



Oxford County Library

Strategic Plan

May 2008



dma Planning & Management Services

3044 Bloor Street West, Suite 315, Toronto, ON • M8X 2Y8

(p) 905.275.4458 • (e) jmorgenstern@dmaconsulting.com • (w) www.dmaconsulting.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
VISION	2
GOALS, STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, AND ACTION PLANS	3
GOALS	3
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS	4
Facilities	5
Services	7
Human Resources	10
Evaluation and Long Range Planning	12
Marketing and Promotion	14
Funding	16
 Appendix A: Strategic Plan Committee Members	
Appendix B: Strategic Planning Process	
Appendix C: SWOT Analysis	
Appendix D: Committee Input to the Vision Statement	

INTRODUCTION

The Oxford County Library (OCL) Strategic Plan outlines key service objectives and priorities for the period 2008-2012. The Strategic Plan responds to the major challenges facing the OCL and the community by positioning the Library as:

- A Focal Point in the Community
- With Welcoming, Accessible Facilities
- Providing Relevant, Quality Services
- Serving Actively Engaged Communities
- To “Make A Difference” and a Valued Contribution

The Strategic Plan initiatives adopted for 2008-2012 will help the Library succeed in meeting its objectives for improved and enhanced library service. The Strategic Plan articulates a Vision, Goals, Strategic Directions, and Action Plans developed during three workshops with OCL staff and Board members. Mr. Jim Morgenstern of dmA Planning and Management Services acted as the facilitator and Barb Adderley of dmA recorded workshop proceedings and summarized findings. The Strategic Planning Process and the input of the Committee is summarized in the Appendices.

VISION

Our libraries are a focal point of our communities with strong connections to community services, local business and residents. Our facilities are vibrant, welcoming, and accessible meeting places where community members of all ages come together to learn, grow, exchange ideas, and enrich their lives. Our libraries offer multifaceted and relevant collections; innovative technologies; and, through skilled and committed staff members, actively engaged communities, governments and other partners, provide programs and services that “make a difference”. The library system contributes to the cultural, educational, social, and economic vitality of the County.

GOALS, STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, AND ACTION PLANS

GOALS

The Strategic Plan's six Goals describe the major initiatives OCL will pursue in the next five years to achieve the Vision.

Facilities:

To provide high quality, attractive and accessible facilities that serve as a focal point for our communities and a gathering place for people and community organizations.

Services:

To provide access to relevant collections, innovative technologies, information services, and programs that meet their diverse needs and expectations for recreation, education, business, and personal enrichment.

Human Resources:

To enhance the delivery of library service with a skilled work force and an actively engaged community.

Evaluation and Long Range Planning:

To ensure that the Oxford County Library remains relevant to the changing needs and interests of the communities it serves.

Marketing and Promotion:

To ensure residents and community leaders are aware of the Library and its services and understand its importance and value to the community.

Funding:

To ensure sustainable and secure funding for the Library through advocacy, the development of partnerships and exploration of alternative funding mechanisms.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS

Strategic Directions are directly related to and rooted in the Goals, but provide more specific statements of how the Library intends to realize each Goal. Strategic directions identify the key components of each Goal or the distinct initiatives that must be addressed to fulfill the Goal.

Action Plans are the key initiatives that should be undertaken to fulfill each Strategic Direction. These initiatives have been identified at a broad scale, to clearly outline a course of action related to each direction. They do not identify an operational plan with day-to-day tasks, timetables and resource requirements. This level of detail will be reflected in annual operational plans that will be prepared by staff to complement the Strategic Plan. Further, the Action Plans focus on the most important initiatives – and particularly those that may signal a change from past practices or a new approach to doing business. It is understood that action plans will be incorporated in the annual business planning process of the Library, where detailed schedules and resource requirements would be outlined.

On the pages that follow, each goal is described and linked to its corresponding Strategic Directions and Action Plans. Each Action Plan has also been assigned a level of priority, based on the following schedule:

Short (S) - to be acted upon immediately and fully implemented in 1-2 years.

