



**TOWN OF PELHAM
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Strategic Plan



2006 - 2010

Forward to the Future

Highlights of What We Have Accomplished

- 2001 - 2005 Circulation Increase of 43%

2002

- 150th anniversary celebration
- comprehensive community survey and strategic plan started
- began initiative to improve adult and children's programming
- began process of staffing improvements



2003

- began implementing new strategic plan priorities
- Fonthill Branch interior repainted
- new children's furnishings and books added at both locations with help of Early Years
- new programs added for adults and children
- Maple Acre Branch interior repaired and repainted



2004

- refurbished Maple Acre Branch / grand re-opening in April 2004
- with assistance of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Fonthill Branch made more accessible
- introduction of new book clubs and Fahrenheit 451: Freedom to Read book club for teens
- Heart of Niagara Fall Reading Series begun with great success: now an annual event
- increased hours of service at Maple Acre



2005

- state-of-the-art Dynix automated system implemented with the assistance of the Ontario Trillium Foundation
- established new teen section at Fonthill Branch with assistance of Niagara Community Foundation
- new library web site designed with assistance from Community Access Program
- new carpet and roof for Fonthill Branch



Winner: 2005 Angus Mowat Award for Excellence in Children's Programming



Winner: 2006 Peter F. Drucker Award for Innovation for 2002-2005 Strategic Plan



Thanks to the following organizations and institutions who so greatly assisted us with our 2002-2005 Strategic Plan. Our success would not have been possible without your help.

- Pelham Art Festival
- Trillium Foundation
- Early Years Ontario
- Service Canada
- Friends of the Pelham Library
- Maple Acre Friends
- Niagara Community Foundation
- Canada Council for the Arts
- Community Access Program
- TD Summer Reading Program
- TD Friends of the Environment
- Town of Pelham
- Local businesses, service clubs and individuals

Pelham Art Festival

**THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION**



**LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO**



Ontario

Early Years
Petite enfance



**Service
Canada**

NIAGARA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



**Canada Council
for the Arts**

**Conseil des Arts
du Canada**



Industry Canada

Community Access Program

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Introduction:

The Pelham Public Library initiated their first Strategic Plan in 2002. By the end of 2005 most of the recommendations of this ambitious plan had come to fruition. The Library Board recognized the need to update the plan and in 2005 successfully applied for a Niagara Community Foundation Grant for that purpose. The key components of the Plan were a Satisfaction Survey for Library Users, six Focus Groups, a review of the updated Municipal Strategic Plan, a day-long Library Board/Library Staff Visioning session, and an analysis of the goals achieved, the remarkable progress and user increases the Pelham Library has experienced the last four years. The Library Board then had two more preparation sessions to finalize the Plan components.

With this new Strategic Plan, the Pelham Public Library Board has a flexible and forward-looking document which can be adapted to future identified needs. This will provide continuity for future community and public library development. Selected recommendations, priorities and goals identified during the Strategic Plan process have already been incorporated into the 2007 budget.

The Pelham Public Library Board and staff extend their thanks to SOLS, and the Niagara Community Foundation for their invaluable assistance in the development of this new plan. The Library Board and Staff have proven that a Strategic Plan, if referenced regularly, can be a useful, active document which works even for a small public library. We look forward to future unfolding of even better public library services and innovations benefiting all in our community.

Library Board 2003-2006:

Robert Winter, Chairperson
Richard McDermott, Vice Chairperson
Malcolm Allen, Council Representative
Mary Balint
Peter Ferguson
Bob Gibson
Ivan Roden
Sharon Singer
Harland Young

Plan Content: Pelham Library Board & staff, library users and the focus groups
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*The Pelham Library thanks
Niagara Community Foundation
for their assistance with this Strategic Plan.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Pelham Public Library has made great strides in the last few years by increasing staffing, developing services and improving resources. These changes have been met with an enthusiastic response by the public as indicated in increased visits and circulation, greater Internet use and program attendance. This success has been expressed by the Library winning two major awards: The Angus Mowat Award for Excellence for development of its Child and Teen Services and the Peter F. Drucker Niagara Area Award for Strategic Planning.

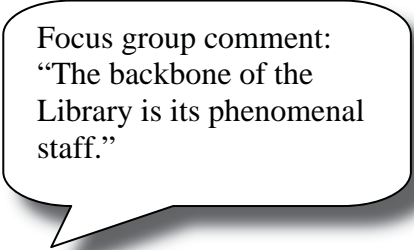
2. The Town of Pelham is a rapidly growing community, with an estimated final population of near 25,000 by 2015. Development increases service demands. Following the provincial trend, the community is aging and many new residents are retired. This group of retirees has different – and often more specific service needs – than the general adult population. Library focus groups and surveys demonstrate the community is aware of the need for services for seniors and feels the Library should focus on improvements for older adults. As in the 2003 Strategic Plan, the Pelham Public Library remains the primary cultural institution in Pelham. Future plans for the Library should include cultural and heritage needs for the community.

3. With a response rate of 55%, the 2006 survey indicated residents are very proud of their library system. The collections of books and AV materials in particular, were much more highly regarded than in 2002. What remained constant between 2002 and 2005 was the expressed need by users of all ages for quieter and larger spaces.

4. Universal appreciation was expressed in the surveys, including teen respondents, for recent improvements. The benefits to the Library from the Early Years Program for children, program development, the Community Access Program and the Trillium Foundation computer upgrade project have been used and appreciated by library users. The buildings, while improved and space maximized at both locations, still remain an impediment to both meeting library standards and need for more space expressed by the public. Surveys, statistics and dramatically increased demand all indicate the need for prompt growth planning by the Library Board and the Municipal Council.

“The public library outranks any other one thing that a community can do to help its people.”

~~ Andrew Carnegie



Focus group comment:
“The backbone of the Library is its phenomenal staff.”

MISSION STATEMENT:

As the cultural and informational heart of the community the Pelham Public Library *enriches, engages and encourages* all Pelham residents in their pursuit of life-long learning and cultural community development. The Library develops and provides equitable access to facilities, resources, services and programs with the aim of giving residents the best possible library.

VISION STATEMENT:

The Pelham Public Library provides vibrant, efficient, responsive services that fulfill community development needs and anticipates new avenues for expanding our role as the cultural cornerstone of the community.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The Pelham Public Library:

- Believes the Pelham Public Library is the heart of our community.
- Supports Intellectual Freedom as a cornerstone of democracy.
- Provides invaluable enrichment and life-long learning opportunities for residents
- Knows the ability to read contributes to an effective community and society.
- Promotes and stimulates the joy of reading, literacy, and lifelong learning.
- Offers residents the best service, staff, resources and programs possible.
- Values and effectively spends your tax dollars.
- Provides, by law, free access to basic resources to Pelham residents. The Library upholds this principle of free access, knowing that excessive fines or fees impede access and library use.

General Recommendations:

1. The general directions indicated by the 2003 Strategic Plan, reinforced by the 2006 survey have been very successful. If these directions are maintained through programming, classes, solid collections, new technological formats and adequate space our library can play a pivotal role as a cultural center as Pelham expands in this period of growth.
2. Address short term space limitations within the annual operating budget.
3. Plan and implement expansion of the Pelham Library to meet current and future requirements.
4. Continue to expand and support partnerships and sponsors.

Strategic Directions 2006 – 2010:

- 1. Providing quality services for all that meet changing user needs.**
- 2. Planning and providing for new and expanded library facilities.**
- 3. Communicating our passion for libraries and life-long learning in our community and beyond.**
- 4. Further developing and promoting Pelham's culture and heritage.**
- 5. Supporting and promoting the continued development of staff, volunteers and Trustees.**

PROFILE OF THE PELHAM LIBRARY

Pelham Public Library has been an integral cultural force in the community for over 150 years. The community is very proud of the libraries, as evidenced by the overwhelming support received from the survey.

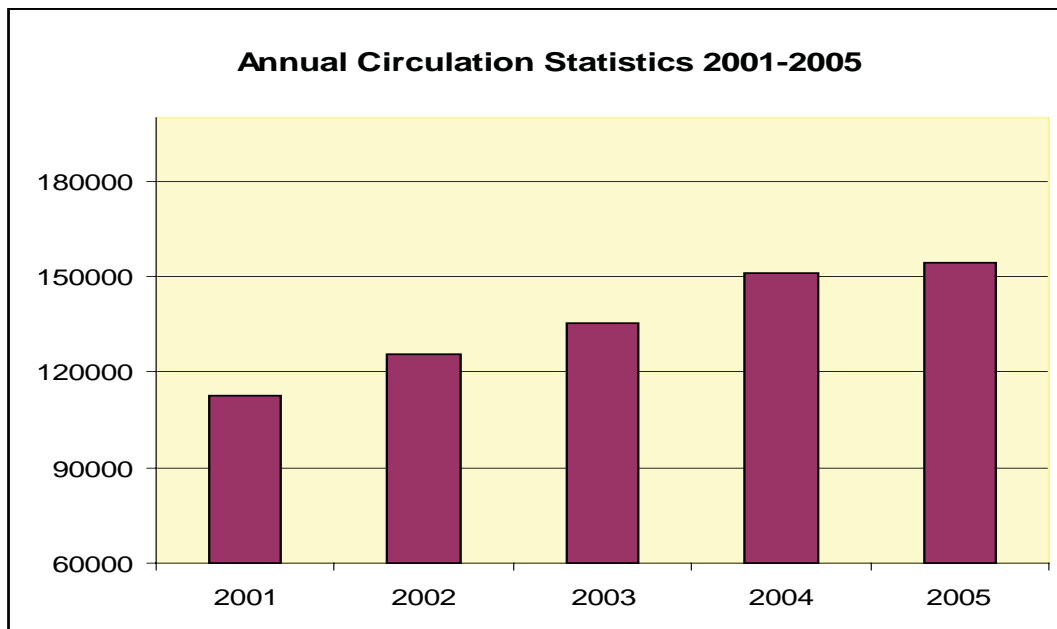
- ▶ 92.4% felt the library was very important or extremely important to the residents of Pelham (2001)
- ▶ Overall Satisfaction 2006 Survey: 97% of respondents were either “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied” with the Pelham Public Library
- ▶ 80.5% of the households in Pelham hold a Pelham Public Library card

Other services offered common to most public libraries are Internet stations, Interlibrary loan, different formats such as books, magazines, videotapes, DVDs, e-books, audio cassettes, books on CD, and programming.

