

Fifteen years into the digital millennium, strategic planning required us to take a hard look at the world around us. We scanned our environment to capture changes and trending – external and internal to the public library sector. Along with understanding our community, we knew we had to plan in the context of our highly competitive, innovation-driven world.

In the following pages, we review trends in six categories – economic, digital, educational, lifestyle, content, and the place we live.

We also know there will be changes that no one can see coming – the “unknown unknowns”. As these emerge, we will need to be flexible in adapting our strategic roadmap to new realities and challenges.

BACKGROUND REPORTS: RESEARCH, TRENDS, AND FUTURE FORECASTS

Markham Public Library
Strategic Plan (Draft)

1. ECONOMIC TRENDS & HOW LIBRARIES CAN HELP

We identified five economic trends for consideration in developing the Strategic Plan.

These trends, and the MPL strategic response are summarized in the chart at right.

Each trend is analyzed in greater detail on the following pages. Our strategic responses are woven into our four Strategic Themes.



MARKHAM'S ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Markham 2020, the City's Economic Strategy, was adopted by Council in 2008, and serves as a blueprint for guiding Markham's economic development program. Markham 2020 was designed to take advantage of opportunities based on the new foundations of prosperity in a global knowledge economy – R+D, innovation and successful commercialization.

MPL has worked successfully with the Economic Development Department and the Markham Enterprise Centre to co-develop and deliver programs for the small business community – such as Entrepreneurs in Residence.

Going forward, as Markham reviews Markham 2020, we will continue to be a key driver in the City's Economic Strategy.

Markham's Economic Strategy

Be a key driver
for Markham's
Economic
Strategy

MARKHAM COMPETING GLOBALLY

The overall Canadian economy is struggling in terms of competitiveness and capacity for innovation. Economic vitality depends on such factors as diversified employment, skilled workforce, competitiveness, investment and affordability.

In its quest to attract business investment, Markham is competing not just locally, within the GTHA, but globally. In a flat world, business investors can choose to locate anywhere. Talent is the new competitive edge and the ability to attract and develop world-class talent is the most critical component of competitiveness.

HOW MPL CAN HELP:

We will continue to provide the IT, resources, services and programs that develop Markham's talent base and a skilled and digitally literate workforce, creating investment-ready conditions, and working within the business ecosystem to foster local economic opportunities and promote local economic development.

Through innovative partnerships and service innovations, we will engage Markham's business start-ups, entrepreneurs, creatives and home-based businesses – supporting R&D, testing new ideas, developing new talent, and opening doors to innovative cross-sector collaborations. For newcomers to Markham, the Library will provide a way into the Canadian economy, while also leveraging the global networks and connections of newcomers. In the new age of lifelong learning, we will provide services and programs that meet the need for ongoing learning and re-learning.

Markham
Competing
Globally

Develop
Workplace
Skills and
Talent to attract
business
investment to
Markham

MARKHAM COMPETING GLOBALLY

A radical change in the modern world's economic structure is "the newfound power for individuals and small groups to collaborate and compete globally. And the phenomenon that is enabling, empowering and enjoining individuals and small groups to go global so easily and so seamlessly is what I call the flat earth platform."

Friedman, Thomas L.

The World Is Flat, A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century

As an example of how MPL can help to support business startups, the creative class and the development of a skilled and digitally literate workforce, MPL is bringing a licensed TEDx event to Markham later this year.

"TED is an organization devoted to spreading ideas. TED stands for "Technology, Entertainment & Design." Speakers are invited to share their ideas with the audience in the format of short talks (8-15 minutes long). These talks can be highly inspirational and popular online. They are recorded and shared with the world through YouTube and the TEDx video library.

"We have selected spark as our theme. A spark may be small, but can quickly grow into something magnificent, powerful, and truly transformative. All speakers will relate their topics to this theme. Our goal is to provide inspiration to local entrepreneurs, artists, makers, professionals, families, students, and everyone in between."

Pam Saliba, Manager, Angus Glen Library



The poster features a dark background with a stylized illustration of a hand holding a lit match, with the word "spark!" written in a white, handwritten font above it. The TEDx logo is in the top left corner, with the text "TEDx MarkhamPublicLibrary" and "x = independently organized TED event" below it. The bottom section of the poster is red and contains event details: "Speaker applications and tickets available at: www.tedxmarkhampubliclibrary.com", "Spark new ideas! Complimentary refreshments and child care. Cash bar.", "Friday, November 13, 2015", "6pm", "Markham Village Library", and "Tickets \$20". Social media links for MPL are listed at the bottom right.

TEDx MarkhamPublicLibrary
x = independently organized TED event

spark!

Speaker applications and tickets available at:
www.tedxmarkhampubliclibrary.com

Spark new ideas!
Complimentary refreshments and child care. Cash bar.

Friday, November 13, 2015
6pm
Markham Village Library
Tickets \$20

[mpl markhampubliclibrary.ca](http://mpl.markhampubliclibrary.ca)
facebook.com/markhamlibrary
twitter.com/markhamlibrary

THE FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE

All levels of government and public service are increasingly facing the challenge of fiscal sustainability. We recognize that to maintain service levels while also funding growing commitments, cities need to find smarter, better ways to deliver the best possible value for every dollar spent.

MPL takes pride in our track record as a leader in the library sector in terms of key performance indicators showing high rates of use at low rates of expenditure per capita, per household and per transaction.

Through innovations such as C3 (Customer Centred Classification), early adoption of self-service technology, and continuous process improvements, we have achieved long-term containment of staffing costs and contributed to the City's E3 Strategy (Excellence, Efficiency, Effectiveness).

HOW MPL CAN HELP: Going forward, we will continue to align with Markham's strategic priorities (Building Markham's Future Together) and to pursue additional E3 initiatives to contain expenses, find efficiencies and generate revenue.

The Fiscal Sustainability Challenge

Develop innovative & creative strategies to support Markham's fiscal sustainability

A CHANGING ECONOMY

A collaborative sharing economy is emerging globally.

“Traditional models of ownership are changing. A sharing economy (also referred to as collaborative consumption or peer-to-peer collaboration or rental), often utilizing social technologies, allows users to share resources, goods, services, and even skills.”

Disruptive business models such as Uber and Airbnb are threatening the jobs and livelihoods of traditional businesses. Human capital is the best survival strategy – providing workers with the skills they need to thrive in the information age.