Medium (M) - to be initiated as soon as possible but within the next two years and implemented within the five-year time frame of the Strategic Plan.

Long (L) - to be acted upon as time and resources permit, but within the next 3-5 years. These initiatives may not be fully implemented within the five-year time frame of the Strategic Plan.

FACILITIES

To provide high quality, attractive and accessible facilities that serve as a focal point for our communities and a gathering place for people and community organizations.

Discussion: This Library prepared an Operational Review and a Library Facility Planning Study prior to the Strategic Plan. The Facility Planning Study is a long-term strategy for the future development and improvement of library facilities in Oxford County. The two strategic directions associated with the Facilities Goal support implementation of the recommendations in the earlier study.

The first strategic direction will clarify and pursue facility replacement, improvements, and upgrades consistent with the Facility Planning Study and the Strategic Plan Goals and Vision. The future of each branch will be addressed and long range plans confirmed to achieve the Vision of facilities that are accessible, welcoming, focal points and meeting places.

The second strategic direction addresses roles and responsibilities for facility development. Current funding procedures are not consistent and the roles that the community should play in facility renewal have not been identified. These actions will support the OCL's ongoing efforts to renew library facilities.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS

Strategic Directions	Action Plans	Priority
F1: Develop a strategy to address facility limitations and identify opportunities for renewal, enhancement, and redevelopment, as warranted.	F1.1 Implement the actions and recommendations outlined in the Facility Plan for the Tavistock Branch.	S
	F1.2 Develop facility-related standards for each level of library in the OCL facility model based on best practices, relevant standards and guidelines, and the experience of other Libraries.	S
	F1.3 Evaluate existing facilities based on recommended standards, and prioritize improvements based on agreed upon criteria. Undertake facility improvements as required	S
	F1.4 Develop a Small Library Policy as recommended in the Facility Plan.	S
	F1.5 Develop and implement an ongoing process for monitoring facilities against recommended standards.	M-Ongoing
	F1.6 Develop and implement a community engagement strategy and communications plan to encourage the community to participate in library facility improvements.	M-Ongoing

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS, CONT.		
Strategic Directions	Action Plans	Priority
F2. Confirm requirements for County and local municipal government and community involvement in the facility enhancement strategy.	F2.1 Library Board to develop a proposal describing a facility improvement/development funding model and soliciting input from local municipalities concerning an appropriate approach for cost sharing and funding facility development and improvement.	S
	F2.2 Adopt a policy based on a preferred model for funding new facility development and improvements that outlines local municipality and County responsibilities.	M

SERVICES

To provide access to relevant collections, innovative technologies, information services, and programs that meet the diverse needs and expectations for recreation, education, business, and personal enrichment.

Discussion: This goal broadly addresses all Library services but focuses on a number of key areas where service enhancements are seen as priorities. Strategic directions, and associated action plans, have been identified for the collection; technology; information services; and programs

The action plans in each of these areas will contribute to new or expanded services that better meet the needs of the community. These service improvements will allow the OCL to better serve existing users and to attract non-users. They are developments that are consistent with library trends and best practices and necessary to achieve the OCL's Vision where libraries contribute to the cultural, educational, social and economic vitality of communities and thereby "make a difference".

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS

Strategic Directions	Action Plans	Priority
S1. Investigate opportunities to improve and enhance the Library's collection.	S1.1 Undertake best practices research with leading libraries to identify opportunities to improve the collections of the OCL.	S
	S1.2 Develop and initiate research activities to understand OCL's various market segments and their unique Library needs and interests.	S—Ongoing
	S1.3 Implement improvements or enhancements to the collection to better serve priority audiences.	M—Ongoing
	S1.4 Update and improve library displays so that the collection can be highlighted and promoted to the community	S
	S1.5 Investigate mechanisms whereby the community and community sponsors could contribute to an improved and expanded collections.	S