What makes us different? Pelham is home to a vibrant arts community. Factors which make the Pelham library unique include the presence of a truly public art gallery, which is self-booking, and the housing of the archival and artifact collection of the Pelham Historical Society. Our programming is extensive, for all ages from babies to seniors. Pelham’s public library is, for all intents and purposes, the only cultural centre in town.

Key statistics and standards:

- **Circulation:** In a complete reversal of a ten year circulation decline, Pelham has now *increased* its circulation a staggering 43% over the last five years.



- **Use: An average of 2,000 people enter our libraries each week.**
- **Internet Use: has increased dramatically: from 2002-2005, bookings increased 32% at Fonthill and 31% at Maple Acre.**
- **Personnel:** Personnel has increased to 7.5 FTE, which is quite close to the recommended standard minimum staff for our population. We have added 3 new part-time positions over the past three years: Publicity and Programming, Children's Services and a Computer/ Cataloguing technician as well as over one FTE of circulation staff.
- **Funding:** The Town of Pelham has supported Library initiatives to improve core services with steady increases over the last five years. As a percentage of the Town's overall budget, the library has risen from 5% to 5.9% in 2005 of the total municipal budget.
- **Special Project Funding:** Because of the Early Years grants from 2002 – 2005, the Community Access Program for the Internet, Niagara Community Foundation grant for Teens and the 2005 Trillium Foundation grant, the Library was able to dramatically improve areas such as child and teen services, our computer system and our public Internet. Because of the municipal fiscal increases, for the most part we will be able to maintain these advances, even with the cessation of Early Years and CAP funding in 2005.

During the past ten years, the loss in provincial operating grant funding of 32% and the virtual cessation of the provincial grants offered in the past for staffing, materials, and capital purchases have been absorbed. *However, continued provincial and municipal funding at present levels is necessary to insure current services can be maintained.*

The development of attainable annual objectives from the Strategic Directions will ensure that the Pelham Public Library continues to be the important cultural institution it is in our community. Examining and acting on options for new facilities, an emphasis on service and offering new programs and services for all ages over the next few years are required to maintain these gains.

Social and Public Library Trends

Libraries are Back!

Perhaps the most interesting trend is that contrary to opinion in the 1990s, both the printed book and the public library have experienced a resurgence in popularity among all ages. A recent provincial poll of important services ranked the public library second only to fire services as the most essential municipal service. In a 2006 Marketprobe survey update, and in our own survey, teens viewed public libraries

as a very positive place to visit, and they will carry this attitude forward as they bring their own families to the library. Maintaining and expanding sound basic services is a priority and excellent service is as important to users as our technological advances.

“Congratulations on doing so wonderfully with library services in recent years! The place certainly feels alive and welcoming... Survey respondent Age group 25-40

Technology

Competition offered by the Internet as a provider of information has resulted in **more** people visiting the library in order to use the Internet, acquire training on computers and acquire background information to cope with our information overload. At the same time, our 2006 survey reveals the vast majority of our users have acquired computers and the Internet. The Pelham Library needs to promote the advantages of these many new formats and means of acquiring information (e.g., databases offered over the Internet). The recent announcement of free Knowledge Ontario databases will be of immense support to keeping our resources current.

Public Library Growth

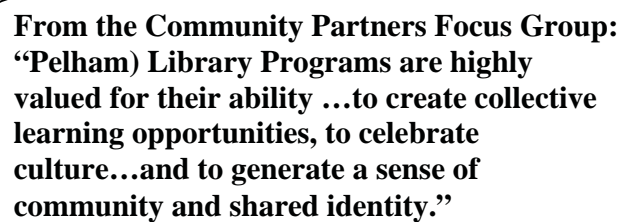
Rather than becoming the empty buildings predicted a decade ago, public libraries are experiencing considerable growth in capital construction across North America. Public libraries have evolved to now be seen as a place to acquire solid background information, learn about local history, enjoy shared experiences such as programming and meetings and to regain a community connection. A recent movement in the library field and the Ministry of Culture's current review of its funding and services to public libraries gives us some hope that the Ministry will make available capital building funding.

Pelham is experiencing considerable development, and many new residents are moving from larger areas offering more sophisticated services and hence having higher expectations. Both established and new residents of towns such as Pelham are looking for places to build community and make new acquaintances. Through programming, classes, solid collections, new technological formats and the offering of a "rest space" our library can play a pivotal role as a cultural center as Pelham expands in this period of growth.

Municipalities and Culture

A new focus has emerged for municipalities in the past few years: that of promoting and encouraging culture in their community. Not only does cultural programming add value for all ages in a community, culture also provides any number of vehicles (festivals, art shows,

cultural events) through which municipalities can promote tourism. Municipal cultural forums are being held across the province, the most recent being in Niagara in November 2006. The Town of Pelham already has the Pelham Art Festival as an annual event in our town (drawing thousands of residents and visitors to the Town for one weekend), and the recent Summer Concert Series initiative. The Pelham Public Library continues to provide an art gallery, quarterly fall and winter music events, and a wide range of literary events. This Town and the Pelham Library are uniquely positioned to expand, support and develop culture for the benefit of all in the Town of Pelham and attract visitors from the Region and beyond.



**From the Community Partners Focus Group:
"Pelham) Library Programs are highly
valued for their ability ...to create collective
learning opportunities, to celebrate
culture...and to generate a sense of
community and shared identity."**

PELHAM'S DEMOGRAPHICS (NOTE 2001 CENSUS)

Age

As can be seen from the following chart, over half of Pelham's population is between 25 and 54 years of age, at an age when people are finishing schooling and developing careers and families. Moreover, given the number of youth in Pelham – about 26% - the needs of families also need to be recognized in community development. The upper age range of this group (age 50 and up) are contemplating retirement.

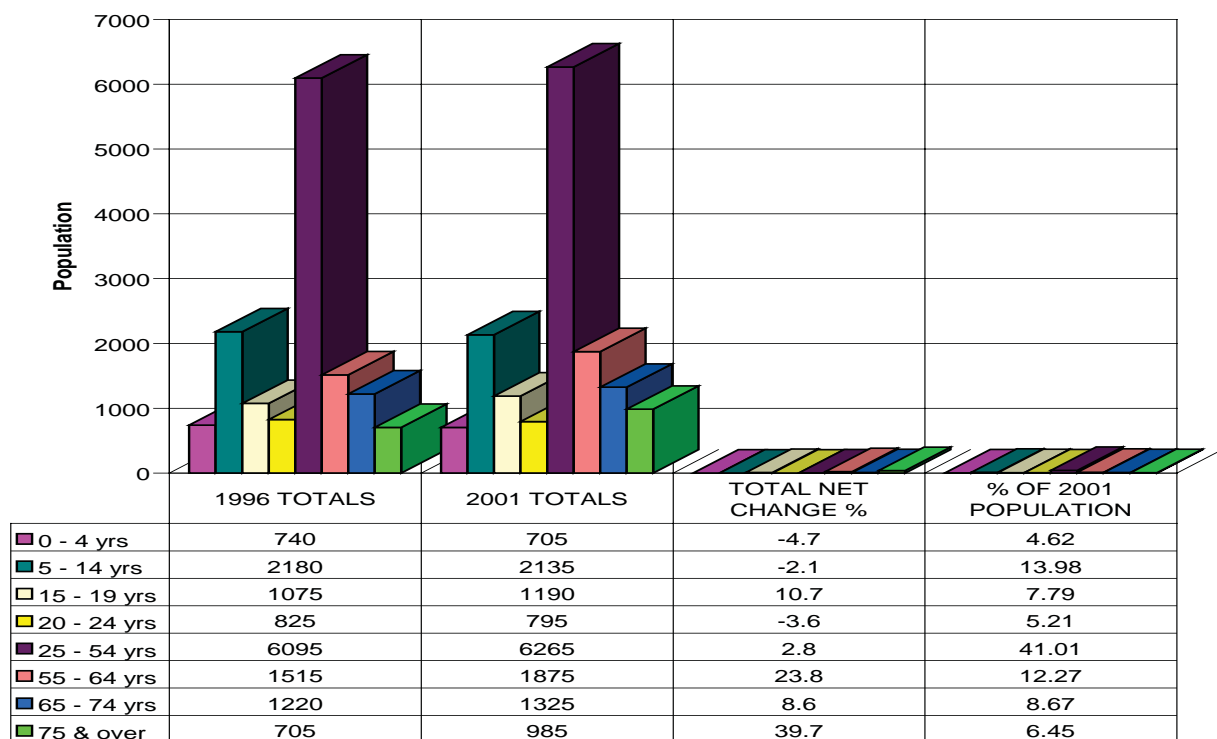
The number of people 55 to over 75 now comprises 27% of Pelham's population. This proportion has increased slightly from the 1996 Census data, and this group represents about half of the total population increase during this period. The implications for the Library are very much the implications for the rest of the province: the need to determine and address the needs of early retirees and recognizing the special needs of an aging population in the long term in terms of services, collections and physical facilities.

