of the library. For example, investing in new types of collections, such as a bicycle borrowing program.
5. A library staff member communicates the decision of the Library to the community member or group. The Library collaborates as an equal partner with community members and together they act as leads for the initiative in the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of success.
6. Library decision-makers review evaluation data from this community-led initiative as well as others to determine what lessons may be learned. Information from all initiatives is shared internally and externally so that success and failures can lead to new ideas from the community.
7. All data leads into system success metrics, which are provided by the library management team to the GM of Cultural Services and reviewed by Council. The proposed community advisory committee provides insight to Council via management to help shape how resources are allocated (for program and services, technology, and collections) in the year ahead, based on community need.

SECTION 4: IMPLEMENTATION & CONSIDERATIONS

Implementation plan

Research on community-led librarianship (“Community-Led Libraries Toolkit”, 2008) and comprehensive organizational change suggests that a phased-in approach to implementation is best. The table below illustrates a 10-year plan categorized by the following themes:

- Developing community relationships & research
- Community outreach, programs & service delivery
- Reimagining of physical space
- Collections & technology
- Staffing, recruitment, training & education
- Library image & identity and mainstream community-led librarianship
- Standards & monitoring success

Theme	Year 1-2	Year 3-5	By Year 10
<p>Developing community relationships & research</p>	<p>Each branch identifies existing community relationships and potential ones (cultural mapping exercise is undertaken with proactive engagement by staff of local individuals and groups); Assess health of current community relationships using one framework across the system</p> <p>Library examines tools to record and track existing and potential relationships and community assets across the system</p> <p>Library system creates list of statistical research and sources of information that are defined as key indicators for health of Lambton community. Library system also identifies if there is information that the Library would like to have but is not currently collected</p>	<p>Each branch develops plan to build on community relationships (in alignment with community library outreach coordinator's goals and work plan)</p> <p>Relationship tracking system implemented across library system</p> <p>Library system tracks key community indicators for Lambton County and makes information available to library staff</p> <p>Explore possibility of developing group of cross-library leaders that can monitor CLL on national level; begin to position Lambton as rural leader</p>	<p>Key focus of all library staff is developing and nurturing community relationships</p> <p>Relationship tracking system is working well and is used to evaluate successful partnerships</p> <p>Key community indicators and library system metrics are aligned; library system is seen as influential community partner, responding in a timely manner to community ideas and needs</p> <p>Library collaborates with other agencies to gather community information identified as valuable, but to date has not been collected</p> <p>Lambton recognized as leader of CLL in rural environments</p>
<p>Community outreach, programs & service delivery</p>	<p>Provide training to front line staff and management about CLL's impact on programs and the program continuum</p> <p>Create staff task group to guide branches on how to assess existing program against CLL values and to make recommendations on what programs should continue, change or end</p> <p>In alignment with community library outreach coordinator's goals and work plans, new programs at 5 pilot branches will reflect CLL values</p>	<p>In alignment with community library outreach coordinator's goals and work plans, 65% of branches have programs that reflect CLL values</p> <p>Majority of library CLL programs are either led in partnership or are co-produced by community</p>	<p>100% of branches have programs that reflect CLL values</p> <p>Majority of all library programs are co-produced by community</p>

Theme	Year 1-2	Year 3-5	By Year 10
Reimagining of physical space	<p>Physical space of 5 pilot branches reorganized to retail-like layout and other CLL considerations</p> <p>Plans for future renovations and physical upgrades are reexamined with CLL as central theme in layout planning</p>	<p>50% of existing physical spaces reorganized to retail-like layout and other CLL considerations</p>	<p>100% existing physical spaces reorganized to retail-like layout and other CLL considerations</p>
Collection & technology	<p>IT & Collections departments develop transition plan to align procurement processes with CLL model</p>	<p>IT & Collections pilot transition plan with up to 50% of budgeted resources</p>	<p>100% of collections and IT decisions are made using CLL lens</p>