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS, CONT.		
Strategic Directions	Action Plans	Priority
S2. Make better use of technology in the delivery of Library services.	S2.1 Undertake best practices research in the library and business sectors to identify opportunities to improve or enhance the use of technology and address current deficiencies. Develop a plan to address deficiencies and implement improvements.	S—ongoing
	S2.2 Empower staff to embrace new/improved technologies through training and development opportunities.	S—ongoing
	S2.3 Investigate opportunities to improve the Library Website to better serve Library audiences. Address deficiencies and implement improvements.	M—Ongoing
	S2.4 Explore opportunities to introduce social marketing tools through better use of technology (e.g. blogs, on-line chat rooms, etc.).	M
	S2.5 Investigate opportunities to improve ease of access to electronic databases and downloadable audio books.	M
S3. Expand the Library's capacity and role for information services.	S3.1 Establish a process and implement procedures for ensuring the Library's Website is kept up-to-date.	S
	S3.2 Investigate opportunities to partner with other service providers (schools, industry, business, govt. etc.) to improve access to information from these sources.	M
	S3.3 Investigate opportunities to strengthen the role of Library as a service point by providing other Government services through kiosks in the Library.	L
	S3.4 Explore opportunities to enhance or improve electronic services available via the Library Website 24/7.	S
	S3.5 Investigate opportunities to better promote information services at Library facilities (bulletin boards, display areas, etc.).	S

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS, CONT.		
Strategic Directions	Action Plans	Priority
S4. Increase the number and type of programs available from the Library.	S4.1 Based on research conducted to better understand OCL's various market segments and their unique needs and interests, identify opportunities to improve program offerings to meet those needs.	S
	S4.2 Investigate partnerships with other County agencies to provide programs in the Library and reduce duplication of services.	M
	S4.3 Establish protocols for and recruit program providers with a good "fit" for the Library.	M
	S4.4 Investigate an appropriate staffing model for programming within OCL to ensure staff with programming abilities and interest are used to their best advantage	M
	S4.5 Develop and implement program evaluation procedures and standards to ensure program quality and continued ability to meet identified needs and priorities.	M
	S4.6 Develop and implement community engagement procedures to augment program offerings with volunteers.	M

HUMAN RESOURCES

To enhance the delivery of library service with a skilled work force and an actively engaged community.

Discussion: The future of the OCL depends on the skill and commitment of residents, Board members and staff who support, manage and deliver library services. The Strategic Plan, therefore, includes action plans to ensure appropriate human resources are always available to the Library.

Three Strategic Directions support this Goal. The first deals with the role of the community in supporting the library. Community engagement is broadly defined and might include volunteers working in the library; program partnerships; fund-raising; and advocacy and support. This strategy will maximize the community's engagement with their libraries. The second Strategic Direction deals directly with the ongoing renewal and professional development of OCL staff and Board members. These action plans ensure the community is served by well-trained and fully skilled staff. The third Strategic Direction addresses the ongoing recruitment and deployment of staff among branches and within the OCL. These action plans ensure appropriate staff are available at all times, now and in the future, and are used in the most effective manner to provide the highest quality library service.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS		
Strategic Directions	Action Plans	Priority
HR1. Ensure appropriate training and professional development activities are available for staff and Board members.	HR1.1 Prepare career development strategies for staff to include, as warranted, enhanced professional development and training as well as opportunities such as mentoring, job rotation and coaching.	S
	HR1.2 Board to identify areas of interest for training or skill development to enhance their governance responsibilities.	S
	HR1.3 Develop an inventory of staff skills and interests and assess against career development strategies to ensure continuous staff improvement and development.	S
	HR1.4 Develop a process for providing staff development days utilizing existing staff strengths and areas of interest as well as outside specialists.	M
	HR1.5 Develop web-conferencing capabilities to allow information exchange and training opportunities between branch library staff.	S