Education and Income

Pelham continues to be slightly above all Ontario totals for the holding of a college diploma or university degree, and significantly higher in the age group 45 – 64. In terms of income, Pelhamites continue to have a slightly higher income than Ontario residents generally, \$52,487 as opposed to \$47,247. This is well above Niagara's average. Pelham has a wide-ranging mix of businesspeople, administrators, educators, health sciences, trades and agriculture.

Population Characteristics

Pelham continues to have a low visible minority population with only 270 residents reporting as same. Generally speaking, the town's population changed little within the past year – while 7% have moved either into or within Pelham. Another indicator of population mobility is that within the last five years 30% of the Town's population has changed addresses within the province.



* FURTHER BREAKDOWN OF AGE GROUPS 25 - 44, 45 - 54, 75 - 84 AND OVER 85 AVAILABLE FOR 2001

2006 SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

2006 Survey Results

The first and second community surveys for the Pelham Public Library Board were very successful. Residents responded enthusiastically and honestly. The results have become the basis for many needs identified in our Strategic Priorities and in formulating our annual operating objectives. Unlike the 2002 survey, which was extremely detailed and very long, the 2006 survey was much shorter and focused on general satisfaction with both the Libraries and various areas.

Who Answered the Survey?

Our age distribution and surveys received.

Summary: The survey results are weighted toward age 45 and older, although considerable effort was made to elicit surveys from younger people. (Hence the comparatively high proportion of responses age 19 and younger.)

General comments on survey results by age:

Age distribution of Surveys received:

		Demographics 2001 Pelham
under 14	7%	5 – 19 21.75% (survey 12%)
15 – 19	5%	
20 – 24	3%	20 – 24 5.21% (survey 3%)
25 – 40	11%	25 – 44 4.2%
41 - 54	14%	45 – 54 5.82% total 6.02 (survey total 25%)
55 – 64	22%	55 – 64 12.27% (survey 22%)
65 - 74	16%	65-74 8.67% (survey 16%)
75 - 84	18%	
85+	1%	75 and over 15% (survey 9%)

Perhaps the most staggering observation is the number of respondents right up to age 65 who listed having a computer and/or the Internet at home: In the 41-54 age bracket, for example, 94% had a computer with 86% having the Internet; in the 55-64 bracket 91% had a computer with 83% having access to the Internet. Even after age 65 the numbers remain high, and we can be assured this computer use will be maintained in the 41+ group.

WHAT WERE THEIR OPINIONS?

- ▶ Overall Satisfaction: 97% of respondents were either “Very Satisfied or “Satisfied” with the Pelham Public Library.
- ▶ Staffing: 75% felt service by staff was excellent in 2002, this increased to 81% in 2006!
- ▶ Collections: There was definite improvement here: The book and audiovisual collections were ranked excellent (36%) or good (51%) in 2006 compared to a mere 20% calling the collections excellent in 2002.
- ▶ Hours of Opening: 10% requested additional hours of operation generally, however over 50 people and all the focus groups expressed the need for both branches to open another day of the week. (Currently both branches are closed Sunday and Monday).

Areas of Discussion Arising from the Survey:

.1 Use of Library internet services

While as per the 2002 survey, high numbers of respondents indicated they or a family member had a computer and/or the Internet), a full 67% did not use the library's website to access the catalogue and a similar 74% did not use the website for information/links. When coupled with the high incidence of computers reported available, this is definitely an issue requiring attention.

.2 Hours of Opening

On the 2002 survey, library hours for each branch were actually listed and asked if the times were suitable for their needs. At that time, 73% of Fonthill users and 22% of Maple Acre users said yes, they were suitable. Maple Acre hours of opening were increased by 6 in 2003 with a resultant circulation increase. On the 2006 survey, in contrast, branch hours were not listed. 32% said the hours of opening were excellent, while 57% said "good" and 10% marked "Needs Improvement", one of the highest negative responses in the entire survey. In the comments section, 30 people requested Monday openings, 11 requested Sunday and Monday and several people commented the library should be open 7 days a week.

.3 Noise

We didn't ask people directly if the buildings were noisy. Comments were made by 15 people (including the teens) relating to need for space and quiet. The causes cited ranged from the staff to the parents of children, the library's holding of the children's programs in the main area, teens, hard-of-hearing seniors and just general noise level. At the same time many people remarked on how much they enjoyed general social interaction with other patrons and/or the library staff.

"Expand on the size...need more computers...need more selection of books and needs a better quiet area."
Survey comment Age group 15-19

.4 Space Limitations

We say limitations because a total of 48 requests were generated as a result of space limitations. Requests for both locations included study areas, more computers, more items in almost every area of the collection, added programs for all ages, wheelchair access for the Maple Acre Branch, and upstairs storage at Fonthill Branch.

"Larger library would allow for more books. Also we could use more parking space."
Survey comment: Age group 75-84

.5 Parking

Every single focus group and 30 respondents of all age categories mentioned the parking at Fonthill was too limited. On some surveys this was the only thing mentioned as needing improvement. Fonthill Branch staff have received literally daily complaints about the inadequate parking *since the Branch opened in 1988.*

.6 Library Focus the next five years:

The question was asked as follows:

“As a public library, we serve all ages and interests. The library has focused the last three years on improving children’s and teen services with great success. What does this community need the **library to focus on** for the next five years? **Check as many as you like:**”

► It was felt that the directions of the Pelham Public Library should be:

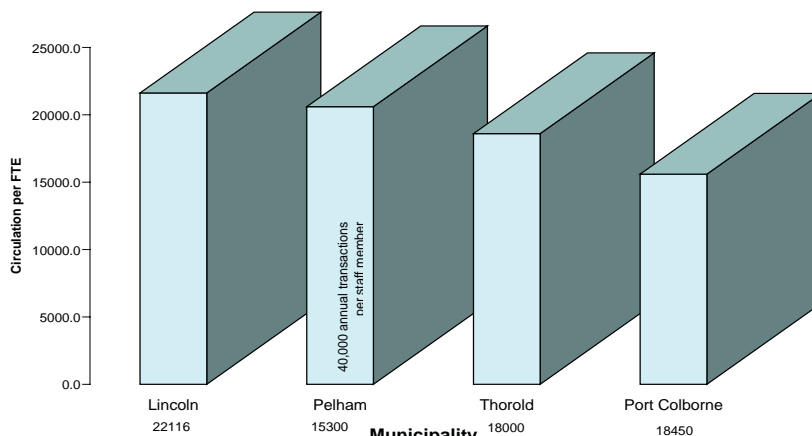
<i>Directions</i>	
Planning for growth	50 %
Lifelong learning	44 %
Reference Center	33 %
Community Cultural Center	35 %

Comparisons with Other Libraries

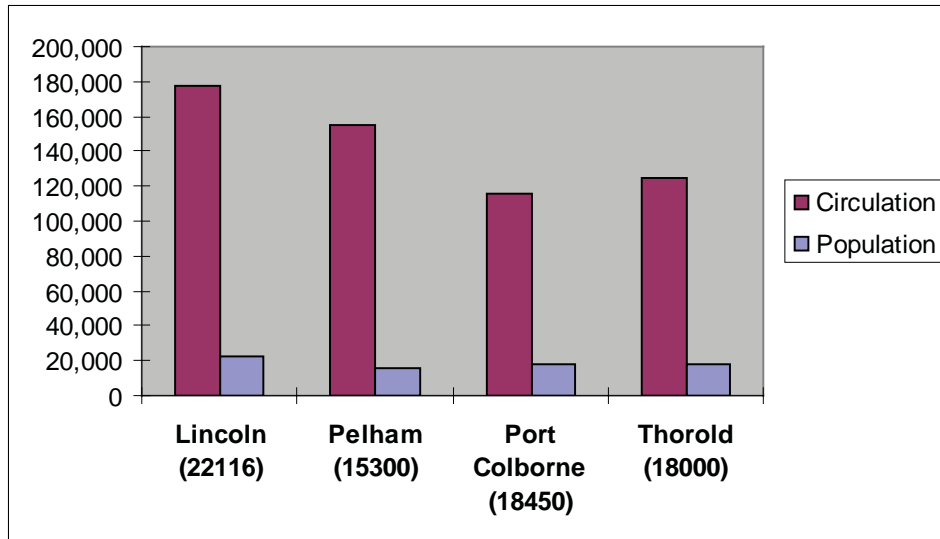
Pelham Public Library was compared to public libraries in Niagara similar in size in quite several key areas. The statistics are provided by the libraries themselves for the year 2005. Staffing numbers, funding and hours of operation reflect covering two locations, which is not true of all of other comparators. It should be noted that Lincoln’s statistics do not include all staff, whereas Pelham does. Grimsby in not included since they were closed for several months in 2005 and Niagara-On-the-Lake did not provide statistics.

► The most notable of all the statistics is **circulation per staff member**. In 2000 we were in the top three libraries for number of circulation transactions per staff member. In 2006 we are still close to the top, although fortunately it has been reduced with the addition of extra staff to balance our circulation increase of 43%. This still translates into check-out of almost 20,000 items per staff member, including the CEO and student pages (who do not regularly perform these transactions). Multiplied by two to accommodate check-in, this is over 40,000 annual transactions per staff member and does not include numerous other duties being undertaken by the staff while on the public service desk and administratively.

