

2021 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

North Vancouver City Library

CHECKLIST

For the PLGR to be considered complete, please ensure you have provided information for each of the following sections. Suggested word counts have been included for each question, but feel free to include more or less text as needed – text boxes will expand as you type. Click on a title in the list below to jump to that section of the document.

- ✓ [1. INTRODUCTION - LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY PROFILE](#)
- ✓ [2. MAJOR PROJECTS/PROGRAMS](#)
- ✓ [3. KEY CHALLENGES](#)
- ✓ [4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL](#)

1. INTRODUCTION - LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

Provide a brief description of the community and library, focusing on what has changed in the past year (up to 500 words).

The City of North Vancouver is located on the unceded traditional territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation and Səl̓íl̓wətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation.

The City of North Vancouver (the “City”) is located at the base of the North Shore mountains, bounded to the south by the Burrard Inlet, and to the east and west by the District of North Vancouver. The 2021 census showed the City had a population of 59,576 people in a land area of approximately 12 square kilometres. This is a 9.9% increase in population since 2016 – making the City of North Vancouver one of the fastest-growing municipalities in the Metro area.

The 2016 census tells us that 67% of the population speaks English or French, with 32% identifying English as an additional language. The most predominant languages after English are Farsi, Tagalog, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Korean and Spanish. Over 6,800 im/migrants participated in various settlement services provided by our local partner, Impact North Shore (formerly North Shore Multicultural Society) in 2020-2021.

North Vancouver City Library (“City Library”) is a 36,000 square foot single-site library system, located in the heart of the City. Situated on the Civic Plaza across from City Hall, in one of the City’s densest neighbourhoods, it is easily accessible and within walking distance for many residents of all ages.

While daily in-person visits have increased by over 30% since 2020, they have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels. At the start of 2021, City Library was operating with reduced hours and services. On January 16, 2021 we increased our hours to 75% of pre-pandemic hours, and on September 7, 2021 we restored nearly all remaining hours.

Staff worked throughout the year to rework and reinstate services in line with public health guidelines – and as a result, we saw year-over-year increases in library visits, computer use and program attendance. Requirements to maintain safe distancing, reduce space capacity, and restrict in-person events and gatherings continued to impact use of the library facility.

Visits to nvcl.ca remained at pre-pandemic levels, while demand for digital collections exploded and borrowing of materials in all formats increased to the highest level in five years.

Residents continue to value the library as critical social infrastructure, essential to their feelings of community connection. In our 2021 year-end survey, 94.8% of library customers indicated they would recommend the library to a friend or neighbour and 92.9% reported they feel inspired to learn more as a result of using the library.

The City's Official Community Plan provides direction while balancing the diverse needs of the community. City Council's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan provides further focus and direction for its four-year term. In alignment with City Council's vision to be "The Healthiest Small City in the World", City Library has identified how library services, priorities and strategies support the City's five priorities: A City for People, A Connected City, A Liveable City, A Vibrant City, and A Prosperous City.

2021 was to be the final year of our four-year Strategic Plan (2018-2021). The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted operations and planned initiatives in 2020 and 2021. Rather than initiate a new strategic plan, the North Vancouver City Library Board elected to refresh the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan with language and content that reflects our current priorities, conversations, and commitments. These revisions extend our current strategic plan by two years and enable us to move forward with fresh direction and vision.

2. MAJOR PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Project/Program Name
The Collaboratory – a community technology learning and innovation space
Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
This project involved the enclosure and repurposing of a little-used outdoor terrace to create a dedicated technology learning space. "The Collaboratory" is an inspiring, light-filled space that preserves the community's views of the City and water. With flexible space and furnishings, The Collaboratory can be transformed into a wide variety of learning environments - from a traditional classroom for seniors' computer classes, to shared workbenches for team projects, to an open floor model for racing robots.
In place of a launch party, Library Trustees and City Councillors visited The Collaboratory for individual tours and helped to create a video about all the space has to offer: https://www.facebook.com/NorthVanCityLibrary/videos/216761893654804/
The Collaboratory is equipped with a wide range of specialized equipment and software and can be set up with Windows PCs, laptops or tablets – in addition to a library of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) kits. Together, these devices support a range of applications for all ages and skill levels including coding, robotics, augmented and virtual reality, videography, and digital art and animation.

Our ultimate vision for The Collaboratory is to support and inspire hands-on, collaborative technology learning for all ages. Launched in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, The Collaboratory's program offerings had to be reimagined for a physically-distanced, home-based and largely virtual learning context. We pivoted to a learn-and-go model, where participants attended staff-led demonstrations individually or virtually then borrowed equipment like digital microscopes, GoPro cameras, coding robots, and circuitry and electronics kits to deepen their learning at home.