HOW MPL CAN HELP: We will help residents re-skill to become players in the changing economy, helping displaced workers to learn and re-learn, acquiring new skills, and pivoting to new career paths.

Changing Economy

Help Residents Re-Skill

FINANCIAL ANXIETY

Financial worries are on the minds of Markham residents. Through our community consultations we heard their concerns about the financial security of their family and their children's futures.

Soaring housing costs and static wage levels mean that many household budgets are strained. Recent research provides evidence of how rates of working poverty and precarious employment are rising in Markham.

Research indicates that despite its high average household income, the rates of working poverty and precarious employment are rising in Markham (see following pages).

HOW MPL CAN HELP: MPL will help households make ends meet through providing access to affordable content, programs and experiences that enrich and transform their lives.

Our role is to provide equity of access for everyone so that the benefits of Markham's rich human capital can be fully realized.



Financial Anxiety

Help
residents
make ends
meet

THE GEOGRAPHY OF POVERTY IS CHANGING

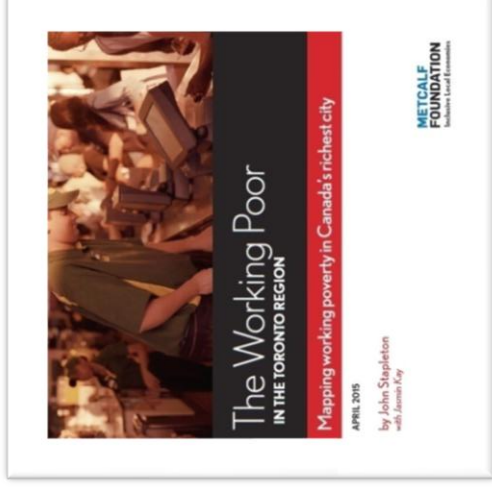
Rising Rates of Working Poverty in Markham

A new report from the Metcalf Foundation, entitled *The Working Poor in the Toronto Region: Mapping working poverty in Canada's richest city*, indicates that the rate of working poverty in Markham is rising.

From 2006 to 2012, the rate of working poverty grew in Markham by 26%.

HOW MPL CAN HELP:

Following the example of the City of Toronto's *Poverty Reduction Strategy* and the development of youth hubs at various branches of the Toronto Public Library, MPL will expand its after-school drop in programs offering tutored help, workshops and other activities. In branches located in areas with high concentrations of working poverty, we will provide programs and services that support people experiencing poverty and also support people in their efforts to move out of poverty.



“As working poverty migrates out of the city to all of the outer suburbs, these communities will need to develop new services and resources to support greater numbers of working poor in both the immediate and long term.”

THE PRECARIETY PENALTY

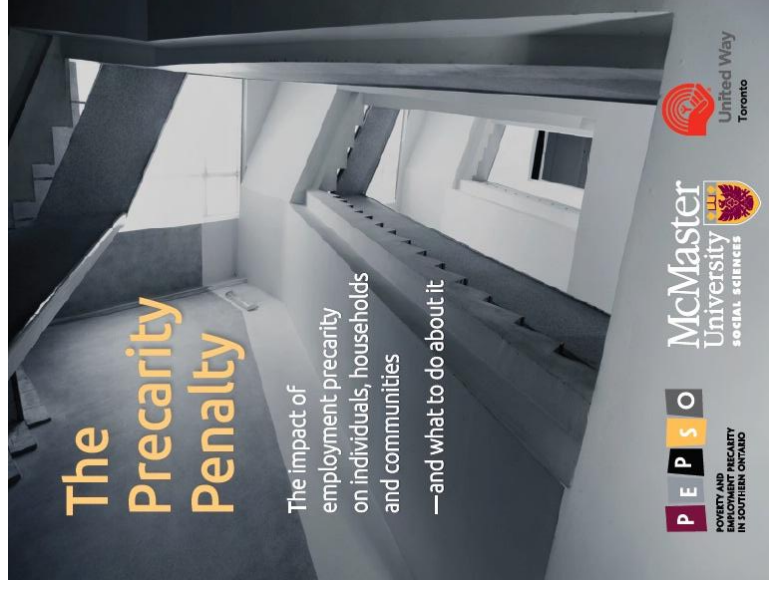
The 2015 Precarity Penalty research report examines the social and economic effects of short-term and insecure employment. Among the report's findings:

- Rising rates of precarious or insecure employment in the GTHA penalizes people across all income levels through jobs that offer lower wages, limited benefits and high levels of instability, making it difficult to move onto better opportunities.
- Uncertain future employment prospects can increase anxiety at home.
- Lack of benefits can make even small unexpected medical costs a crisis.
- Unpredictable work schedules can make finding suitable childcare very difficult.

- The short-term nature of the employment relationship can limit a worker's access to the training needed to get ahead.
- The uncertainty of precarious jobs affects the health and well-being of individuals and families

WHAT MPL WILL DO:

The *Precarity Penalty* report provides many insights into the challenges faced by residents in precarious employment, and what economic uncertainty means for families, children and communities. For MPL, these insights will guide the development of services and programs that support the job search and career advancement. As always we will continue to support the whole family through our programs and services.



“Precarious employment not only creates significant stress on individuals and families today, it also creates conditions that can trap those who are in precarious employment from opportunities to get ahead.”

CLOSING THE PROSPERITY GAP: SOLUTIONS FOR A MORE LIVABLE CITY REGION

Closing the Prosperity Gap, is the result of close collaboration between the Toronto Region Board of Trade and its research partner, United Way Toronto. The research identifies a growing affluence gap between high and low income neighbourhoods. Findings include:

- Unequal access to quality of life determinants and opportunities among different neighbourhoods.
- Growing divide between neighbourhoods alongside rising income inequality.
- Low-income neighbourhoods experience lower educational attainment, higher unemployment rates, and greater poverty.
- The lack of sufficient tools to confront these challenges leads to a rising sense of marginalization — a feeling of being left out of the region's economy and society.

- Greater challenges for newcomers and young people than other segments of the population in building better lives for themselves.
- Major weaknesses in our ability to capitalize on the economic potential of our emerging workforce.
- High youth unemployment rates.
- Undervaluing newcomers' qualifications and experience.

WHAT MPL WILL DO:

Design services around the building blocks of social cohesion – equity, inclusion and access.

Provide programs and services that ensure better opportunities and outcomes for all residents, ensuring that everyone is at their best and can contribute to Markham's shared prosperity.