Theme	Year 1-2	Year 3-5	By Year 10
Staffing, recruitment, training & education	<p>Hire community library outreach coordinator(s) to lead consultation in 5 branches; establish annual goals such as 1 CLL project brought to fruition in year 1, 3 by year 2, and focused pilots across the system where appropriate (see section on Top 10/Low Hanging Fruit)</p> <p>Assign accountability for success of CLL implementation to all managers; one manager selected to support community library outreach coordinator</p> <p>Leadership team and all managers receive training on CLL and how it will be applied in LC; initiate supervisor training on how to support change and CLL in their teams</p> <p>Ensure adequate human resources (leaders and training) are in place to bring CLL to LC; amend the organizational structure of responsibilities and direct reports to make the system appropriate to CLL strategies</p> <p>Develop new job descriptions for all library staff reflective of CLL as the strategic framework for their role; Use this for all new hires</p> <p>Develop performance targets for all existing and new employees related to CLL</p> <p>Engage staff unions to garner support for adoption of CLL as a means to increase relevance</p>	<p>Community library outreach coordinators leading community consultation in 65% of branches; establish annual goals to bring progressive number of CLL projects to fruition</p> <p>Train all frontline staff on CLL and how it will be applied in LC; managers and leaders invest sufficient coaching time to support frontline staff with the change</p> <p>New hires continue to use updated job descriptions; transition existing staff to new job descriptions and performance targets developed in years 1 and 2</p>	<p>100% branches and employees work with CLL approach</p> <p>Plan and implement phasing out of community library outreach coordinator position as 100% library staff have CLL positioned as key accountability of their jobs</p> <p>Reward and recognition system introduced related to CLL targets</p> <p>100% frontline and leadership employee performance targets reflect CLL values</p>

Theme	Year 1-2	Year 3-5	By Year 10
Library image & identity; mainstreaming CLL	<p>Address current critical internal and external communication challenges</p> <p>Upgrades to current website are identified and implemented to increase functionality and introduce CLL</p> <p>Create two-way communication channels specific to change management process, including a robust intranet system that has intuitive navigation and can be contributed to by all staff</p> <p>Identify how adoption of CLL will merge with other key frameworks, Municipal Cultural Plan, County Strategic Plan, etc.</p> <p>Launch report to community, focusing on community engagement and partnership impact, through CLL lens (to continue to grow year over year)</p> <p>Implement tactical marketing framework – an action plan by month to ensure sustained visibility for Library across the County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate project to draft key messages about the library system, consistent with the CLL lens 	<p>Review vision, mission and values and refine with CLL perspective</p> <p>2 year strategic marketing plan launched, building on key messages and including the process to initiate rebrand reflecting CLL as a key strategic framework</p> <p>Intranet launched and being used by 50% of staff; continual improvements to system and content</p>	<p>Rolling 2 year strategic marketing – communications strategies and tactical marketing plan is implemented</p> <p>Rebrand project is complete after community-drive process focusing on the visual, verbal and experiential elements of CLL in Lambton County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, mission and values • New logo and branding tools developed • Upgraded website to foster CLL conversations and information <p>Intranet being used by all staff with online access, reviewed for useability and content every 2 years</p>

Theme	Year 1-2	Year 3-5	By Year 10
Standards and monitoring success	<p>Leadership team to develop plan to transition current metrics (e.g., circulation) to CLL relevant metrics (e.g., community engagement and outcomes)</p> <p>Approval by committee for plan to adopt new metrics</p> <p>Establish a library advisory committee comprised of non-elected supporters to provide advice and guidance to library leadership and board</p>	<p>Library system has implemented 50% of new metrics to use as basis for decision-making</p> <p>Establish Friends of Library associations with specific mandate at select branches</p>	<p>Board of directors is using CLL metrics to make decisions, along with advice and guidance of advisory committee</p> <p>Each branch (or cluster of branches) has Friends of Library associations</p>

The following notes supplement select points as necessary in the implementation plan.

2. Community outreach, programs & service delivery

- The recommended implementation of community-led librarianship as it relates to programs is directed in a way that simultaneously increases the number of programs that are introduced through community initiative and increases the involvement of the community in the design, development, implementation of programs. The program continuum is shown below for reference.