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS, CONT.		
Strategic Directions	Action Plans	Priority
HR2. Develop a staffing model for all levels of libraries in the OCL system describing allocation, recruitment, advancement and succession planning.	HR2.1 Develop a staffing model that identifies core competencies and required skills, recruitment procedures, advancement plans for each position, and staff resource requirements for all levels of libraries within the OCL system.	M
	HR2.2 Review approach to allocating staff relative to community use and demand for library services and ensure staff are deployed in a manner consistent with demand.	M
	HR2.3 Investigate opportunities to employ existing staff in other positions throughout the Library system or in other branches, as training and mentoring opportunities and to facilitate succession planning.	M
HR3. Prepare a community engagement strategy.	HR3.1 Identify key community and business leaders with experience and knowledge or ability to act as library champions. Develop a strategy to more effectively involve the community in broader range of library functions, including program support; governance and fund-raising, and other service areas.	M
	HR3.2 Identify Library activities and tasks that could be supported by volunteers and develop and implement an improved process for volunteer recruitment and recognition.	M

EVALUATION AND LONG RANGE PLANNING

To ensure that the Oxford County Library remains relevant to the changing needs and interests of the communities it serves.

Discussion: The OCL is committed to ongoing evaluation and future planning. The environment within which libraries provide service in Ontario is rapidly changing and improvements and innovations are introduced on a regular basis. In addition, Oxford County will experience social, cultural and economic changes that will have an impact on library services. The OCL has recently prepared a number of planning studies and will regularly update recent plans and undertake additional research to remain in touch with community needs, best practices and service trends.

This commitment is reflected in two Strategic Directions. The first deals with the OCL's research activities and the second addresses ongoing service evaluation and planning. The action plans describe the initiatives that will be undertaken in each of these areas to fulfill the Strategic Plan's goal for long range planning and evaluation.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS		
Strategic Directions	Action Plans	Priority
E1. Regularly conduct research both in the local community and beyond to investigate needs and opportunities associated with library services.	E1.1 Commit resources to ongoing research activities that identify best practices for library service, community needs and interests and satisfaction with library services.	S
	E1.2 Investigate opportunities to make better use of available library research tools (LIBSSAT and LIBPAS).	S
	E1.3 Make better use of the Website to investigate community opinions, needs and perceptions of the Library.	M
	E1.4 Investigate the feasibility of using focus groups sessions with representative sectors of the community (with particular emphasis on teens) to provide input on key areas of service.	M
	E1.5 Investigate opportunities to form positive working relationships with target group leaders and champions to improve service delivery.	L

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS, CONT.		
Strategic Directions	Action Plans	Priority
E2. Adopt approaches for the ongoing evaluation of library services and for updating Library plans and strategies.	E2.1 Identify and implement procedures for ensuring Action Steps are linked to annual business planning process.	S
	E2.2 Conduct an annual Strategic Plan Review to record progress and identify barriers to implementation.	S
	E2.3 Adopt procedures to ensure the Board regularly reviews planning documents as required.	S
	E2.4 Identify simple performance measures and protocols for tracking and reviewing Library performance (e.g. relative to circulation, membership, program participation, etc.)	M
	E2.5 Commit resources to ongoing evaluation of Library services.	S

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

To ensure residents and community leaders are aware of the Library and its services and understand its importance and value to the community.

Discussion: Marketing of OCL services and promotion of the Library and library services are captured in this Goal. The community's awareness of the Library has been identified as an issue, particularly with respect to attracting new users. The first Strategic Direction will address this concern with actions designed to better inform the community and increase their awareness of library facilities, services and programs.