“We don’t want to lose the next generation of young people to other regions with better opportunities, or to unemployment, underemployment or paths that jeopardize their future and the safety and well-being of our communities. A better quality of life for residents is better for everyone — it will attract investment, create jobs and spur wealth creation.”

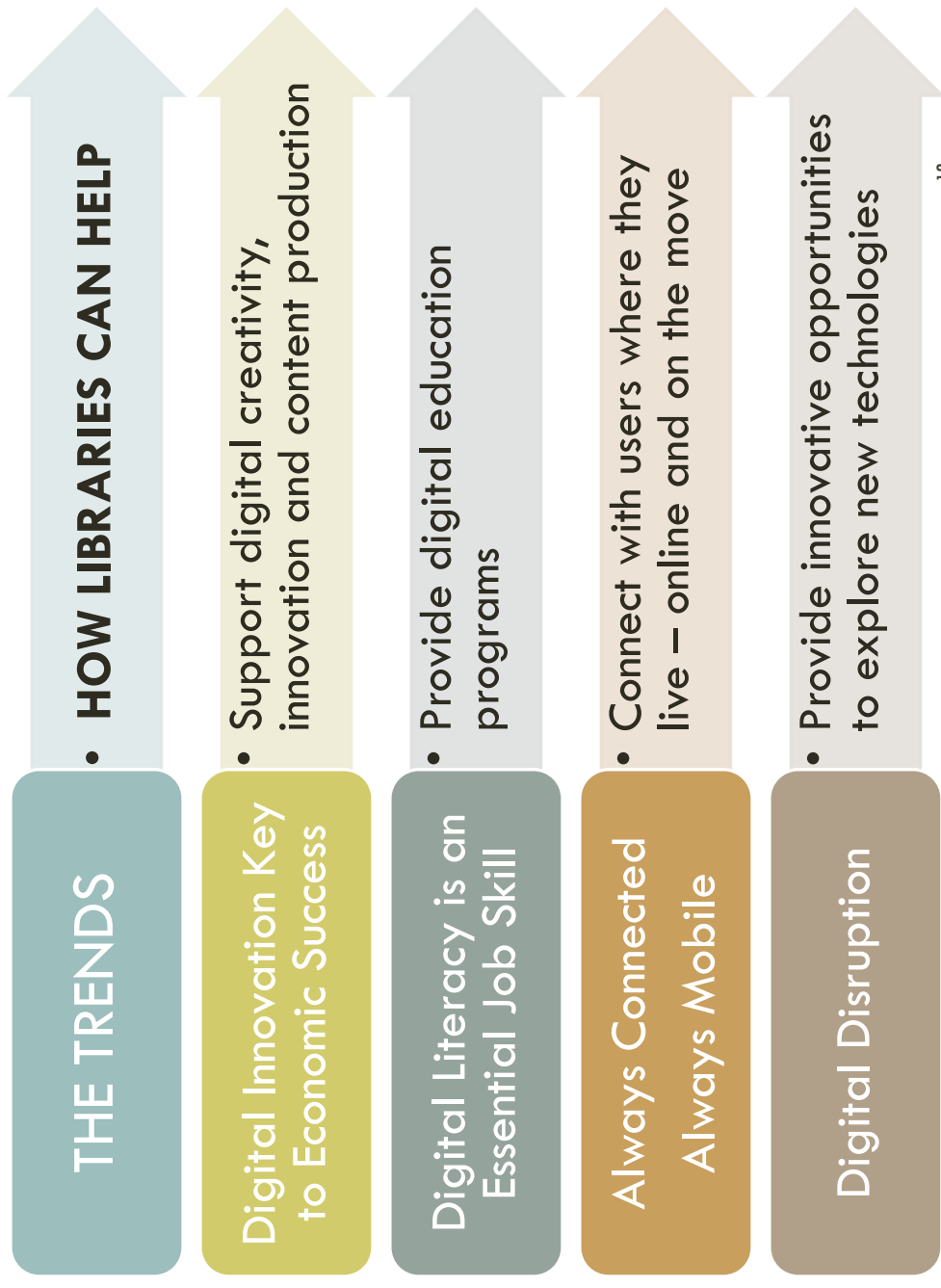
Toronto Region Board of Trade

2. DIGITAL WORLD TRENDS & HOW LIBRARIES CAN HELP

We identified four Digital World trends for consideration in developing the Strategic Plan.

These trends, and the MPL strategic response are summarized in the chart at right.

Each trend is analyzed in greater detail on the following pages. Our strategic responses are woven into our four Strategic Themes.



DIGITAL INNOVATION IS KEY TO ECONOMIC SUCCESS



3D technology captures people's imaginations and opens minds to new possibilities.

People can create models that move quickly from digital to physical, shrinking the time lapse between creating a design and holding a tangible object of that design

3D printing has the potential to transform global manufacturing as more people see new ways to make things, because they're thinking in 3D.

TJ McCue. *3D Printing is Changing the Way We Think*.
Harvard Business Review, July 21 2015.

Creative and innovative uses of technology are essential to future sustainable economic success. Libraries are seeing the growth of innovation communities within libraries.

HOW MPL WILL HELP

We will support digital creativity, innovation and content production by providing innovative opportunities for residents to explore new creative technologies.

Digital
Innovation
Key to
Economic
Success

Support digital
creativity,
innovation and
content
production

DIGITAL LITERACY IS AN ESSENTIAL JOB SKILL



MARKET RESEARCH FOR ENTREPRENEURS

To succeed in business,
digital literacy is an
essential job skill

HOW MPL WILL HELP
Provide digital education
programs that invest in
digital literacy skills

Digital
Literacy is
an Essential
Job Skill

Provide
digital
education
programs

ALWAYS CONNECTED ALWAYS MOBILE



FOBO (Fear Of Being Offline)

We live in a mobile-driven world that creates a 24x7 connected mentality. Increasingly, the lines between our personal lives and our work lives are blurred.

In the branches, customers bring their own devices to the library and expect adequate wifi capacity to study, research, and consume content effectively.

From selfies (aka “informal creative activity”) to new networks and digital collaboration, the digital revolution has transformed lives and behaviours.

MPL RESPONSE

Connect with users where they are – on mobile devices, tweeting, etc.

Develop a multi-channel communication strategy to engage users on both digital and analog platforms.

Always
Connected

Always
Mobile

Connect with
users where they
live – online and
on the move

DIGITAL DISRUPTION

Around the world, digital innovations are disrupting ways of doing business, undercutting business models (uber, airbnb) and livelihoods (licenced taxi drivers and the bed and breakfast industry).