Outreach	Partnerships	Community development	Co-production
Library services are planned, designed, delivered and evaluated by library staff	Library services are delivered in cooperation with partner organizations	Library services are devised after developing relationships with local communities	Library services are co-produced by library workers and local communities

Figure 5.1 Program Continuum
Source: Pateman & Williment, 2013

- We recommend that, as the Lambton County Library becomes oriented to working with a community-led librarianship model, program outreach begins with community members, who currently are involved in the Library or have an association close to the Library, and then gradually works towards engaging members of the population who are or are at risk of being marginalized.

3. Reimagining of physical space

- Adopting a retail-like layout that centres around themes, rather than organizing collections based on the Dewey Decimal System, will create an environment that more users are comfortable with. Additionally, facing more book covers forward (as opposed to spines out) will foster an easier method of browsing, consistent with popular retail environments that attract consumers in large numbers.
- Considering community-led librarianship while doing structural renovations or moving into new locations means engaging the community ahead of plans being developed so that the space can be used in a way that is right for users. This may include community meeting rooms and informal gathering places, considerations about how many computer stations are needed, space for unconventional collections like bicycles, etc.

5. Staffing, recruitment, training & education

- We recommend that a new position, community library outreach coordinator, be created for Lambton County Library. This position would be permanent and must be well supported via reporting to a senior manager and be on par with librarians in the branches in order to achieve the goals. The rationale for creating a separate position at this time is that the community library outreach coordinator will be a vast departure for many library staff positions, and we feel there is a better chance of success if the organization hires externally for the required skills. (It should be noted that posting the role of community library outreach coordinator internally ahead of an external search, may yield a select number of potential candidates who happen to already work within Lambton County Library.) Most Canadian universities with library programs maintain a focus on technical skills and do not yet seek to develop skills that are required for community-led librarianship, such as humility, empathy, confidence, curiosity, critical thinking and self-awareness (Pateman & Williment, 2013). As the implementation plan progresses and library staff members are given the right training and support to work differently with the community, the community library outreach coordinator position may be phased out as library staff assume these responsibilities.
- A sample job description for the community library outreach coordinator is attached in Appendix M. Ideally, the selected community library outreach coordinators will not only have the skills and experience required for this role, but also be reflective of the community. It is the hope that community library outreach coordinators will work alongside library branch staff to facilitate increased or improved community relationships and to develop programs and services that are aligned with what the community has identified as a need, issue or asset. Additionally, community library outreach coordinators will initiate relationships with the local municipalities to support the town's (or city's) cultural and recreational plan objectives.

- It will be important to shift the work of all library staff. When “library staff” or “library workers” are referenced in this report, this is intended to encompass all staff within the system, at all levels and in all roles, from branch librarians to facility management roles. To successfully implement community-led librarianship, all positions within the organization must hold some degree of responsibility for this change. “With tightening budgets, there is a real danger that library management and decision-makers will react by entrenching themselves in traditional service approaches” (Pateman & Williment, 2013, p. 21). With reference to demographic statistics, some staff will experience this change through attrition, whereby individuals will move out of the organization. Starting in year 1 of the implementation plan, new library staff will be hired using updated job descriptions in which community-led librarianship is reflected as a key strategic framework (appropriate to the duties of each role). With education, training, coaching and encouraged by shifted metrics, all library staff will adopt this new slate of duties by year 5 and will eventually replace the need for the community library outreach coordinators at the branches in year 10.
- As soon as this model of community-led librarianship is adopted, it is imperative that Lambton County Library examines whether the optimal organizational structure is in place to make this organizational change happen. The leadership team must be ready to commit to its own learning and development about community-led librarianship and how to manage a team through organizational change. This will require even more investment in staff training, coaching and support for the next decade as compared to technical or functional responsibilities. It must therefore examine the structure of the management team, the ratio of supervisors to direct reports and the adoption of performance targets and team metrics that are aligned with the implementation plan. It is further recommended that the leadership team invests in team-building that fosters increased trust, communication and the identification of shared values, as the team must be a solid working unit that is committed to the achievement of results in order to move this change forward. A sample leadership team chart is attached as Appendix N. It has been created from a compilation of factors, including an examination of leadership teams at other libraries in which community-led librarianship is a key strategic priority, shifting the number of direct reports to a larger pool of supervisors, and assessing how accountability for this implementation plan could be distributed amongst a team. (It should be noted that conducting an organizational review of human resources was not within the scope of this project and further analysis is required by Lambton County Library before making any structural decisions.)
- As system evaluation metrics are shifted from inputs and outputs to impact and outcomes employee performance targets will need to be adjusted to match. Implementation of new performance targets does not mean adding to existing ones. In fact, we recommend that the leadership team identify what community outcomes it will hold itself accountable for and also identify which current metrics can be phased out.