The second Strategic Direction is focused on the Library's contribution to the community. In addition to acquainting the community with OCL services, it is important that residents, local business, other service providers and decision-makers understand the important role the Library plays in Oxford County. These action plans will ensure the Library's contribution is documented and effectively communicated in a manner that will enhance support for the OCL.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS		
Strategic Directions	Action Plans	Priority
MP1. Develop a marketing plan to improve awareness of the Library and the services it offers.	MP1.1 Research best practices and develop a marketing plan and communications strategy for library services. The marketing plan should address: Library products and services, with an emphasis on those that are new or may not be well understood by the community; the methods that will be used to disseminate information; and target audiences and the best methods to reach various audiences.	S
	MP1.2 As part of the marketing plan, investigate successful means to engage target or priority audiences (i.e., poster or bookmark contests with school age children) and form positive working relationships with target group leaders and champions.	M
	MP1.3 Improve marketing and communication, using new or existing methods, on the full range of available library services and particularly those that are new or may be poorly understood by the community.	S
	MP1.4 Review the effectiveness of current communication methods and explore new vehicles that may be more effective in reaching OCL's many audiences.	S
	MP1.5 Investigate other opportunities to use local media, as well as free and widely available options for marketing library services.	M

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS, CONT.		
Strategic Directions	Action Plans	Priority
MP1. cont.	MP1.6 As part of the marketing plan, identify resource requirements and incorporate in annual budgets.	M
	MP1.7 Develop a Library Logo and a Library Branding Statement that encapsulates and condenses the Strategic Plan Vision and can be used on all marketing and promotional pieces.	M
	MP1.8 Implement the recommendations in the Facility Plan with respect to improved signage.	M
MP2. Develop an advocacy and promotion program for the Library.	MP2.1 Collect and share with appropriate audiences testimonials and other statements from the community indicating the contribution that the Library makes to their lives.	S
	MP2.2 Identify performance measures to monitor the Library's social and economic contribution to the community and share these with community leaders and decision-makers.	M
	MP2.3 Identify and implement a wide range of procedures for communicating the Library's accomplishments to political leaders, various community interests (such as the business community) and the general public.	S
	MP2.4 Explore opportunities to promote the Library through partnerships in the local community.	M
	MP2.5 Explore opportunities to promote the Library in conjunction with other Libraries in the County.	S

FUNDING

To ensure sustainable and secure funding for the Library through advocacy, the development of partnerships and exploration of alternative funding mechanisms.

Discussion: The resources required to provide quality library services are addressed in the funding Goal. The Strategic Directions strive to enhance the resources available to the OCL through action plans focused on alternative sources of funding and partnerships that contribute to cost sharing or joint program and service provisions.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLANS		
Strategic Directions	Action Plans	Priority
FD1. Explore the full range of financing and funding approaches available to the Library.	FD1.1 Investigate best practices and alternative funding approaches successfully adopted by other Libraries.	M
	FD1.2 Explore opportunities to expand existing and develop new sources of self generated revenue.	M
	FD1.3 Develop an OCL Fundraising Strategy that considers and incorporates opportunities for donations, sponsorships and self-generated revenue.	M
	FD1.4 Commit resources to continually exploring grant opportunities but only after determining service and ensuring grants are targeted to the most relevant OCL initiatives and initiatives that can be sustained if funding from external sources is lost in the future.	S
FD2. Explore and evaluate partnership opportunities	FD2.1 Investigate partnerships that will bring new resources to the OCL and contribute to enhanced library services.	S
	FD2.2 Review opportunities to partner with Tillsonburg and Woodstock Libraries regarding opportunities for shared service delivery, joint purchasing or marketing, etc.	S
	FD2.3 Investigate potential partner opportunities with local community businesses and tailor partnership proposals to key initiatives.	M



Appendix A: Strategic Plan Committee Members



Strategic Plan Committee Members:

Library Board

Don McKay (Chair)
Margaret Lupton
Paul Holbrough
Donald Doan
Mike Hennessy
Sharon McDonald
Sherrill Calder

OCL and County Staff:

Lisa Miettinen	CEO/Chief Librarian
Cristina McLaren	Branch Services Librarian
Rosemary Lewis	Ingersoll Librarian
Lynn Buchner	Director of Corporate Services, County of Oxford

Consultants:

Jim Morgenstern and Barb Adderley, dmA Planning & Management Services

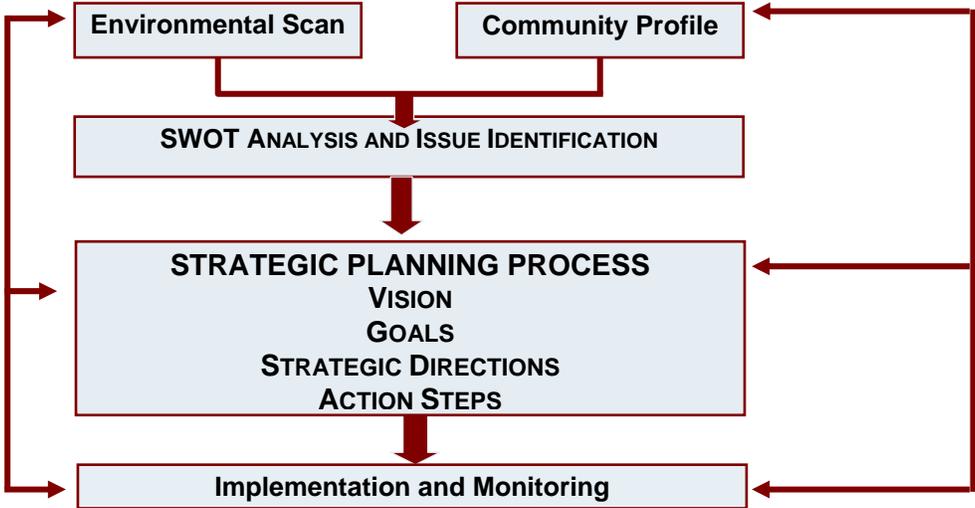


Appendix B: Strategic Planning Process



The Strategic Planning Process

The following figure briefly outlines the process used to develop the Strategic Plan.



In previous planning studies for the OCL, the consultant compiled and updated a socio-economic profile of the community, compiled key indicators of current library service, and researched trends and best practices relevant to the Library. This information was used to inform the strategic planning process.

OCL staff and Board members considered the Environmental Scan and Community Profile when analysing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) associated with OCL’s Library Services during the first of three facilitated workshops. The SWOT analysis is summarized in Appendix C.

The Vision, Goals and Action Plans were developed by the Strategic Planning Committee in two workshops facilitated by the consultants. Committee member input to the Vision is summarized in Appendix D.



Appendix C: SWOT Analysis



Part One: SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Committee members were asked to identify the *strengths* that the Strategic Plan should build on; the *weaknesses* that must be overcome; the *opportunities* to take advantage of and the *threats* that must be addressed to ensure Library services continue to meet needs. Committee input to the SWOT is summarized below:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good staff • 13 branches • Sufficient, stable funding to support current operations • Libraries are seen as a cornerstone of their communities • Use of past and present technologies • Forward thinking Board • Stable customer base who are generally satisfied with services provided • Child-focussed and child friendly – good programming and resources for children • Responsive to community needs • Decentralized system, results in improved access and reduced travel time • Community focussed, “hub” of the community • Good relationship with Libraries outside of the County system • One-on-one customer service within rural libraries • Some good facilities • Growing range of services provided, strong service focus • Large collection base, responsive to a diverse range of interests • Libraries as a focal point, meeting place, community centre, “hub” or “spoke” on service spectrum • One of few remaining gathering places in small rural centres • Customers with modest expectations looking for a basic level of Library services • Staff are forward thinking and proactive • Positive alliance with County and other County services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public awareness of services could be strengthened • Lack of information regarding non users and potential new users • Some lack of political will to accept change and in making changes to the status quo of the Library system • No alternative sources of funding, could be an issue in the future • Absence of a full County-wide system of Libraries, may be an issue if there is increased competition for funding • Customer confusion over non-County libraries in municipalities geographically within County boundaries • Lack of facility space in some smaller libraries • Customers desire improved collections • Limited linkages and collaboration with School Boards and other education providers regarding resource sharing and future planning • Library has limited understanding of the needs of the increasing number of homeschooled children and youth in the community • Most facilities are utilitarian and there is a lack of welcoming/inviting space within the existing system of facilities • Many accessibility issues with existing facilities • Lack of adult and senior-focused programming – will require more as this segment of the population grows • Limited marketing and advertising to both existing users and non-users • Large number of branches results in operating inefficiencies, which equates to reduced hours of operation, fewer programs, “thinner” collections in each library, and other compromises to services the Library can provide • Urban libraries are more competitive and may be drawing users away from rural libraries • Some rural facilities considered to be in fair to poor physical condition • Because of decentralized system, staffing levels are lower in rural branches than in urban libraries • The 1 branch =1 staff model may result in a sense of “ownership” and a resistance to change the status quo at rural libraries • Limited public involvement in re-tooling the Library system • Lack of willingness to get the public involved