Disruption is the new normal for business — making it all the more critical to provide paths to reskill for those displaced by digital disruption, and those needing access to innovative technology to explore new ways of making a living.

MPL RESPONSE

Provide innovative opportunities to explore new technologies

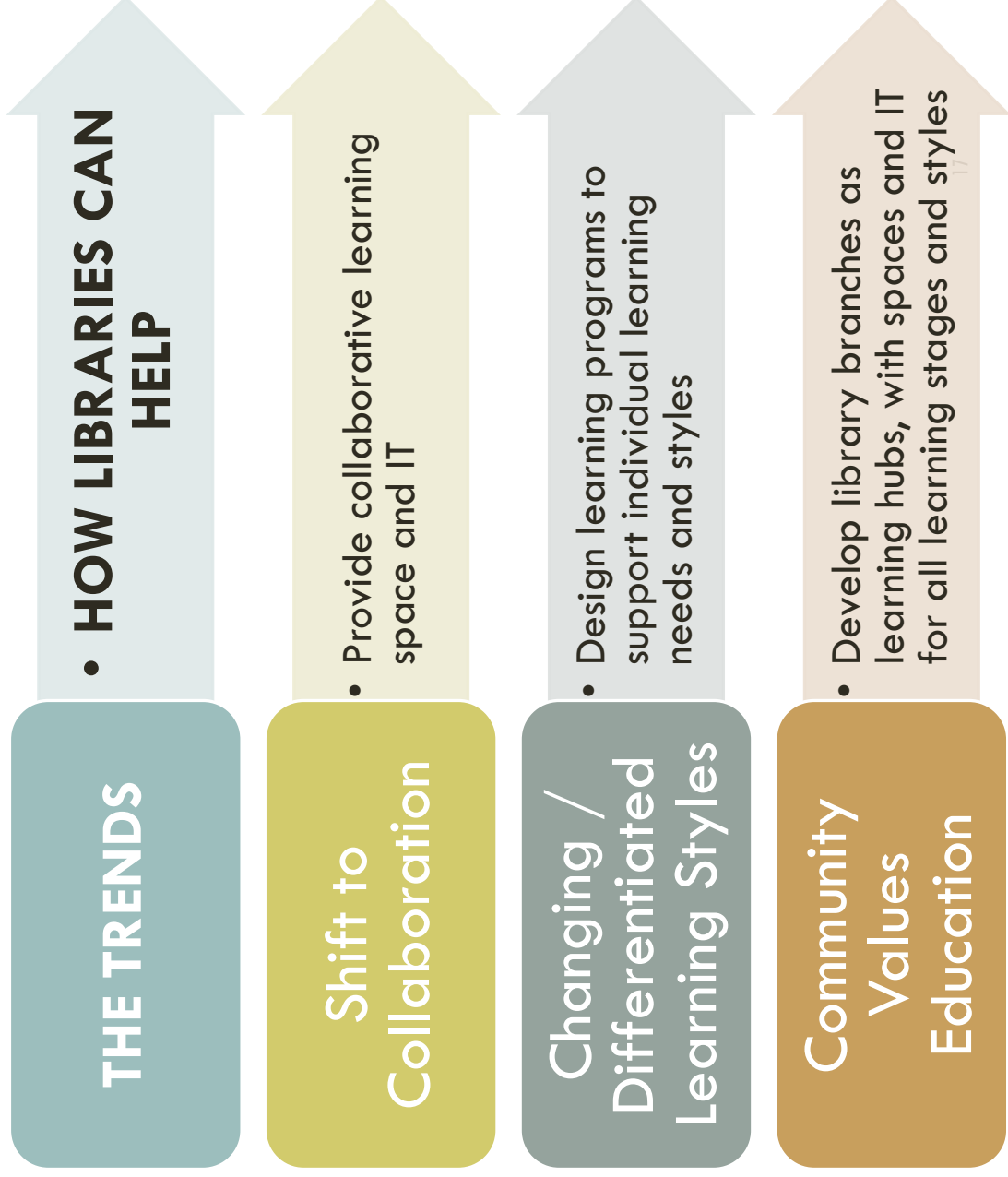
- Including creative hubs for the public to use as digital media labs, makerspaces, music editing and other creative endeavors

Digital
Disruption

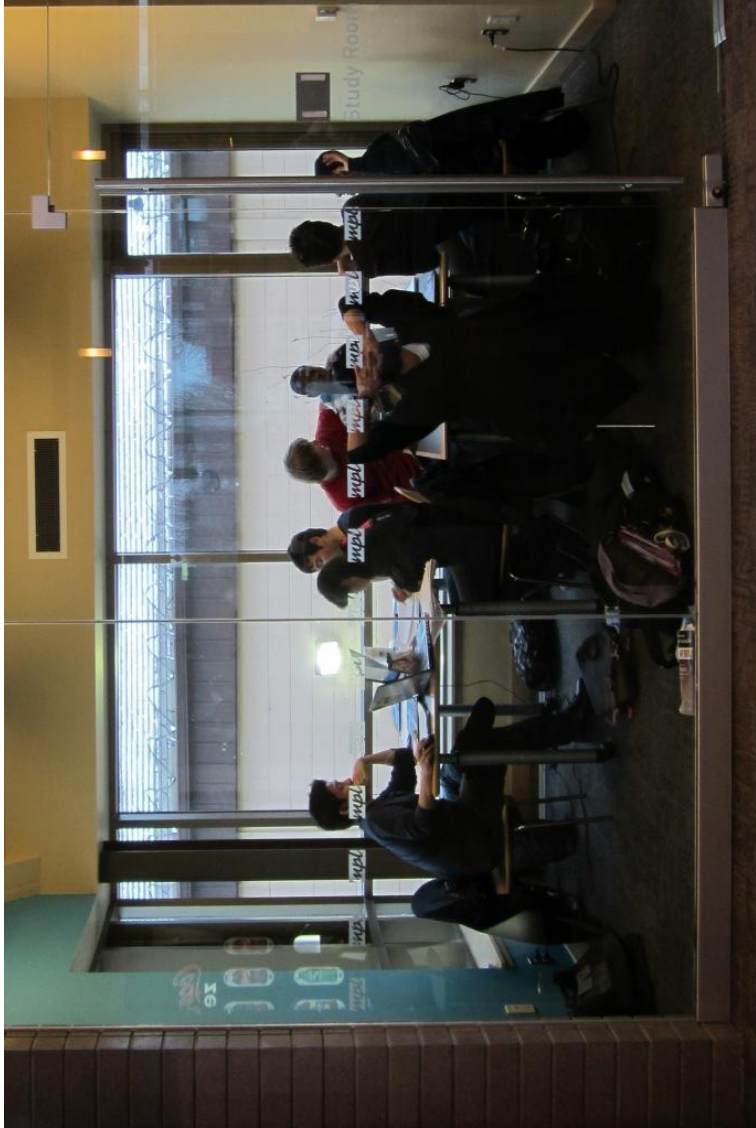
Provide
innovative
opportunities
to explore
new
technologies