- A large investment in staff training, at all levels, as required. This will include education related to community-led librarianship, leading and working through change (generally and specifically how the Library is leading change), and developing skills that allow library staff to engage with the community in new ways (for example, humility, empathy, confidence, curiosity, critical thinking and self-awareness). Beyond full-day, full-team learning sessions, the best chances of success for transferring learning and applying new skills will happen during team meetings and 1:1 coaching between supervisors and employees.
- Another important first step in the implementation of community-led librarianship will be to work with the staff unions to garner their support for this change, positioning this opportunity as a way to future prosperity instead of breaking from tradition.

7. Standards and monitoring success

- Most libraries track and make resource allocation decisions on metrics that do not tell the whole story of a library in the modern world. The number of library cards, in-person circulation numbers and program attendance are commonly used statistics. In community-led library models, research supports the transition to metrics that provide a “holistic, accurate and contemporary view” (Pateman & Williment, 2013, p. 228) of the library as a community partner. Suggested community-led library metrics, which illustrate a shift from inputs and outputs to impact and outcomes, include:
 - Evaluation at the organizational level, staff level and community level.
 - Community-based evaluation indicating if and how success is experienced by the community on a short-term, intermediate and long-term basis. These metrics are identified and designed in collaboration with the community.
 - Evaluation built in throughout and not only at the end of a process. In the case of service planning and delivery, evaluation occurs “when determining the target group, identifying need, planning service and programme-based responses, and when these services and programmes are delivered” (Pateman & Williment, 2013, p.199).
 - Impact indicators of the library reflecting the contribution the library is making to major policies and strategies within the county.
 - Evaluation of service standards related to community well being and social exclusion.

- We do not recommend any change to the rather distinctive governance structure of Lambton County Library, but we recommend implementing two strategies to better engage the community and provide further support to county politicians as they make decisions about the future of the Library.
- First, we recommend that if further interest is expressed by the community, creating an advisory committee comprised of non-elected community members representative of Lambton communities where branches exist. We suggest striking one committee with a system-wide focus and smaller sub-committees for each branch or set of branches within one municipality. Local advisory committees may also share their minutes and reports with local municipal councils, in order to bring forward any relevant issues that relate to facilities or locations. With reference to sample terms of reference attached in Appendix O, the advisory committee will not be responsible for governing the system or making budget decisions, but will be expected to provide vital advice and guidance to decision-makers, in the spirit of the community-led librarianship model.
- Second, the Lambton County community told us that they were interested in establishing a Friends of the Library group. Friends of the Library associations offer many benefits to organizations, including engaging passionate volunteers to support various events and fundraising activities (e.g., used book sales) and acting as external champions to advocate on important issues. Sample terms of reference and additional information sources attached in Appendix P.

A high level implementation plan organized sequentially is attached in Appendix Q.

Barriers to success

1. Organizational culture: The right people in place

The key to success of any major organizational change is whether the culture of the organization will support it. Community-led librarianship is a large departure from the traditional roles of library staff. Throughout this project, fear, apprehension and pockets of resistance by staff were expressed. Research suggests that there are three common themes of resistance by staff when implementing community-led librarianship. They include: a lack of resources (“how could we possibly do more when we don’t have time to do our jobs now”); the role of library services (“we are a centre of knowledge not community developers”); and the unknown (“how does this affect me?”) (Pateman & Williment, 2013). As libraries elsewhere have faced technological, environmental, economic and cultural trends that impact library use, institutions have made shifts to embrace opportunities; but the implementation of community-led librarianship – change on a much higher scale – has an impact on every aspect of the system.