Circulation per Staff Full Time Equivalent (FTE) - 2005

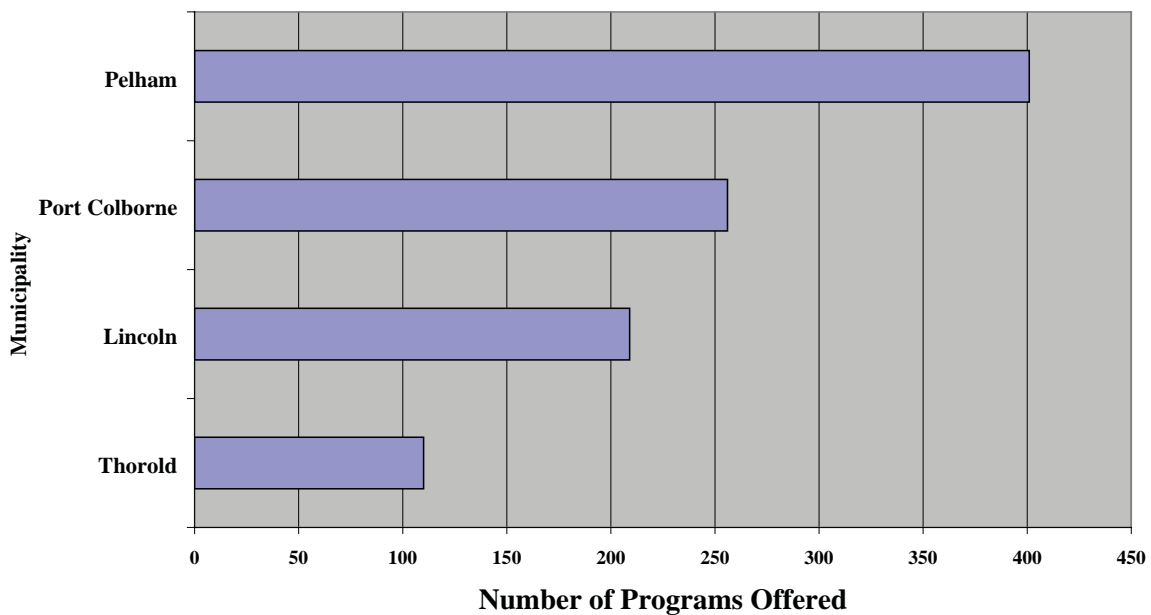


► Circulation per Population: Pelham Public Library users average 10 checkouts of materials per person annually. Although Lincoln outranks us, it is important to note that Pelham is the smallest of comparative libraries. As noted before, Pelham residents highly value and frequently use their library.



► The Library offers more programs than most other libraries its size or much larger. It should be noted that many programs are very popular but limited by space and staff to 6 – 10 people per session. Consequently, we have to offer extra programs for several sessions of children’s programs and book clubs, for example.

Number of Programs Offered in 2005



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Through this Strategic Plan, Pelham Public Library has an opportunity to play a key role in the development of this community over the next several years. By committing to becoming the cultural cornerstone of the community, we can also become a vibrant, efficient, responsive institution that anticipates and meets community development needs. Pelham is looking for a new identity and cohesiveness as it moves into the 21st century, and the Public Library can play a pivotal role in the preservation and development of the Town's heritage and culture while providing the level of library services our community requires.

We can accomplish this through:

- 1. Providing quality services for all that meet changing user needs.**
- 2. Planning and providing for new and expanded library facilities.**
- 3. Communicating our passion for libraries and life-learning in our community and beyond.**
- 4. Further developing and promoting Pelham's culture and heritage.**
- 5. Supporting and promoting the continued development of staff, volunteers and Trustees.**

BUSINESS PLAN TO ACCOMPLISH STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

General Strategies:

- maintain and continue innovations in traditional services and roles
- continue the Library's role as a portal for the community to new technologies, new formats of information and to other libraries
- begin assessing which provincial Accreditation standards can be realistically attained: for the Pelham Public Library this means primarily in areas of Policy and Governance
- The Pelham Public Library Board shall review the Strategic Directions annually to order to review statistics, demographic information and to set annual operating and capital goals

1. Providing quality services for all to meet changing service requirements.

Services and Collections:

- Offer Monday openings at both library locations (2007 budget item)
- Continue consistent development (includes weeding and additions) of all areas of the books and audio-visual materials as space constraints allow
- Maintain new website and add electronic resources as feasible (Knowledge Ontario, a collection of free databases will be on-line in 2007)
- Investigate the service and collection needs of aging residents and devise programs and outreach to accommodate them (2007 – ongoing)

Staffing: Improve public service and alleviate heavy workloads:

- Increase the hours of the part-time positions of the Head of Adult Services, the Child/Teen Services Coordinator, the Program Coordinator and the Computer Technician to full-time by 2010
- Gradually increase Circulation staff hours until each staff member has a minimum of 20 hours per week by 2009

Technology:

- Plan to upgrade servers to meet system capital requirements and allocate the staffing hours needed to meet installation requirements of new Dynix systems
- In light of cessation of CAP funding, expand staff training in computer use in order to assist public
- In light of cessation of CAP funding, investigate funding sources for systemic computer and CPU replacement over the next four years
- Expand digital equipment and computer courses for public

2. Planning and providing for new and expanded library facilities.

(See Facility Section, Appendix C)

- undertake a professional assessment of the buildings done to establish engineering and structural conditions (2007 budget)
- begin working with community groups and the Town of Pelham to achieve a 7,000 foot building in Fenwick for library services and programming and meeting room (s) (date: 2007-8)
- begin working with the Town of Pelham to achieve a 20,000 square foot building in the north end of town which includes 4,000 square feet for display and storage for the Pelham Historical Society, retains the public art gallery and has additionally adequate space for library storage, library staff and mixed size meeting rooms. (date: 2010)
- Simultaneously investigate possible grant sources; in conjunction with the Town of Pelham's commitment to proceed with the construction of new facilities (2006 – 2010)
- Work within the community and with applicable Ministries and other granting agencies to achieve capital funding for new library facilities
- Encourage existing partners to continue fund-raising efforts annually; the Library Board and Friends will need to undertake additional fundraisers when the Town of Pelham commits to proceed with the construction of new facilities.

3. Communicating our passion for libraries and life- learning in our community and beyond

- Develop means to obtain public input and improve information aids: signage, customer comment avenues, promotional lists, additional promotional displays (on-going, signage in 2007 budget)
- Communicate with municipal, provincial and federal bodies regarding library needs

- and success (on-going)
- develop new brochure for system (2007)
- Participate in advocacy initiatives planned by Ontario Library Association, Ontario Library Board Association, Federation of Ontario Public Libraries and other organizations as feasible

4. Further developing and promoting Pelham’s culture and heritage.

Promote a teen Wikipedia venture whereby noted Pelham residents (Marlene Stewart Streit, Steve Bauer and Dorothy Rungeling to start) are accurately biographed for the Web and add the biographies as a handy homework site for Pelham Children. (2007)

- Continue to work with the Pelham Historical Society to offer joint programs and displays about our Town’s rich history (on-going)
- Investigate Canada Council of the Arts grants for partnered community art projects and classes (2008-9)
- Continue quarterly concerts with local musical artists on Sunday afternoon (on-going)
- The Library offers four book clubs in-house at present for adults and children: investigate disabled (e.g., large-print books or audio) book clubs either in-house or in local facilities

5. Support and promote the continuing development of staff, volunteers and Trustees

- Investigate sources of funding to hire a temporary Coordinator for Outreach Services, who can make contacts, develop volunteer capability and programming and determine and deliver senior and disabled needs in a manner the library can sustain (2006 – 2007)
- CEO to develop long-term individualized training plans for staff until 2010 keeping in view potential staff retirement 2010-12 (2008)
- Ensure adequate budget funding for professional development of staff, Board and Friends groups (2007 CODI conference for one staff member; 2006 - 2010 OLA conference and training 2007 – 2010)

FACILITIES DISCUSSION:

Considerable comment on the facilities was made in the focus groups, on the surveys and in the Board/staff meetings. Space, or lack thereof, now and long-term was most mentioned. Space affects programs offered, the amount of materials on the shelves, the provision of new formats, patron comfort in the branches as well as efficient staff procedures. Other considerations mentioned:

There was *virtually no* difference in the level and nature of complaints about both library buildings between 2002 and 2006: **poor parking, noise levels, and lack of space for people and materials were all cited in both surveys.**

parking, general physical plant needs, accessibility by all patrons to buildings, lack of meeting space as evidenced by room bookings, inaccessibility to some collections. See Building Report, Appendix A for a full discussion. Following is a synopsis and short-term recommendations.

Fonthill Location:

Fonthill is currently 7,000 feet short by the calculation of one square per capita. There is an obvious generational space and patron use conflict at Fonthill, an expected difficulty with an open concept building. However, patrons who enjoy using the library for quiet reading or study space are often frustrated by the enthusiasm generated in the children’s programs. Space planning should include the “cultural cornerstone” concept and seek to retain both the art gallery and our own local history collection, while envisioning ways to make the Pelham Historical Society collection more accessible.

- ▶ A Building Committee of the Library Board should be established to examine options and long-term plans for library/cultural/heritage service in Pelham, and meet with Council as soon as possible to discuss mutual community development goals.

Maple Acre Location:

It is recommended that any library location be 4,000 square feet; Maple Acre is 993 square feet with an unusable basement. The entire building has all possible shelving added and all areas of the library are completely full. There is inadequate space for staff, patrons, and storage.

- ▶ A Building Report on the Fenwick Branch done several years ago noted:
 - lack of insulation
 - no drywall in building
 - estimates to upgrade building were \$150,000
- ▶ Electrical system is at capacity; new wiring and a new panel is required if anything is to be added.
- ▶ Basement is leaking; an inspection revealed that due to mould, it is unsuitable for storage.
- ▶ The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC) in their 2005 access evaluation noted an additional \$50,000 worth of accessibility items (new washroom on one level, wheelchair access to and throughout building) and these do not include the additional operating costs which will be incurred if the renovations are carried out in the present building.

Recommendation: A new facility for the Fenwick Branch has been submitted to the Municipal Capital Budgets for 2007.