3. LEARNING TRENDS & HOW LIBRARIES CAN HELP

We identified three Learning and Education trends for consideration in developing the Strategic Plan. These trends, and the MPL strategic response are summarized in the chart at right. Each trend is analyzed in greater detail on the following pages. Our strategic responses are woven into our four Strategic Themes.



SHIFT TO COLLABORATION



School curricula increasingly requires group work, representing a shift to a more collaborative learning model

MPL RESPONSE: Provide collaborative learning space and IT to support student collaboration

Shift to
Collaboration

Provide
collaborative
learning
space and IT

CHANGING / DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING STYLES



Educators have developed a better understanding, based on research, of how youth learn. Libraries like the Chicago Public Library design youth learning space based on the concepts of “Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out.”

*The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on
Digital Media and Learning
Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out*

MPL RESPONSE: Design learning programs and spaces to support individual learning needs and styles

Changing /
Differentiated
Learning
Styles

Design learning
programs and
spaces to support
individual learning
needs and styles

MARKHAM VALUES EDUCATION

Community consultation reinforced our understanding of how important educational success is to Markham families – a shared value and priority across all of Markham’s diversity. As well, older adults expressed a lifelong passion for learning and self-improvement. This is consistent with the research conducted in 2010 for Markham’s Greenprint, and the finding that education is the # 1 value among Markham residents.

MPL RESPONSE

Develop library branches as learning hubs, with spaces and IT for all learning stages and styles.

Provide diverse events to meet different learning styles and help all ages achieve their lifelong learning goals.

Community
Values
Education

Develop library branches as learning hubs, with spaces, IT & events for all learning stages and styles

4. LIFESTYLE TRENDS & HOW LIBRARIES CAN HELP

We identified three lifestyle (the way we live) trends for consideration in developing the Strategic Plan.

These trends, and the MPL strategic response are summarized in the chart at right.

Each trend is analyzed in greater detail on the following pages. Our strategic responses are woven into our four Strategic Themes.



TIME-CRUNCHED LIFESTYLES



During our community conversations, we heard about the time crunch and long commutes with their impact on family life.

The Integrated Leisure Master Plan identified lack of time as a significant barrier to using the City's leisure services.

Data shows that Markham has many multi-generational and multi-family households – making for busy, noisy homes with a lot of sharing and competition – for adult attention, for Internet time and for quiet study space.

MPL RESPONSE Provide convenient online options/channels for accessing library services.