Making community-led librarianship a key strategic framework of the Library will require the investment of time, focus and energy to repurpose existing resources. With approval of this plan, county politicians who govern the Library must be open to the Library measuring success differently, and thereby making funding and organizational decisions based on new strategies and metrics.

With reference to the proposed implementation plan, we recommend a phased approach to community-led librarianship, to be sensitive to the investment of resources and in consideration of the staff's response to a change of this magnitude. With a 10-year plan, it is believed that the influence of early adopters will strengthen the support of the new vision of the Library and that natural attrition will address those who choose not to embrace the change.

Restructuring the Management/Leadership Team

The senior leadership team of the library system needs to be comprised of dynamic change agents who are capable and willing to devote years of service to implementing community-led librarianship in the Lambton County. These people must possess the ability to influence and motivate their teams through ongoing and clear communication; they must be ready to embrace new systems, structures and styles of leading and coaching people; they must demonstrate 100% commitment to community-led librarianship in their words and actions and be ready to lead by example, leaving behind more traditional work methods.

While a full analysis of the roles and accountabilities of the senior leadership team was not within the scope of this project, it is apparent that structural change will be required in order to bring community-led librarianship to Lambton County Library. At this time, the position of branch services manager reportedly has a total of 140 direct and indirect staff reports. To provide the level of coaching and support to frontline and supervisory staff during a change at this level, it is impossible for one person to invest the time required. Second, other library systems that have adopted community-led librarianship (some with a smaller number of branches) have a larger senior leadership team with more experience of achieving the types of goals found throughout the recommended plan. A sample organizational structure is provided as Appendix N for consideration as library leadership begins to undertake this review process.

2. Communication: Improving system channels

Organizations that operate from multiple locations typically experience communication challenges, and Lambton County Library is no exception. Furthermore, there is a feeling of pride and unique identity within each branch of the Library that may cause a “silo-ing” effect in terms of cross-system awareness.

Given the extensive change that will be experienced by library staff and community members, it is imperative that the Library have several methods of communicating these changes in a timely, consistent manner, in multiple formats and over the duration of the next decade.

It is recommended that the communication systems be assessed and improved to promote the successful implementation of the community-led librarianship model. This must include developing an internal communication channel that can reach or selected staff in a timely and comprehensive way. This will need to be consistently monitored, and allow responses to issues and recognition and acknowledgement of employees for their contributions. For example, an alternative dispute resolution could be introduced so that matters of concern can be brought forward by staff to be addressed by management.

The library enjoys valuable relationships with local media. Unfortunately, the current website was found to be a barrier to communication: it is difficult to navigate, whether from a home computer or mobile device. There are many examples of libraries that have excellent websites that provide a great deal of information, easy access to the catalogue and two-way communication with the community.

Additional considerations

Communication of project results to stakeholders

As part of this project, we have had the good fortune to have rich conversations with many passionate library users and county citizens, as well as current staff. There is a true desire and need from each of these groups to know of the results and progress of community-led librarianship in Lambton. It is recommended that, as quickly as possible, the County provide a version of this report and corresponding decisions in a form that is accessible to all branches and local municipalities.

Community library outreach coordinator role: Repositioning Lambton County Library as community catalyst

The adoption of community-led librarianship and the recommended implementation plan provides the opportunity for Lambton County Library to become a valuable community partner and agent of change. Lambton County Library has the opportunity to move away from a traditional organization that delivers top-down-directed programs and services, to a connected, inclusive and collaborative partner that municipalities, community and groups engage and support. For this reason, within the recommendations made in this report, there has been an intentional focus on congruency with the County of Lambton's Strategic and Cultural Plans, and a key strategic recommendation to initiate this shift through the introduction of a community library outreach coordinator. The vision of this new position is to provide a collaborative liaison with local municipalities, designed to connect library strategy with the recreational, cultural and community goals specific to each municipality. As the library system initiates its evolution into community-led librarianship, a community library outreach coordinator will begin immediately to assess community need, form relevant partnerships, and generally support the creative and cultural goals of the local municipalities. See the sample job description for this position in Appendix M.