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APPENDIX A

Pelham Public Library Focus Group Report

Prepared by Anne Marie Madziak

Library Development Consultant, Southern Ontario Library Service

April 24, 2006

Focus groups were held at the Pelham Public Library as part of the library's strategic planning process. The purpose of conducting focus groups was to elicit feedback from current library users, and to better understand users' expectations and perceptions of library service. In addition, one group was for purposes of consulting with community leaders and partners, regardless of personal library use by participants. The focus group sessions were organized by library staff and facilitated by a consultant from Southern Ontario Library Service. The five sessions were conducted over two Mondays in April 2006.

1. Seniors

This group was comprised of five women and one man who use the library in a variety of ways: borrowing books and DVDs; entertaining grandchildren; participating in the library's book club; attending evening art classes; browsing and reading magazines and newspapers; consulting information resources, including the community bulletin board; and, not to be underestimated, social interaction. Participants were very satisfied with library service, and quite well informed as to the range of programs and services available.

Service Strengths and Successes

These seniors experience the library as a welcoming place in the community where they enjoy spending time and always find something of interest. They had high praise for library staff, calling them helpful, knowledgeable, and very personable. In the words of one woman, "the backbone of the library is its phenomenal staff." Staff is seen as working hard to improve the library, and several members of the group praised the library for its recent focus on serving children and families. The CEO was praised for her ability "to sniff out every grant that is out there," bringing in additional funds that enhance library service. There were several comments that for a community their size, the quality of library service is exceptional. Participants cautioned the library against always striving to be bigger and better. This group would like to see the library keep doing what it does and keep doing it well.

Other positive comments about library service included:

- Always a really good selection of new books; the library manages to keep up with an ever growing selection of authors and subjects; always money going into new materials
- It's a great service that the library offers multiple copies of the titles being read by book clubs
- Very pleased with online access to the collection; reserving books online works seamlessly
- An attractive building, made welcoming and user friendly; plants and seasonal displays add to the attractiveness
- Participants enjoy seeing the library busy, well used; like seeing the variety of events in the Festival Room

- “This library has the right balance between books and computers.”
- The art exhibits are a great service to the community, as well as to local artists; enjoy seeing families looking at art together
- The library’s bigger events and gatherings are great for the community
- Woman who runs a literacy program appreciates being able to borrow 15 children’s books at a time; staff very helpful
- Grandchildren love the library; a great outing
- Staff doing a great job of reaching out to the schools, drawing new children and families in to the library
- One person who has had a lot of ties with a lot of libraries, proclaimed Pelham as the best; the library is current, the collection new and relevant, staff excellent and easy to approach
- Staff receptive to ideas, suggestions for purchase of new materials
- Non-fiction good overall, e.g., able to find a recent book on Attention Deficit Disorder
- Staff don’t let you wander lost; ask if you need help; take you to the right part of the collection
- Library newsletter and email notices re upcoming events helpful

Service Expectations/ Suggested Improvements

- This group made it clear that the library meets, and in some cases, exceeds their expectations with regard to library service. At the same time, they had a few suggestions for improvement or expansion of library service:
 - More programs in the Festival Room; multi-generational programming like cooking with your children/ grandchildren
 - Reinstate deposit collections in some of the seniors’ buildings as some residents cannot make it to the library
 - The adopt-a-book program needs to be better promoted, a great alternative to sending flowers, gifts, etc.; but lots of their friends don’t know anything about it
 - Find storage space on main floor; better utilize basement for collections or meeting space, and save volunteers (seniors) from having to go up and down the stairs when preparing for an event
 - Promote the library with the adult population – does the average Pelham resident know all the library has and does? Seems to be such a gap in library users between students and seniors, with the exception of parents
 - Profile board members in the newsletter; make them more visible, approachable; increase the board’s profile and credibility

There was discussion about the library’s apparent need for more space, but it was without resolution. On the one hand, this was the group saying the library doesn’t need to be bigger and better, but at the same time, group members did recognize there is significant population growth, particularly in Fenwick. These residents would like the Maple Acre branch to stay the small, cozy reading room that it is, but they also acknowledged that it may not adequately meet the needs of the larger population.

Barriers to Service

The group identified parking as the most significant barrier to service. Having to park in the lot across the street is particularly problematic in the winter, having to navigate snow banks. Difficulty getting a workstation was also mentioned as a barrier by more than one participant. While it was recognized that staff move young people off if they are made aware they have exceeded their time limit, this was seen as less than ideal, as it is incumbent on patrons to police other patrons. There is a desire for a more automated solution that would end a person's access when their time is exceeded.

One participant identified accessibility issues that would make the library very challenging for someone in a wheelchair. The washroom doors should open out, rather than in, and some of the stacks and furniture seem pretty tight for full turns in a chair or scooter. **(Washroom doors approved by JAAC consultant in rpt; aisles can't be increased without losing shelving)** This person pointed out that this will only increase in importance as the population ages.

Role of the library

Participants had an animated discussion of the role of the Pelham Public Library, seeing it primarily as making books and other media accessible to everyone, for purposes of reading, learning and information. For one participant, "the best thing the library does is teach children to love books, and no matter how poor a community is, they can afford that." There was also considerable support for the library's role in promoting culture and community engagement by bringing residents of all ages and stages of life together in an environment that encourages social interaction.

2. Residents beyond Fonthill

There were seven residents present at the focus group held in the Maple Acre Branch: five women and two men. All but one spoke of having moved to Pelham within the last decade, but not within the last three years. They are frequent library users who visit at least once a week, primarily for leisure reading materials and/or with children or grandchildren. They are quite satisfied with the collection and the level of library service available to them. They had very few complaints or suggestions for improvement. A number of participants wished to commend the library board and staff for the excellent library service, and for taking the initiative to consult with them, as library users.

Service Strengths and Successes

While most of the participants spoke of using both branches of the Pelham Public Library, and appreciated having access to Fonthill's larger collection and facility, they have found that the resources of the Maple Acre Branch meet many of their needs. There was considerable praise for the staff and the collection, as well as for the ambience of the small, cozy facility. There was not an overriding demand for more of anything, with the exception of hours of service.

Other positive comments included:

- Staff is exceedingly willing and helpful
- Maple Acre Library has a great location; a few of the participants walk to the library, combine it with picking up their mail
- Computer access to both collections and the ability to reserve books from home is greatly appreciated; "staff should get a pat on the back for making things so easy"

- Interlibrary loan a great service; staff so willing to get what you're looking for
- Strong collection overall, son studying political science at Brock found the books he needed in Fonthill; great selection of new fiction titles in both branches
- One man commented he rarely gets beyond the new books display; used to be a challenge to find a new book in Maple Acre
- Children's section has improved dramatically, both the collection and programs
- The library system seems to have progressed beyond the Fenwick versus Fonthill rivalry; the two branches are really complementary
- One woman, a newcomer, recalls being disappointed when she first saw the Maple Acre Branch from the outside and first visited with low expectations, but she's been astounded by what she and her husband, both avid readers, have access to; quite impressed with the level of service, and the quality of the collection
- A few participants spoke of the social aspect of visiting the Maple Acre Branch where you are familiar to staff; one man talked about how much he enjoys initiating a conversation that engages everyone present
- At the same time, participants enjoy the library as a rare quiet haven
- The young mother present praised the children's programs, adding that she and other mothers appreciate the rotating days because you can't always make the same day of the week

Service Expectations/ Suggested Improvements

While generally very satisfied with library service, this group made the following suggestions:

- Rotate the selection of movies between the two branches
- Start a book club at the Maple Acre Branch
- Find creative ways to draw in the adult population, especially in the new subdivisions in Fenwick
- Staff need to be aware that when they're speaking on the phone their voice really carries in such a small library
- Adopt Welland's system of keeping track of what you've read on the library's computer system; you can look back over your own borrowing history (**Not available on this Dynix version**)
- Take maintenance of Maple Acre facility seriously; staff member should not be shoveling snow; the Town should be doing it
- If more space is needed in Fenwick add an extension to the back; keep the great location
- Library staff should consider implementing a visiting library service for residents who can't make it to the library

Barriers to Service

There were only a few difficulties reported by the participants of this group:

- Hours of service are too limited, especially in Maple Acre; Saturday to Tuesday is too long a stretch to be closed; more than one reader spoke of Sunday being a day to read but unable to get new books on Monday
- There can be issues of noise control at both branches, especially Fonthill; sometimes you want a quiet place to read or think
- The step into the women's washroom in Maple Acre is dangerous (it did cause this

patron to trip and stumble); there needs to be a sign indicating there is a step (“**Please watch your step**” sign has been in place there for years)

- Maple Acre should be wheelchair accessible
- There seems to be an awareness problem; most residents of Fenwick do not know the library is there; the library needs to better promote itself!

3. Parents

There were ten parents present, one father and nine mothers, their children ranging from preschoolers to teenagers. The families with young children were more likely to be frequent users for whom a visit to the library is a highly anticipated family outing. In the words of one mother of young children, “the library is at the centre of our life as a family.” The parents of teens spoke of their children having used the library when they were younger, but using it rarely in recent years.

The parents in attendance were reasonably well informed about the library and its services, though some were unaware of the library’s website and the ability to search and reserve titles from home. Likewise, not everyone was aware of the library’s newsletter or the email notices of upcoming events.