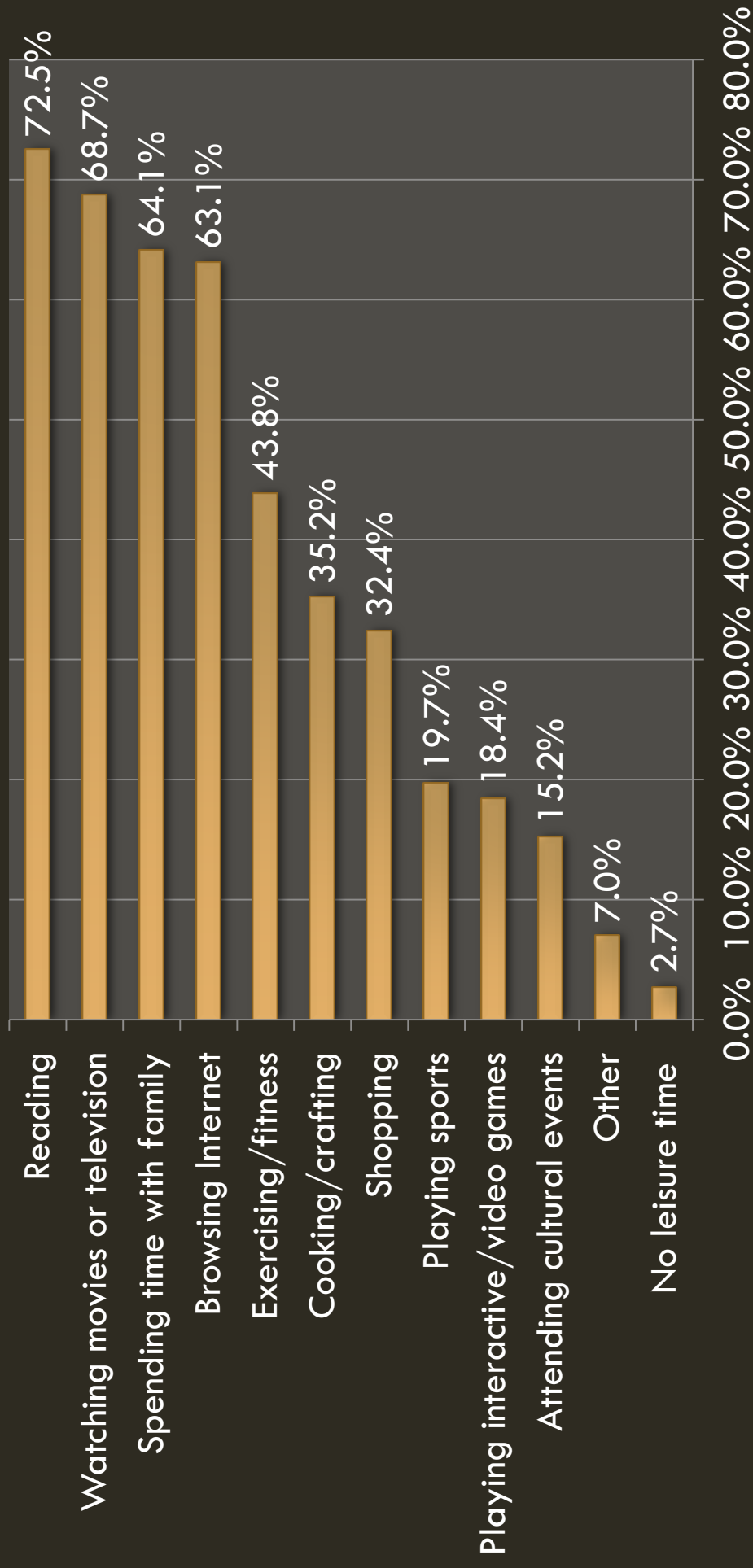
Time-Crunched Lifestyles

Provide convenient online service options

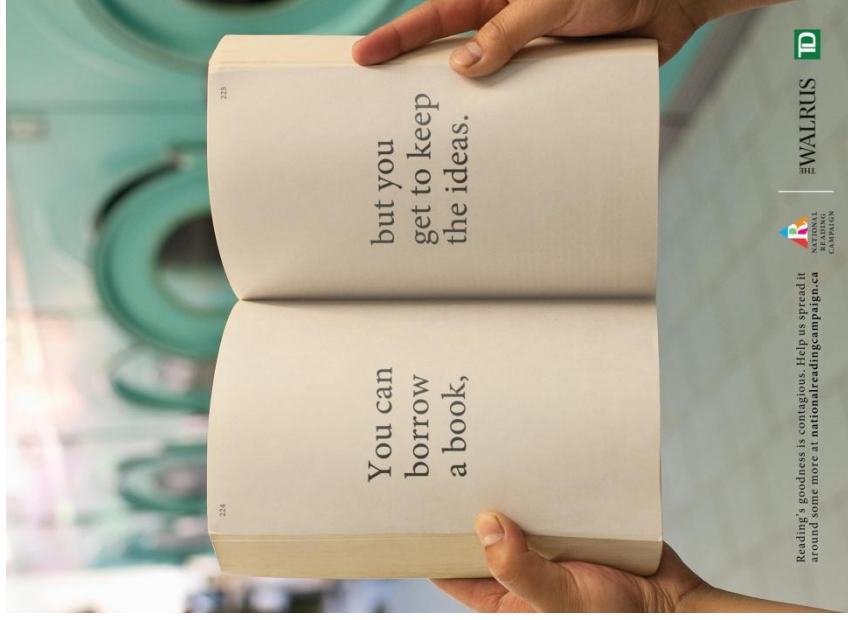
+ LEISURE TIME IN MARKHAM

MPL Strategic Plan Survey asked...how do you spend leisure time?

How Do You Spend Your Leisure Time?



A COMMUNITY WITH HIGH ASPIRATIONS



Markham dreams big. Community consultation confirmed that this is a community with high aspirations — for educational success, for career advancement, and for financial prosperity and security.

MPL RESPONSE MPL will help everyone achieve their aspirations for family, health, education, careers and life

A Community with High Aspirations

Help everyone
achieve their
aspirations for
family, health,
education, careers
and life

SOCIAL CAPITAL IN DECLINE

The 2010 *Integrated Leisure Master Plan* identified the decline in social capital across North America. Often described as the *Bowling Alone* syndrome, associated with the drop in membership in social clubs like adult bowling leagues and in service organizations.

MPL RESPONSE Strengthen Markham's social capital through the provision of public spaces that bring our diverse community together and provide inclusive programs and events that enhance mutual understanding.

Social Capital in Decline

Provide public spaces that serve as community assets, bringing diversity together & strengthening Markham's social capital

5. CONTENT TRENDS & HOW LIBRARIES CAN HELP

We identified three Content trends for consideration in developing the Strategic Plan. These trends, and the MPL strategic response are summarized in the chart at right.

Each trend is analyzed in greater detail on the following pages. Our strategic responses are woven into our four Strategic Themes.



RISE OF THE EBOOK

“Public libraries are balancing ebook access with access to traditional book services for loyal and dedicated print users. Materials budgets for most public libraries are keeping pace with both inflation and population growth.”

*Ebound Canada Report:
Ebook Collection
Practices. August 2015*

Ebook use continues to rise among public library customers. However access continues to be constrained by budget issues as well as the business models developed by the publishing industry for ebook sales to libraries. Generally, the public library sector acquires material under licensing/purchase models:

- Public library models almost always focus on one-book, one-reader access to titles with each “copy” limited to a set number of circulations.
- Several larger publishers provide single-user copies of titles only for a limited period of time (a year or two) and require libraries to renew each copy if they want continued access. Each copy may or may not also come with a limit on the number of circulations; the license expires whenever one of the two limits—time or circulations—is reached.

MPL RESPONSE

While the business models for ebooks continue to evolve, provide convenient online reading options (as feasible within the constraints of product availability and cost).

Rise
of the
ebook

Provide
convenient
online
reading
options

THE READING DEBATE — EBOOKS VS. PAPER BOOKS

FAIR EBOOK PRICES LONG OVERDUE FOR LIBRARIES

Digital content is the fastest growing area of borrowing for public libraries.

Last year alone, ebook downloads grew by more than 60% and demand continues to increase.

The popularity of digital content – and of ebooks in particular – is an exciting opportunity for libraries to connect with the public in new ways, but it also presents challenges.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In some cases, libraries pay three to five times more for eBooks than consumers.
- There are caps and time limits on ebook use by library customers.
- This means there are fewer titles and fewer copies for readers to discover.

THE E-BOOK PRICING COALITION

- A Coalition of Canadian public libraries is working to raise awareness of ebook pricing issues, with the goal of ensuring broad access to eBooks for Canadian readers.

After several years of polarization, and predictions that ebooks would completely replace paper books, the ebook publishing market has matured and appears to have stabilized. It now appears that it may be possible for the digital and print worlds to co-exist.

For libraries, the pricing issues persist (see sidebar at left) and managing the challenge of providing traditional book services to loyal and dedicated print users while, at the same time, expanding their ebook collections.