Planning ahead for 2017

In 2017, Canada celebrates 150 years of Confederation. Many organizations are planning ahead expecting that there will be multiple opportunities for funding and grants related to building infrastructure and moving innovative projects forward. It is recommended that Lambton County Library begin preparing for opportunities in which the directions and outcomes of community-led librarianship will be a fit for these opportunities.

Budget

As the scope of this project focused on providing a strategic opportunities framework – on how the library system thinks, how it works and how it can evolve to strategically meet community need and become a thriving network of community and cultural hubs – rather than an operational implementation or organizational restructuring plan, a detailed budget has not been included in this report. Decisions relative to strategic report recommendations (including the restructuring of the management team, introduction of new staff roles, and the implementation of pilot programs suggested in the “Top 10 engagement opportunities” section) will involve in-depth planning and analysis, and a detailed implementation action plan, including budget priorities, by year. The consultants were intentional in not being prescriptive about budget for this reason, and, because of the very nature of community-led librarianship. In order to be truly community-driven and community-responsive, decisions about investments must be made in collaboration with, and support from, the community itself. This includes the development of partnerships to support recommended pilot project (e.g. local business sponsorship of a Maker Lab for youth).

CONCLUSION

“During economic downturns, it may be tempting to take the easy path and revert to our old ways of working. However, the relevancy of the library service is directly related to its relevance to the public tax base and the local communities in which it functions. Continuing to work without innovation to ensure community needs are correctly understood and addressed, in the same way as lack of innovation in the private sector leads to the demise of private companies, may ultimately lead to the demise of the public library” (Pateman & Williment, 2013, p. 201).

The adoption of a community-led librarianship model will mean large-scale changes to the Lambton County Library. It will require shifts in every aspect of the Library from how it engages with the community, how it invests in programs, collections and technology, and how it measures success, to the core competencies and range of service provided by staff to users. Yet, with adequate time, energy and resources required to make this shift, Lambton County Library can position itself as a continuing leader of innovation in the Canadian library landscape, a community partner that is seen as “enduringly relevant,” and a local destination accessed and valued by diverse communities.

Within this report, we have offered the following recommendations to the Lambton County Library:

1. Adopt community-led librarianship using a phased implementation plan over the next decade. Take steps to proactively remove identified barriers to success, which include ensuring the right people are in the right place to manage this organizational change, implementing the new role of community library outreach coordinator, and improving existing internal and external communication channels across the system.
2. Continue the community engagement that has begun with this project. Focus on the list of “Top 10 Priorities and Low-Hanging Fruit” as a starting point while developing a systematic way to collect and respond to information that comes via community conversations.
3. Develop a plan to communicate the results of the Library Strategic Capacity Plan project to the community and all staff (beginning with those who participated in the forums and offered other contributions to the project)
4. Create opportunities to take advantage of potential 2017 infrastructure investment, which is expected in connection with Canada’s 150th anniversary of Confederation.

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RESOURCE LIST

Pateman, J. & Williment, K. (2013). *Developing community-led public libraries: evidence from the UK and Canada*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.

“Community-led Libraries Toolkit (2008) Working Together Project. Retrieved from http://www.librariesincommunities.ca/resources/Community-Led_Libraries_Toolkit.pdf”

List-serv dialogues – Ontario Library Association & Canadian Library Association

Edmonton Public Library’s Community-led Service Philosophy Toolkit



APPENDICES

Documents compiled in separate attachment to this report.

- Project Steering Team Planning Session Agenda and Presentation Deck (May 13)
- Staff Team Meeting Agenda and Presentation Deck (May 22)
- Staff Team Meeting Follow-up Memo
- Project Steering Team Planning Session Notes
- Community Forum Design and Questions
- Community Survey Questions
- Project Steering Team Meeting Agendas (June 3, July 8, July 29)
- Project Steering Team Memo (June 19)
- Staff Team Memo & Communiqué (June 19, July 13)
- County Council Presentation Deck
- Community Forum Poster
- *My Life. My Library.* London Public Library Campaign
- Community Library Outreach Coordinator Job Description
- Sample Leadership Organizational Chart
- Terms of Reference for Library Advisory Committee
- Sample Terms of Reference and Information Sources for Friends of the Library Association
- High Level Implementation Plan (organized sequentially)

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