STRENGTHS, CONT.	WEAKNESSES, CONT.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low expectations of current users may be a weakness since this may impede efforts to move forward and improve the system • Lack of application of the “business model” in planning for Library services, lack of bonuses for innovation or incentives to change status quo or improve the “business case” for Library services • Reliance on County for many services, including IT, Public Works, etc., but no control over decisions related to these services or related interdepartmental charges • A gap in services for youth in present Library system. Concerned that if youth are not current customers, they may not feel services are relevant to them in the future as they mature and raise families • Competition in the marketplace for all types of information and leisure time entertainment • Negative public perception post-closure of some branches • Challenged with the rapid pace of technological change and how to balance high costs associated with emerging technologies with the value of improved service to customers

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising education levels and population growth will result in growing market for Library services. Opportunity to increase market share • Library as community centre when other rural services may be in decline • Opportunity to improve services by increasing hours of operation and implementing other efficiency changes to operations • May be an opportunity to partner with Educational providers, Industry and other service providers, but many challenges to achieving this • Opportunity to make incremental improvements to marketing Library services to schools and homeschoolers • There will be a growing segment of the community who cannot afford to pay for services and for whom the free access to information provided by the Library will be increasingly important. Library will serve other social needs at a time when other services are being reduced in small communities • Opportunity for the Library to encourage growth of the knowledge sector of the economy throughout the County • Opportunity to explore corporate sponsorships • Increasing ethnic diversity in the community may represent new markets for the Library • Opportunity to support the change in focus from agriculture to industry-based sectors of the economy and to support growth of the knowledge-based sector • Growth in tourism and cultural tourism may represent new markets or new opportunities for the Library • Opportunity to meet the diverse needs of the growing seniors market. New generation of seniors may be more financially secure and may also represent new revenue potential, and an opportunity to benefit from endowment funds, etc. • Possibility for membership fees or fees for value-added services in the future, may represent new revenue sources • Possibility of a two-tier library system where the basic level of service is free and value-added services are fee-based • Overall the growth of affluence in the County may represent a new source of funding, and an opportunity for increased donations, etc. This may help offset cost of providing services to those who cannot pay • Need to find incentives to meet the needs of non-users and draw them to Library; i.e. meet seniors needs for lifelong learning, meet business users needs, meet the needs of youth for technology-based services, meet needs of the community for a welcoming, gathering place; meet the needs of growing homeschooling population for educational resources and programs • Opportunity to improve the Library's evaluation and long range planning functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising energy costs, staffing costs, and operating costs in general with potentially fewer resources in the future • Future funding uncertainty • Political reluctance to change the status quo in the way library services are delivered. May need to work with urban libraries to reduce "silos" and share resources • Future priorities for funding at the County level may change, result in declining resources for the Library • Relevance of Libraries in the future as leisure and social interest change. Can Libraries continue to make a difference in people's lives? • Further erosion of rural communities' service base as schools, banks, and other services are removed or are declining in these centres • Upcoming generation is demanding different services that the Library may not be able to meet • Lack of succession planning may result in staffing shortage. As trained workforce retires, there may be lack of suitable staff to take over senior roles. Trained librarians are increasingly drawn to non-public sector opportunities • Resources for small County libraries may decline if there is a forced amalgamation of all Libraries • With the expansion of the "information highway" there is the potential for changes to the way Library services are delivered. May result in a Province-wide system and/or more home -based services • Better educated youth are moving out of Oxford County for educational opportunities. How to retain them, or entice them back to live during the "family-phase" of life and not just their retirement years?