MPL RESPONSE Follow our customers' lead and keep pace with the format preferences that Markham residents want

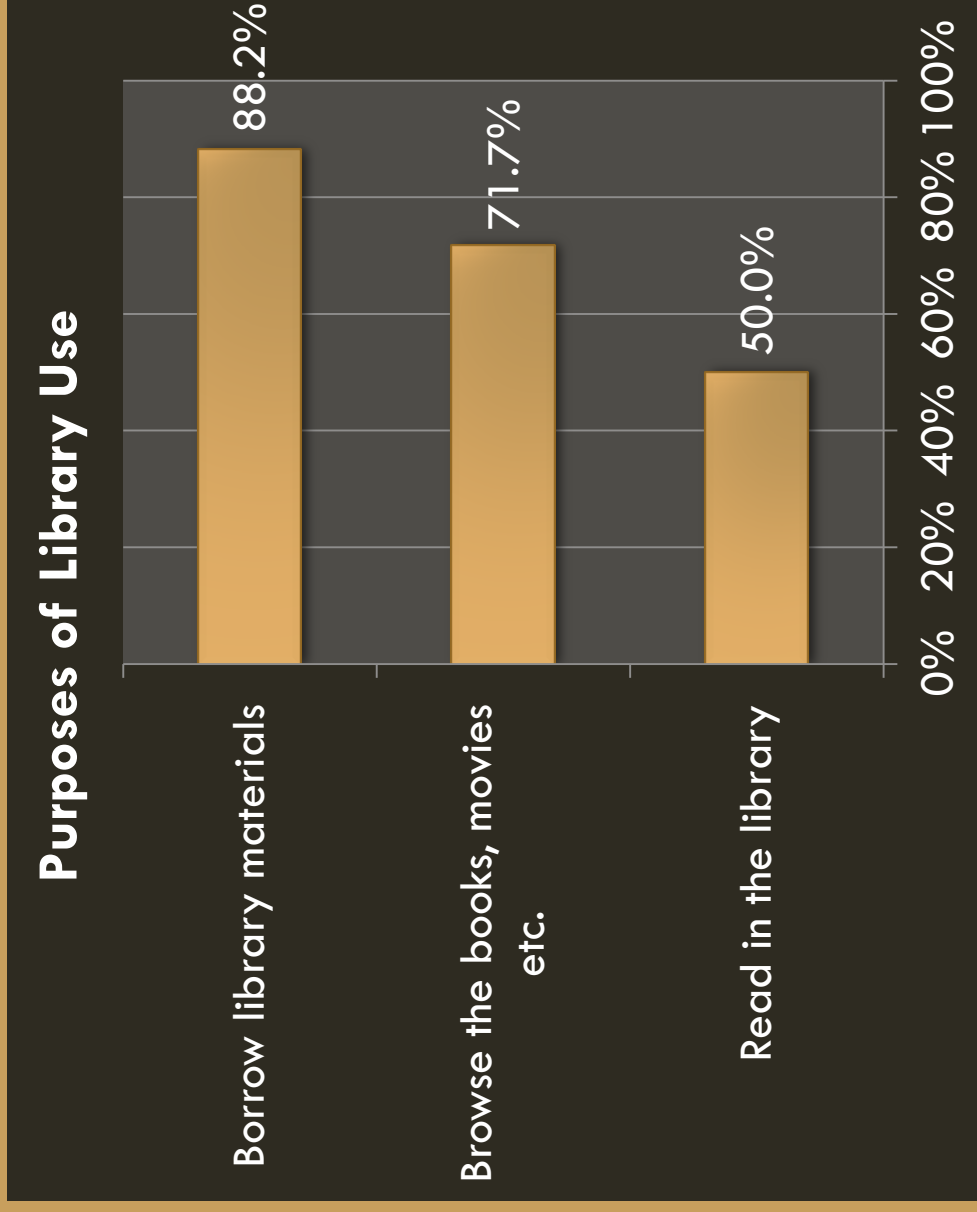
E vs Paper Debate

Follow our customers' lead and keep pace with the format preferences that Markham residents want

CONTENT MATTERS

In a time of great uncertainty, what we do know for certain is that content – the collection of library materials, whether print or digital – is important to Markham’s library customers. MPL Strategic Plan Survey Respondents told us that their top 3 reasons to use the library are related to the content:

- Borrowing library materials
- Browsing the books, movies, etc.
- Reading in the library