In addition, we filled our program calendar with a range of pandemic-friendly virtual and small-group programs, including:

- One-to-one technology help
- Small-group instruction on common digital tasks like downloading your vaccine card or making appointments for medical tests ("technology learning circles")
- Learn-and-go programs to introduce participants to different technologies available to borrow through the library
- Citizen science programs, including a December bird count
- Drop-in Minecraft gaming and digital art studio

We also put together several family-oriented technology themed literacy programs for Family Literacy Day and Literacy Week, including "The Very Hungry Code-a-pillar", "Dash Robot Code n' Play", and a "Harry Potter Coding Event".

Looking ahead, as COVID restrictions ease, staff are excited to expand programming in The Collaboratory and connect with community partners like Capilano University and the local school district to further enrich our offerings and inspire the community.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?

This project aligns with City Library's strategic priority to "Inspire Learning, Discovery & Creation" and specific goals to:

- Create a dedicated, inspiring space for learning and innovation
- Devise learning experiences for all ages that inspire and motivate
- Actively weave 21st century learning skills into library programs
- Support digital skills development and application

With its focus on lifelong learning, skills development, and equitable access to technology and resources, The Collaboratory also supports City Council's priorities: "A City for People" and "A Prosperous City".

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal\(s\) for public library service](#)? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.

<p>1. Improving Access for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)</p>	<p>As a dedicated technology learning space, The Collaboratory helps our community connect to and navigate the digital world with state-of-the-art equipment, industry-standard software, high-speed internet access, and innovative programming.</p> <p>The Collaboratory supports community members of all ages, backgrounds and skill levels by providing free access to current technologies and a menu of staff-led and self-directed learning supports.</p>
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What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.

City Library aspires to be a creative hub and an engine for community innovation and problem solving. The technology and programming available in The Collaboratory are key elements in our goal to empower discovery, inspire creativity, and support skills development.

In 2021:

- 551 individuals participated in technology programs
- Library cardholders completed 57,663 online courses
- 88.5% of library users agreed that the library is a key source of support as they navigate technological change – a 21.9% increase over the previous year
- 92.9% of library users feel inspired to learn more as a result of their use of the library

Immediate outcomes from the opening of The Collaboratory included:

- Addition of 700 square feet of distinct and dedicated technology learning space, separate from other public programming space
- Increased access to internet and public computers
- Increased access to specialized technology and software that supports community members' educational, workplace, and skills development needs
- Technology learning supports available during all public service hours
- Increased capacity to support learning tailored to the needs of our community, such as small and home-based business, film, animation and gaming

As a result of engaging with programming and technology in The Collaboratory:

- Community members are able to improve their skills with technology
- Community members are better able to connect with family, friends, community information, and government services
- Community members are more adaptable and able to skilfully navigate technological change

With time and expanded programming:

- Community members will feel inspired to come together and use technology to solve community problems
- City Library will be a hub for technology-based learning across generations and cultures

Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)?

The City of North Vancouver was a critical funding partner for this project, providing 100% of capital funding to build and equip The Collaboratory.

City Library aspires to work closely with program partners, including local schools and post-secondary institutions, to develop and deliver expanded programming in The Collaboratory. Pandemic restrictions prevented us from moving forward on this aspiration in 2021. As restrictions ease, staff will be working with partners to plan for future programming in the space.

Project/Program Name

Year of Science

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.

2021 saw City Library's programming staff find their stride in the delivery of high quality virtual programs, as well as a limited return to in-person programming. The Year of Science (YOS) was selected as a programming theme for 2021 in order to:

- Provide a sense of cohesion to our public programming
- Inspire our library programmers (Librarians and Library Technicians) to look at programming with fresh eyes
- Reflect and respond to important issues facing our community

The theme shaped the many free programs, workshops and events the library produced in 2021, using science as a lens to inspire learning and discovery while promoting critical thinking and scientific literacy.

Many YOS programs focused on children and youth. Magical Science is one example of a program that engaged children, their families and teens. Teen volunteers posed as "science fairies" to answer young children's science-related questions through letters and emails. The teens answered 71 letters over the summer on topics ranging from "Where does space come from?" to "What are shadows made of?" Questions and answers were posted in the library for all to see and enjoy. One strength of this program was how it provided a simultaneously fun and educational experience for a wide age demographic – engaging participants in activities that extended writing, research and inquiry skills.

In keeping with our strategic priority to Honour Indigenous Perspectives, we were grateful to work with Indigenous presenters who presented scientific topics from an Indigenous worldview. Ethnobotanist, T'uy't'tanat-Cease Wyss (Squamish Nation) led participants on a virtual guided tour through the beautiful Harmony Garden, which is located on Squamish Nation land and filled with plants native to the region. T'uy't'tanat shared her knowledge about plant identification, traditional uses of plants, and invasive species. In another program, Wilfred Buck (Opaskwayak Cree Nation) taught attendees about the constellations of the Northern Hemisphere through a Cree lens in his program Ininew Ackosuk (Cree Stars).