Part Two: Issues and Challenges

Based on the SWOT, Committee members identified the following as some of the key issues to be addressed in the Strategic Plan. These in turn contributed to the development of Goals for the Strategic Plan. Major challenges in addressing these issues were also noted.

Issues/Improvements Required:	Challenges:
1. Establishing a Decentralized Community-Based “Hub” – Positioning the Library as a Central Service Provider and Exploring Opportunities to Partner with Other Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small library, basic level of service, facility constraints and limited hours of operation may not accommodate expanded role required • Not clear how to partner with others service providers or willingness/interest of other providers • Diminishing number of potential partners in small rural communities • Joint facilities or services may require shared resources; unclear if resources are available
2. Enhance Services to Attract and Retain Non-Users and New Users (bring in other partners, expand hours of service, improve technologies and programs, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource limitations to expand services and provide services necessary to attract non-users • More efficient to maximize services to existing market; resistance to reaching out to new markets • Lack of information on non and new users • Small rural facilities may not be attractive to new users • Competition from other library systems and other information sources • Poor marketing and promotion of the Library
3. Improve Communications and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource limitations, skill limitations, lack of staff time
4. Improve Evaluation and Long Range Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource limitations, skill limitations, lack of staff time
5. Expand Library’s Relationship with other Service Providers and Woodstock and Tillsonburg Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No coordinated plan • Attitude and corporate culture of all parties; resistance to establish partnerships • Jurisdictional and legal issues
6. Improve Library Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small rural libraries need improvements; future costs associated with accessibility • Lack of resources and willingness to change • Return on investment given low and possibly declining levels of future use • Cost sharing with municipal (or private) owners
7. Increase Stability of Library Financial Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition for resources • Increasing costs associated with energy and other services; higher costs inherent in rural, multi-branch system • Identifying new sources of revenue that are acceptable under the Public Library Act
8. Staff Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources • Lack of succession plan • Declining pool of professionals interested in working in public sector



Appendix D: Committee Input to the Vision Statement



Committee Input to the Vision Statement

The Committee identified important statements to be included in a Vision for the Strategic Plan. Their comments are grouped into the following themes:

Library as a Community Centre

- “Hub” for community activity, focal point of the community
- Community centre and centre of the community
- Contributes to the cultural, educational, social, environmental, and economic well-being of community
- Contributes to the quality of life in the community, supports the uniqueness of communities
- Library contributes to a sense of community spirit
- Centre of knowledge and culture in the community
- Welcoming, inviting, accessible, and customer-focussed facilities

Well Supported Centre for Learning, Innovation, Growth, and Creativity

- Accountable to, and directed by an actively engaged community
- Provides access to a world of literature and emerging technologies
- Library is a place to experiment, learn, create
- Library continues to “make a difference” in people’s lives
- Library supports growth of the knowledge based sector of the economy in the County
- Community is aware of and values the services provided by the Library and has a sense of ownership in the Library
- Library collaborates with other partners to communicate the value of its services

Efficient and Relevant Service Delivery

- Partnership focussed and appropriately publicly funded
- Library’s services continually evolving to meet the changing needs of the community
- Cost effective services, efficient service delivery
- Understands and responds to the needs of all sectors of the community
- Library provides services for all ages, beginning with the very young
- Provides a seamless integration of services that meet needs for business, education, and pleasure