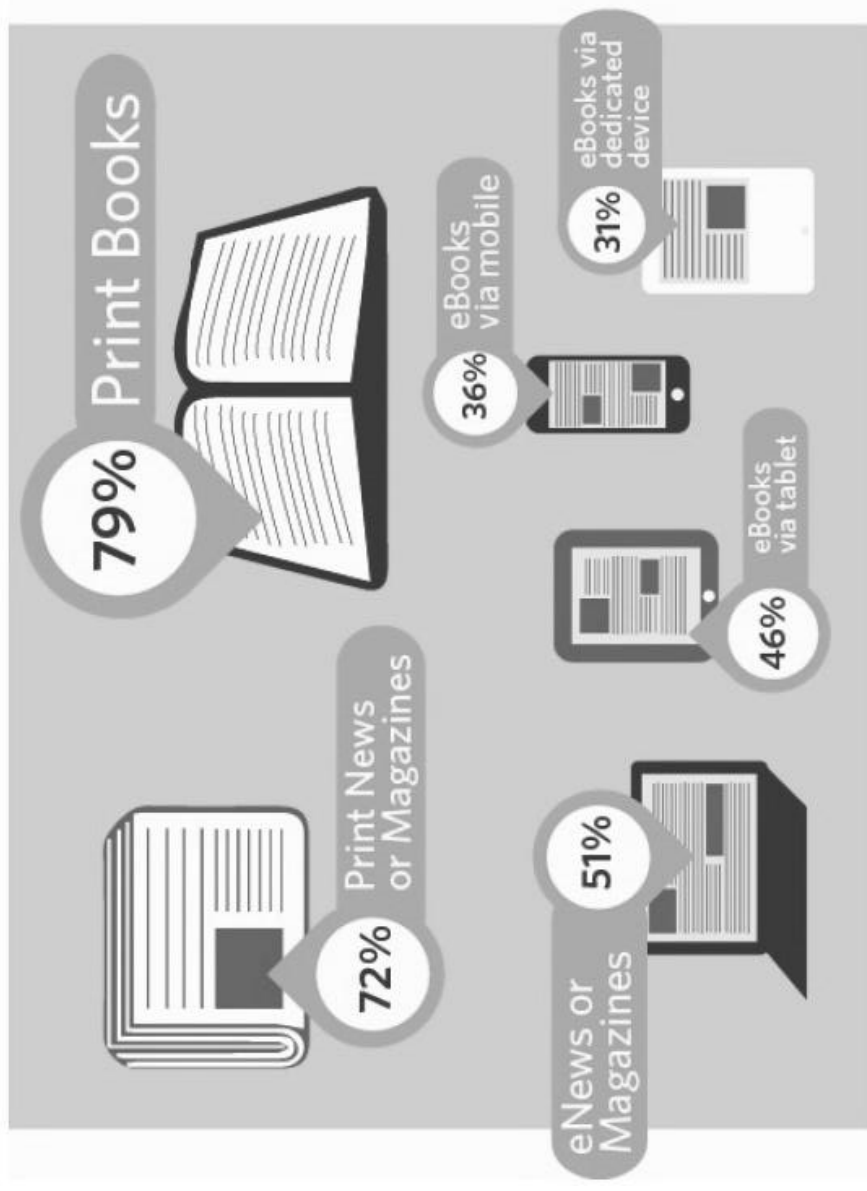


THE FUTURE OF READING — A PERSISTENT PREFERENCE FOR PRINT

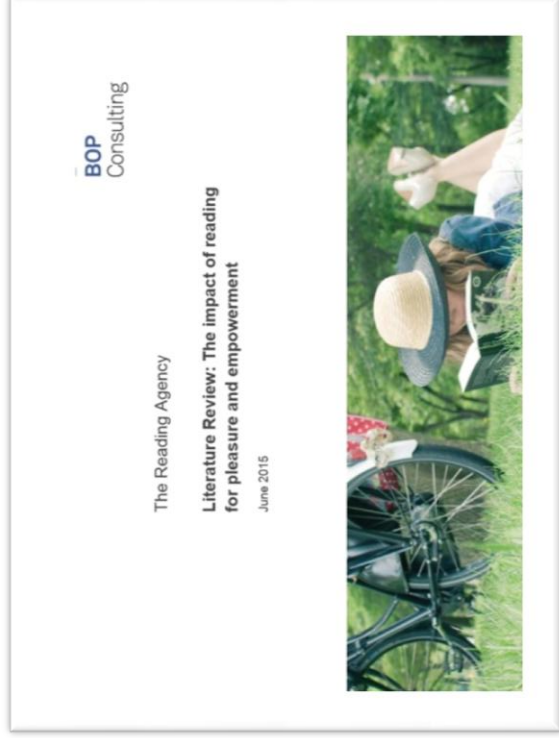
Even among the Millennial Generation, a preference for print persists. A recent study - *How Millennials Consume Content* — found that in the last year, nearly twice as many respondents had read a print book (79%), than an ebook on any device — the closest being a tablet (46%).

This persistent preference for print among Millennials suggests that early assumptions about the transition from print-based to digital content may have been over-aggressive. For libraries, this means that collection budget allocations will need to be carefully managed to keep pace with generational complexities and changes in reading preferences over time.

Publishing Technology: *How Millennials Consume Content*



THE POWER OF READING



An increasing body of research provides evidence that reading for pleasure and empowerment has many benefits:

- increases empathy,
- improves relationships with others,
- reduces the symptoms of depression and dementia,
- improves wellbeing through life,
- improves social capital,
- increases knowledge of other cultures, and
- increases the sense of personal and social belonging in this world.

*“Everything
changes when
we read.”*

The Power of Reading

Champion the
power of
reading to
change lives
for the better

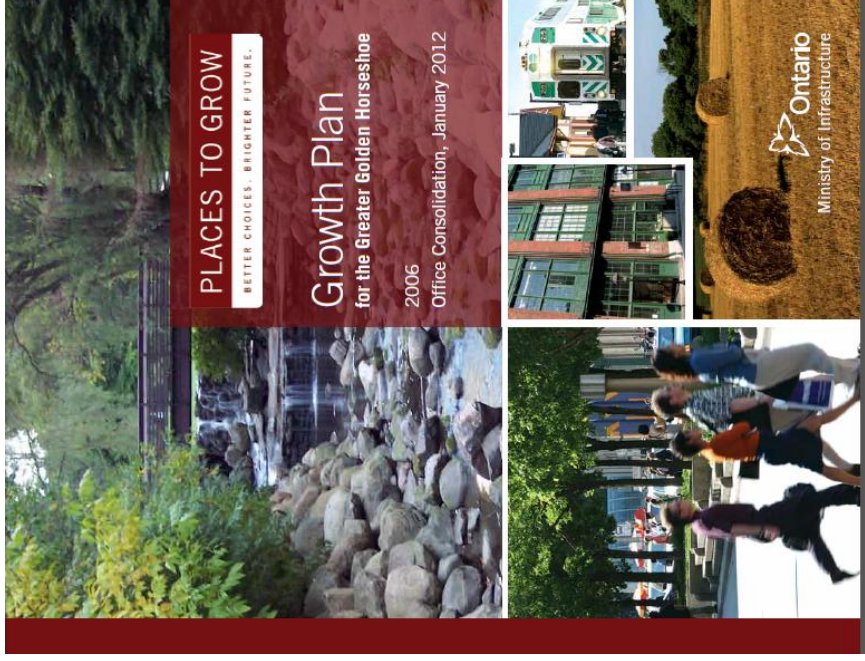
MPL RESPONSE Champion the power of
reading to change lives for the better through
marketing, content and programming

6. PLACE TRENDS & HOW LIBRARIES CAN HELP

We identified three Place trends for consideration in developing the Strategic Plan. These trends, and the MPL strategic response are summarized in the chart at right. Each trend is analyzed in greater detail on the following pages. Our strategic responses are woven into our four Strategic Themes.



PLACES TO GROW



Places to Grow – Ontario’s Growth Plan

- Like other municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Markham is planning for residential intensification along its growth corridors.
- Increased density and smaller housing units will drive a need for indoor public space for study, leisure time and social interaction.

MPL RESPONSE

- Provide space that compensates for more compact housing units
- Develop innovative new service models for urban areas

Places to Grow

Provide space that compensates for more compact housing units

Develop innovative new service models

PLACEMAKING AND A RESILIENT CITY



Place making Drives Resilient Cities

- Increased data and research shows the role of place making and the public realm in quality of life outcomes.

MPL RESPONSE

- Meet public expectations for library space as a community asset and a key element of Markham's public realm.

Placemaking & a Resilient City

Meet public expectations for library space as a key element of Markham's quality of life & public realm

COMMUNITY LEARNING HUBS

- Residents and students in particular, are looking for places for individualized and collaborative learning.

MPL RESPONSE

- Continue to evolve our spaces to support different learning needs.
- Develop branches as community learning hubs with partners delivering learning programs.



AN AFTERNOON WITH ROBOTS AT UNIONVILLE LIBRARY

Community Learning Hubs

Form partnerships to enhance our role as community learning hubs