Service Strengths and Successes

The overall level of satisfaction was quite high, particularly in terms of programs and services for preschoolers. There was, at the same time, the sentiment expressed that the library needs to grow with the children by developing the programs and services aimed at older children and teens. This was not expressed as a criticism, rather as praise for what has been accomplished for the younger children and the desire to stay connected to the library as a family as their children grow and their needs change. The parents praised the following aspects of library service:

- The children’s area, with its murals and comfortable furniture; the tables encourage interacting between Moms and children
- The welcoming environment conveyed by the building and, in particular, by the friendly staff; staff greet them and their children by name, helping their children belong to the community; not all libraries are so welcoming or so friendly
- Library as hub, helping children connect to the community; appreciate programs that introduce children to other community agencies, e.g., police, fire, etc.
- The collection highly valued; the availability of all material types appreciated
- The partnership with the Early Years program
- The “phenomenal” programming for children, including story hour, summer reading program, March break activities; the props, music and activities are really professional and the programs affordable
- The outreach with schools is a great way to draw new families into the library
- The opportunity to view art with their children, as a family; instill community values and identity
- Adult programming like the digital photography workshop
- A good variety of magazines
- Parenting books
- The library website – amazing and easy to use
- The library perceived as a huge value; worth every cent of Municipal money spent on the library budget; shocked that so many more people don’t use it

Service Expectations/ Suggested Improvements

Because several in this group are familiar with other public libraries in Ontario, they had a number of concrete suggestions:

- Saturday programs for families
- Back packs with targeted age appropriate children's books ready to borrow
- Teen movie nights
- Library information and incentives in Welcome Wagon packages and information packages given to new Moms in hospital; library information in doctor's offices, grocery stores
- Lists of age appropriate new books and children's bestsellers could be promoted through the schools (**some suggested in school newsletter**)
- A computer for preschoolers in the children's area (some participants commented there used to be one); How-to computer information for parents who are not computer savvy
- Children's books and programs in French (try again)
- A youth advisory council to encourage input from teens
- Work with school librarians to reach older children and teens
- More DVDs for children and families

Barriers to Service

Satisfied as they are with the library service available, the parents identified a few barriers that make it somewhat more difficult to use the library:

- Parking
- The 'hit and miss' purchasing of teen and pre-teen fiction series; very frustrating for young readers to discover titles missing half-way through a series; could area libraries coordinate which will purchase and maintain which series?
- High school students have a difficult time remembering due dates; could there be email reminders that you have items about to come due? (this mother did not know you could renew items over the phone)

Role of the Library

The parents see the library as playing a number of key roles in the community:

- A good foundation to literacy and learning, and everything books have to offer
- A way to gradually introduce your child to the world of ideas and knowledge
- A central source of information, all kinds of information, a hub; the bulletin boards are highly valued
- An important social gathering place for young children and new parents, and residents of all ages

4. Newcomers to Pelham

There were eleven participants in this group, all relatively new to Pelham, having mostly come from larger communities like Mississauga, Milton, Burlington, Etobicoke, and St. Catharines. Most of them were also library users in these larger centres and have brought to Pelham a heightened awareness of all that a public library can be. At the same time, there was a high level of satisfaction with the library service available in Pelham, and an appreciation for the friendly, personable service, and the quiet, 'homey' atmosphere, especially in Maple Acre. Once again, library staff was praised as eager to help, extremely knowledgeable, and friendly and personable.

Service Strengths and Successes

There was a great deal of discussion in this group about how the library had helped them settle in when they first moved to Pelham. The library as community hub, as a source of community information, as an appealing public space where you could spend time and interact with other people in a comfortable setting, as a means to belonging and becoming familiar in a new community, were all highly valued by this group of newcomers. As one woman put it, “the library was the focus of our new life; it made us feel connected.” In addition, they praised:

- The library as the best source of all kinds of information, including community information
- Public internet access, especially for those members of the community who do not have home computers
- Interlibrary loan a great service
- Magazines and newspapers and comfortable furniture for reading and browsing; love spending time in the library reading
- The library’s book club
- The online reserve system; library website very easy to use
- A great place to bring grandchildren
- Library as quiet place – my place, my time/ time out!
- Staff are the best! Their fundraisers are so much fun! So willing to find whatever you’re looking for
- New books display very helpful
- Staff quite open to suggestions for purchase
- New online catalogue makes it much easier to find books and/or to follow a particular author
- Like the way the computer users seem to help each other; you can hear someone asking out loud, “does anyone know how to ...?”
- Fast response time on reserves – all 3 books in 3 days
- Information like Consumer Reports useful and valuable; saves you money as a shopper
- The Historical Society’s collection a great community asset
- 2 excellent seasons of author readings – they’re great!
- Poetry reading was surprisingly enjoyable; exposure to something new
- The art gallery
- “In this day and age, the public library is one of the few free things to enjoy!”

Service Expectations/ Suggested Improvements

As with the other groups, the newcomers were generally pleased with library service. They did express some unmet expectations and/or suggestions for improvement:

- Better hours for both branches, but especially, Maple Acre; “Why isn’t a public library open 7 days a week?”; need politicians who will find the finances to keep the library open every day of the week; it’s a crucial public service for many, many people; from Saturday to Tuesday too long for library to be closed
- A list of new books ordered on website
- An online book club (someone mentioned Mississauga and Brampton have one)
- An orientation session and/or brochure for new library patrons (several in the group did not know about the historical collection)
- A newsletter, rather than individual bits and pieces of paper (again, an apparent awareness problem)
- The library, especially the Fonthill Branch, needs noise control – keep noisy areas at a distance from a space preserved as quiet space; could a room or corner be glassed off as

- quiet space?
- Noisy in the library during children’s programs; could programs be held in the Festival Room?
- Areas of nonfiction need updating: basic how-to’s, e.g., gardening, upholstery, decorating, cookbooks, health and fitness
- More resources for genealogical searches
- Need more children’s DVDs; more current ones
- Better selection of audiobooks
- More paperbacks; hard cover books are too heavy and awkward
- Miss the list of upcoming books; would like it restarted
- More adult programs in the mornings to reach the retired population
- General interest talks would generate interest, e.g., wills; practical information delivered by professionals as a community service; not senior-specific, but an opportunity to gather with like-minded in the community; around shared interests

Barriers to Service

Once again, parking was mentioned as the most significant barrier to library use. The only other difficulty mentioned was that the library needs more space and that, perhaps, the board needs to plan for expansion (at the same time, there were some in the group who feared that expansion would risk the personal touch they so value).

Role of the Library

There was concern expressed in this group that the public library must remain separate and distinct from the school library. The strength of the public library is that it serves the entire community and every resident at every age and stage of life. The primary role of the library was articulated as being a lifelong learning centre that offers people of all ages relevant reading materials, other media, and speakers in the pursuit of their interests and information needs; a place to go to find out anything you want to know.

The social aspect of the library was also seen as important by this group, with the library being coined the hub of the community, in particular because there is no other community centre in Pelham. Likewise, the lack of other cultural agencies places added pressure on the library. In the words of one group member, “we ask a lot of our library because there isn’t anything else in terms of cultural expression, and the public library is well positioned to offer something for everyone in the community.”

5. Community Partners and Leaders

There were eight participants in the community partners’ focus group, six of whom are regular library users. Participants were invited because of their position in a community agency and/or their familiarity with local issues and community characteristics. The focus of the conversation was different from that in the other groups, with this group spending far more time describing what they see happening in the community and exchanging views on the roles the library might play in community life.

There was, in this group, a great deal of respect for the library's capacity to attract a wide range of individuals, and its contribution as an umbrella for community events and initiatives, helping citizens organize themselves to make the community a better place to live. The library has also earned a strong reputation as an organization to partner with, in achieving shared agendas. One participant referred to a recent partnership between the library, the Early Years project and Pelham Cares as a very successful example. By working together, these agencies were able to introduce young, low-income, single Moms to the programs and services the library offers to young children and their caregivers.

The Community

Participants described the Pelham community in the following ways:

- A commuter community
- A spread out community, with no centre and significant transportation issues; difficult to deliver services across entire municipality; huge increase in requests for transportation from seniors
- No property left in Fonthill town core; Fonthill has outgrown the town centre concept; it is very accessible for a small segment of the population (seniors in nearby apartment buildings)
- No community centre or seniors centre; nearby communities have vibrant seniors centres, offering everything from ballroom dancing to golf lessons
- No cultural institutions; traditionally, residents have supported arts ventures in other communities, e.g., St. Catharines, Welland; Pelham events not well supported in the past; starting to change
- A great need for free or very affordable and accessible community meeting/ auditorium space
- Demographically, the community is on the verge of a significant shift – an aging population; soccer enrolment has decreased from 1,000 to 600 children; median age has risen dramatically; a significant portion of the newcomers to Pelham are recent retirees or soon-to-be retired; the services needed for this aging population are not in place or in the plans, as yet
- The people who are becoming seniors will have the highest disposable income in the history of the country

The Library

The following observations and suggestions on the role and the activities of the library emerged in the group's animated discussion:

- The library's Festival Room cannot keep up with demand for meeting space, nor should the library try to single-handedly fill the gap in the community for meeting space
- The group would like to see the library expand programming, recognizing that that will make it even more difficult for other groups to book the Festival Room; in addition, the Pelham Arts Council could run art classes every day of the week, such is the demand, but again, this would create even more of a shortage of meeting space for other groups; the Historical Society can't even hold its meetings at the library because of demand from other groups
- There was some suggestion that the library might experiment with off-site programming, but others felt the library's events should be held in the library, even if it means other groups have to look elsewhere for meeting space

- Two library locations are the right number of locations to serve the community; a third branch would not make sense; but both existing facilities are too small for the size of the current population, let alone the growth projected
- There was considerable discussion about how to get a larger library in Fonthill; everything from taking over the post office and spreading out, to being part of a new multi-purpose community facility; there was some enthusiasm for the library to be part of a cultural complex like the Roselawn Centre in Port Colborne
- At a more practical level, there was a lengthy discussion about the possibility of turning the library basement into public space; adding a graded entrance to street level; and an elevator to make it totally accessible; the sentiment was expressed that, regardless of expansion, the library needs an elevator between the two floors
- Library needs to extend outreach services to places like Short Hills and even to people's homes, e.g., visiting library service, especially in the absence of public transportation
- The participants were in general agreement that the most important role of the public library is as a community resource centre where reading and learning are encouraged and supported; the collection, and related speakers and programs for all ages are the primary expressions of this role; the group would like to see the library offer more programming like the author readings and other cultural gathering events for the community; they commended the CEO for recent expanding of library programs
- In terms of looking specifically at a 5 year window, the participants felt that the library's work for the next five years was to critically assess what the library of the future should look like, in relation to library collections, programs and space needs, as well as in relation to other building initiatives in the community; to make the case for what is needed to meet the needs of the changing community

6. Summary

Clearly, the Pelham Public Library is successfully meeting and, in many cases, exceeding the expectations of current library users. In particular, recent efforts to develop programs and services to children and families were recognized and praised, as were improvements to the adult fiction and non-fiction collections. The library is viewed as an important community service that has managed to achieve the right balance between its traditional role as provider of books, and its newer role of providing access to computers and information technology. In addition, there is a great deal of support for the library as public space, as an appealing place to spend time, either alone or with others in the community. Library programs are highly valued for their ability to bring people together, to create collective learning opportunities, to celebrate culture and creative expression, and to generate a sense of community and shared identity.

While neither library users nor community partners know how to solve the library's space shortage, there is considerable agreement that it exists in both facilities. The very fact that the library is viewed as a gathering place by so many necessarily increases demands on the facilities. A successful gathering place offers adequate meeting space and a variety of seating throughout the library. While the small, cozy atmosphere of the Maple Acre Branch is valued, there is recognition that both libraries will need more space if they are to grow as the community grows.

Pelham Public Library Focus Group Report

Prepared by Judy Abo Nassar, Pelham Public Library Staff Member

Children 8-11 years old

This group of children consisted of 5 girls and 2 boys who attend the library for a book club. They also use the library in other ways: borrowing books and DVDs; research for school projects; attending individual art and literacy events.

Service Strengths and Success

These children view the library as a positive experience and one that they would like to share with more of their friends. Most of the children have attended the library for preschool activities and continue to attend children's programming for their age group. They see the staff as friendly and helpful and spoke especially of the programming staff. They experience the staff as helpful and 'safe' to approach with a question. "I don't worry if I don't know, they won't laugh at me or be upset." The group spoke often of their school libraries and the overall sense was that they felt the public library gave a greater focus and value to the juvenile collections.

Service Expectations/Suggested Improvements

The children were generally satisfied with the collection of the Pelham Public Library, however, they began to make comparisons with their school libraries. Many of the suggested improvements focused on the school library, but I felt they were important in highlighting pitfalls to avoid at the Public Library.

The children would like to see more chairs and a work table within the section that houses the juvenile chapter books and non-fiction collection.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Keep a lot of interesting chapter books
- Reference books should not look old and be in poor repair
- Reference books should have current information
- More chairs – comfy style
- Outdoor activities included in some programs (picnic)
- DVD player available in the library
- Swimming pool (the idea of a multi-use facility)
- Display of patrons' favourite book
- Section on web site for patron recommend reading
- Different coloured book shelves
- Bigger tables (were sitting at the preschool table for part of session)
- More copies of the Chronicles of Narnia

The one theme that ran throughout the session was the desire to have a multi-use facility. The children saw the possibilities of attracting some of their friends to the library and getting to spend more time together if there were other activities also available within the same facility (i.e., swimming, sports, music)

APPENDIX B FULL SURVEY DISCUSSION

2006 Strategic Plan Survey Summary

1. Methodology:

The surveys were developed by staff and distributed at both branches of the Pelham Library over a period of three weeks. Surveys were also distributed to focus group participants and one class at Notre Dame High School. The 2006 survey was less comprehensive than the survey of 2002 and designed to gauge satisfaction with the library's services. Surveys were tabulated in-house and due to a lack of access to sophisticated analysis software, basic cross-referencing was done only in the category of age.

Number of surveys received: 350

Total number of surveys distributed: 520 Return rate: 55%

The survey results are based on the number of times the question was answered, not on the total surveys received.

Note for comments attached: Only the negative ones, for the most part, were recorded. A second list of positive or very interesting comments will be incorporated in the plan. For planning purposes, the negative ones help us see where weaknesses lay. Strengths are evident looking at the survey results.

2. Age distribution of Surveys received:

Demographics 2001 Pelham			
under 14	7%	5 – 19	21.75% (survey 12%)
15 – 19	5%		
20 – 24	3%	20 – 24	5.21% (survey 3%)
25 – 40	11%	25 – 44	4.2%
41 - 54	14%	45 – 54	5.82% total 6.02 (survey total 25%)
55 – 64	22%	55 – 64	12.27% (survey 22%)
65 - 74	16%	65-74	8.67% (survey 16%)
75 - 84	18%		
85+	1%	75 and over	15% (survey 9%)

Summary: The survey results are weighted toward age 45 and older, although considerable effort was made to elicit surveys from younger people. (Hence the comparatively high proportion of responses age 19 and younger.)

General comments on results by age:

Perhaps the most staggering observation is the number of respondents right up to age 65 who listed having a computer and/or the Internet at home: In the 41-54 age bracket, for example, 94% had a computer with 86% having the Internet; in the 55-64 bracket 91% had a computer with 83% having access to the Internet. Even after age 65 the numbers remain high, and we can be assured this computer use will be maintained in the 41+ group.

Use of Library: There is a definite (perhaps not surprising) swing toward the use of the Library for leisure as opposed to information as our respondents age. The increase in leisure use begins in the 55 – 64 group, while use of the library for both education/information and recreation/leisure remains very strong in the group age 41 – 54. Use of the Library for both education and recreation does increase again in the age 65 – 74 bracket.

And the Demographic Gulf Widens...

It was noted in the 2002 survey that the Pelham Library encapsulated the increasing conflict between the needs of different sectors of the public. An example is the older person reading the paper or teen studying being disturbed by children in the other sections. If anything, the gulf continues to increase. A teen noted that staff spent considerable time assisting seniors but they themselves could not get help they needed. A definite, albeit small trend in the 2006 survey were comments that too much attention was being paid to the collections/programs for children and the library should refocus on adult resources and priorities -one person specifically mentioned Baby Boomers. While these comments were in no way representative of the survey results overall, in 2002 not one mention was made of too many resources and space being expended on young people. Many 2006 respondents mentioned the need to increase services to, in particular, homebound seniors.

3. Survey results:

Generally, the response ratings for most questions rated either the highest or second highest ranking.

Overall satisfaction ratings for the Library were as follows:

Very satisfied: 64% Satisfied: 33%

.1 Staff

Library staff ranked, as per the 2002 survey, as very highly regarded, with 81% of respondents scoring staff as Excellent. Most comments about the staff were very positive or noted the staff seemed to be very busy at the front desk.

.2 Collections

Overall perception of the collection improved considerably between 2002 and 2006. In 2002 the response was only 17% ranking the collection as excellent, while slightly over 20% felt areas were lacking. In 2006 36% ranked the collection as excellent, 51% ranked it as good and 12% felt it needed improvement. The Library has invested considerable time and resources on providing more shelving and updating materials at both locations. As usual, our respondents further commented (some at great length) on what areas they felt should be expanded.

4. Areas of Discussion:

.1 Use of Library internet services

While as per the 2002 survey, high numbers of respondents indicated they or a family member had a computer and/or the Internet), a full 67% did not use the library's website to access the catalogue and a similar 74% did not use the website for information/links. When coupled with the high incidence of computers reported available, this is definitely an issue requiring attention.

.2 Hours of Opening

On the 2002 survey, library hours for each branch were actually listed and asked if the times were suitable for their needs. At that time, 73% of Fonthill users and 22% of Maple Acre users said yes, they were suitable. Maple Acre hours of opening were increased by 6 in 2003 with a resultant circulation increase.

On the 2006 survey, in contrast, branch hours were not listed. 32% said the hours of opening were excellent, while 57% said “good” and 10% marked “Needs Improvement”, one of the highest of this category in the entire survey. In the comments section, 30 people requested Monday openings, 11 requested Sunday and Monday and several people commented the library should be open 7 days a week.

.3 Noise

We didn't ask people directly if the buildings were noisy. Comments were made by 15 people (including the teens) relating to need for space and quiet. The causes cited ranged from the staff to the parents of children, the library holding the children's programs in the main area, teens, hard-of-hearing seniors and just general noise level. At the same time many people remarked on how much they enjoyed general social interaction and/or chatting with the library staff.

.4 Space Limitations

We say limitations because a total of 48 requests were generated as a result of space limitations. Requests included study areas, more computers, wheelchair access, more in almost every area of the collection, added programs for all ages and so forth.

.5 Parking

Every single focus group and 30 respondents of all age categories mentioned the parking at Fonthill was too limited. On some surveys this was the only thing mentioned as needing improvement.

.6 Library Focus the next five years

The question was asked as follows:

“As a public library, we serve all ages and interests. The library has focused the last three years on improving children's and teen services with great success. What does this community need the **library to focus on** for the next five years? **Check as many as you like:**”

a) Planning for growth: Exploring options to offer the community needed space for programs, larger book collections, more public computers, quiet areas. **50%**

b) Lifelong learning: The Library provides the resources, accessible programs and services for all ages and incomes to pursue interests and learning. **44%**

c) Reference Center: The Library actively provides timely, accurate and useful information for community residents in a variety of formats. **33%**

d) Community Cultural Center: The Library further develops as a center for programs/ meetings/classes, providing space for community groups, theatre and art. The Library and historical groups collect, preserve and display Pelham's history. **45%**

Other related comments on focus: Generally, the comments centered on the lack of quiet areas, need for users (e.g., computers, teen studiers, children's program attendees) to have their own separate areas. Over 20 comments were received to the effect Fonthill needed a bigger building; 10 commented Maple Acre should be bigger. Difficulties relating to no elevator at Fonthill and no accessibility at Maple Acre were also cited frequently.

Focus Directions in 2002 and 2006:

In 2002 Children's and Youth Services at the Library was clearly the number one priority for those answering, followed by Life-long Learning and Reference Center. Respondents in 2006 often marked all four of the boxes, but the indicated preference among the younger set was Planning for Growth. This makes sense because a young person spends most of their time in the educational system already. Older respondents chose, almost equally, Planning for Growth, Lifelong Learning and Community Cultural Center, with Cultural Center the slight leader. The latter is interesting because it clearly indicates the Pelham Library would actively increase its role as the heritage and cultural center for our Town. Achieving any of these will involve growth planning in any case.

APPENDIX C- BUILDINGS REPORT

Fonthill

1. Parking

Numerous complaints have been made regarding the lack of parking at the Fonthill branch. The problem has become more acute as children's programming, adult classes in the Festival Room, meetings and/or special events occur during regular opening hours. As was pointed out in a recent letter, there is no room to turn around and one has to back out when no parking spaces are left. Parking is much exacerbated by winter conditions, as patrons, seniors and parents with children in particular, are not comfortable trying to negotiate their way to the library on foot with a stroller or walking aid from the mall or the municipal parking lot. For either of these groups, encouragement to walk in winter is not a solution to any problem.

2. Meeting Room

Originally designed for classes for the Pelham Art Club and gallery showings, this has become an all-purpose community meeting room, library programs room, classroom, training center and art gallery. We are receiving more frequent complaints that the gallery is frequently not accessible to people viewing shows. There are very few community spaces for reasonable rent in Pelham, and the room can be booked literally from morning until night for up to 16 hours daily. As this is the only suitable program facility in the library, even the library trying to book an event in its own building has become difficult. The community desperately needs more meeting rooms, and the Fonthill location, for other reasons below, needs at least one more programming room.

3. Noise Level

As is typical in an open-concept building, considerable irritation has been expressed by patrons trying to read or study while children's programs are taking place. Staff has considerable

difficulty concentrating on any sort of administrative work because of the placement of the staff workroom. Concurrently, there are waiting lists for all the children's programs currently being offered.

4. Facilities

The Fonthill Branch has a new roof, painting and carpeting. We are now looking to the inevitable furnace and air-conditioning repairs becoming more frequent as building components fulfill their lifespan. These will have to be replaced, probably by 2010.

5. Elevator

The astounding lack of an elevator in Fonthill warrants a mention on its own. Remarkable amounts of staff and volunteer time and effort (not to mention back strain) are spent carrying boxes, furnishings and equipment up and down an awkward staircase on a routine basis. Moving large items is extremely difficult and requires Town staff and planning. Trying to hold a book sale necessitates hours of unnecessary labour. Not having an elevator means the Pelham Historical Society area is rendered inaccessible to the disabled.

6. Other Agreements

An agreement was reached with the Pelham Historical Society whereby, for a nominal rent, the Society's exceptional collection of artifacts and arrival material relating to local history is stored in approximately 400 square feet of Fonthill's basement. There are no special climate controls and the collections are on the floor with partial walls, inviting damage to the collection through insects, flooding and contaminants. There is little appropriate display area for the materials. Public access is by appointment only and limited to what volunteer hours the Society members can make available (and this assumes the researcher can use stairs.) In order to preserve this exceptional collection, allow for additional acquisitions and have appropriate display and research space, any plans for a new library building or community center should involve the Society with the intent of eventually incorporating it into the Public Library.

7. Space

The architect who designed this location, interesting enough, gave it a life-span of fifteen years where space was concerned. Exactly fifteen years later, this location is essentially out of space. All changes possible have been made to the existing space and shelving on the main floor, but Fonthill is currently lacking both study and reading areas, a second or even third meeting/program room suitable for children and adults, inadequate staff space, accessible storage, and room to add new collection formats. The community in general is lacking a heritage center, dedicated public cultural gallery, class space, small public theatre suitable for modest shows (e.g., 300 people) and meeting rooms.

Recommendations for Fonthill:

1. That the Library administration continue with such short-term solutions as can be made on the main floor of Fonthill, such as updating or moving collections.
2. That the Library Board immediately engage a professional to undertake a study of feasible renovations at the Fonthill Branch, such as an upper floor. It must be clearly

understood that a renovation is short-term, and does not improve the parking situation – in fact it may aggravate it.

3. An alternative is planning now for a new cultural facility to include the above-mentioned components and ensuring adequate library space for the next twenty years for the Town of Pelham.

Maple Acre Branch

Several years ago, Town officials evaluated the Maple Acre branch, concluding that making necessary repairs and upgrades to meet current building standards would cost well over \$100,000.

Among the problems:

1. inadequate space, with no program room, storage or staff area
2. some existing shelving is a safety hazard due to instability
3. existing space very difficult to monitor and is not conducive to an efficient service operation
4. original building constructed in 1919; insulation was never added resulting in proportionally high heating and cooling costs
5. wiring is at capacity with upgrades required
6. tiny partial basement, water damage coming into the basement and also occurring through the upper floor. A recent assessment recommended that the basement not be used for any storage whatsoever due to mould
7. almost no accessibility for the disabled. A recent JAAC report estimated a minimum of \$50,000 worth of renovations which would create far more space problems and considerably increase operating costs in areas such as snow removal
8. insect infestations are occurring each fall from both the interior and exterior of building. Regular extermination with pesticides will now be required

Discussion:

1. Despite the charm offered by an older building, in the case of renovation and addition, Maple Acre would require gutting to the walls, adding insulation and drywall, new lighting, the addition of an adequate basement, a new heating and electrical system and that is only in the existing section. Costs for an addition (about \$200 per square foot) would then be additional to that.
2. Council has already offered one option through the Town's Strategic Plan – moving into the proposed new Fenwick Community Center, which is currently without a site or a plan.
3. Land is available directly to the rear of Maple Acre, which may prove adequate for a new building.

Recommendations:

1. That the existing library in Fenwick not be considered for expansion
2. That the Library Board Buildings Committee meet as soon as possible with the appropriate Council committee to examine the best options for a new library and/or community center in Fenwick

APPENDIX D GENERAL STATISTICS 2002 - 2005

Strategic Plan Statistics 2002-2005

	2002	2005	%+/-	Standard
Fonthill *	7900	7900	0%	1 ft per capita
Maple Acre	990	990	0%	Pelham 15,300 pop Minimum required size any location 4,000 square feet
Circulation (annual)	114,405	154,501	35%	
Circulation per population	7.47	10	35%	
Checkouts per staff *	20,141	19,782	-2%	
Collection size	53,871	58,861	9%	
Materials expenditure*	\$54,800	\$76,660	40%	Budget amounts - does not include grants or actuals
Materials expenditure per capita	\$3.58	\$5.00	40%	
Municipal Funding	293,645	564,835	92%	
Municipal Funding per population	\$19.2	\$37	92%	
Membership	11189	7430	-34%	
Non-resident membership	434	455	5%	
Number of Programs	206	401	95%	
Program attendance	3644	5316	46%	
Provincial grant	\$23,388	\$23,400	0%	
Staffing full-time equivalent	5.6	7.8	39%	1 FTE per 2000 population

* Fonthill space is main floor, office, and meeting room and does not include basement space

* \$10,000 development charges added to materials annually beginning in 2002

* Staff who do not circulate materials such as the CEO and student pages included

Note : Population of 15,300 used for both 2002 and 2005

Staffing Strategy

- Staffing in November 2001 included 2 full-time staff (CEO, Deputy CEO); Adult Services at 29 hrs (ILLO); Circ staff @ 18 hrs/wk; Branch Supervisor @ 12 hours per week; Adult Page @ 10 hours per wk; Student pages @ total 40 hours per week
- 2002 – Circulation Assistant position created and added: 3 staff @30 hrs per week
- Public Services Coordinator (programs, publicity) added at 21 hrs per week
- 2003 – Child & Youth Services added @ 21 hours per week
- Public Services hours increased to 26 hours per week
- 2004 – Cataloguing Computer Tech added @ 21 hours per week
- 2005 – Child and Youth Services increased to 28 hrs/wk
- Cataloguing Computer Tech increased to 25 hrs/wk
- Branch Supervisor position eliminated

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

- Children's book collections thoroughly weeded; about 50% replaced with new stock
- Adult collections thoroughly weeded
- New formats and collections added: DVDs, Books on CD, music CDs; children's book and cassette/CD; children's audio books in cassette & CD; parent resource collection, e-books
- Magazines reviewed annually and titles added; two newspapers added (one to Maple Acre)
- Maple Acre – rotating collections of videotapes, DVDs, large print and fiction; however this needs to be done on a more regular basis

Mission Statement:

As the cultural and informational heart of the community the Pelham Public Library enriches, engages and encourages all Pelham residents in their pursuit of life-long learning and cultural community development. The Library develops and provides equitable access to facilities, resources, services and programs with the aim of giving residents the best possible library.

Vision Statement:

The Pelham Public Library provides vibrant, efficient, responsive services that fulfill community development needs and anticipates new avenues for expanding our role as the cultural cornerstone of the community.

Strategic Directions 2006 – 2010:

1. Providing quality services for all that meet changing user needs.
2. Planning and providing for new and expanded library facilities.
3. Communicating our passion for libraries and life-long learning in our community and beyond
4. Further developing and promoting Pelham's culture and heritage.
5. Supporting and promoting the continued development of staff, volunteers and Trustees