Our most popular Year of Science program in 2021 was an author talk by Dr. Suzanne Simard on her hugely successful book *Finding the Mother Tree*. Presented in partnership between the three North Shore libraries (City Library, North Vancouver District Public Library, and West Vancouver Memorial Library), this virtual presentation attracted over 400 participants! The session opened with a traditional welcome by Tsitsayxemaat Rebecca Campbell Duncan (Squamish Nation) and was hosted

by CBC Radio personality Shelagh Rogers. Participants learned about the complex ecology of BC's forests and about the links Dr. Simard discovered between her research findings and her own life experiences while writing her book.

Additional YOS programs offered in 2021 included:

- Astronomy for Beginners with the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
- Citizen Science Biodiversity Observation, which encouraged citizens of all ages to participate in observational science projects in their community
- Drawdown: Climate Action and Reversing Global Warming
- Take-and-make kits for children and families with a variety of science-based projects
- Spring Equinox Celebration with the Heiltsuk Nation which featured information on Heiltsuk star knowledge and management of the herring harvest
- Teen Wildlife Ambassador Program with City Parks staff
- Story times with science-based themes
- Once Upon a Tree with Lynn Valley Ecology Centre about our local trees and forests
- Climate Activism Panel for teens, with knowledgeable youth activists leading a panel discussion

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?

The Year of Science programming supported the library's strategic priority to "Inspire Learning, Discovery and Creation", including goals to:

- Devise learning experiences for all ages that inspire and motivate
- Actively weave 21st century learning skills into library programs

Programs offered participants the opportunity to learn about a wide variety of topics, from botany to climate change to Indigenous astronomy. Citizen Science programs brought participants out into their communities to discover the flora and fauna present in local parks and their own backyards. Astronomy programs led participants to discover a new view on the constellations of the Northern Hemisphere. Take-and-make kits encouraged families to engage in creative projects while learning together.

With its focus on climate and environmental science, the Year of Science also supported City Council's strategic priority "A Liveable City".

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal\(s\) for public library service](#)? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.

<p>2. Advancing Citizen Engagement (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)</p>	<p>The many programs offered through the YOS project directly align with the provincial goal of "Advancing Citizen Engagement".</p> <p>The YOS initiative supported reconciliation through programs that centered the knowledge and worldviews of Coast Salish and other Indigenous peoples. This gave attendees an alternative perspective to euro-centric practices of science and provided, for many attendees, new sources of knowledge about the natural world.</p>
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	In addition, programs like Citizen Science supported community knowledge-sharing by encouraging local residents to observe and report the various species of plants, animals and insects in their community.
What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.	
<p>Library staff developed and delivered 87 Year of Science themed programs in 2021, which attracted 1,654 community participants. Our most popular YOS program was Suzanne Simard's virtual author visit, with over 400 people in attendance.</p> <p>Programming staff observed that YOS programs that addressed the topic of climate change, such as the event with Dr. Simard, were particularly welcomed by community members. Multiple attendees commented that they appreciated the opportunity to learn and to connect with others on this often anxiety-provoking topic. Some specific feedback we received:</p> <p><i>"Thanks so much for this event! I was inspired to go to the nearest forest and just breathe"</i></p> <p><i>"I felt the book was healing for me. In a desperate time of a deadly pandemic your talk made me cry and smile and I felt rapture as you described my beloved BC Forests."</i></p> <p><i>"Thank you! What a pleasure to hear this gentle, genuine woman share her ground-breaking discoveries with a world so sadly in need of her wisdom and the hope she stirs in our hearts."</i></p> <p>Many reported that they felt empowered and inspired to work with others in the community to address climate change. This impact is yet another way in which the YOS programming supports the provincial strategic goal to "advance citizen engagement".</p> <p>The Citizen Science programs that ran throughout the year also resulted in 470,368 observations of 2,708 species by City residents – and led to the discovery of invasive plant species in City Parks (then reported to City staff who coordinated their removal)! The observations were recorded in a global species data sharing network, contributing to biodiversity science and research locally and globally.</p> <p>Further outcomes for Year of Science programming included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members were inspired to contribute to citizen science initiatives • Families discovered new ways to connect and learn together • Participants developed inquiry and critical thinking skills • Participants had expanded appreciation for different world views and ways of knowing 	
Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)?	
<p>City Library staff worked with many partners to plan and deliver the array of Year of Science programs. Program partners played a number of roles, including contributing and presenting content, as well as cost sharing. Program partners included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Vancouver Memorial Library • North Vancouver District Public Library • Birds Canada 	

- North Vancouver City Parks Department
- Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

Project/Program Name

Open Door Community Hub / Strengthening Communities Services

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.

At all times of the day and year, the library operates as an unofficial day shelter for folks who value the library as a place that is protected from the elements, safe and low-barrier, and where they can access resources, technology and community connection.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, City Library also collaborated with local faith groups to operate a “warming station” one morning a week from November through March, where individuals experiencing homelessness could get a warm drink and snack while accessing both library services and those of other community service providers. This service ceased when the pandemic was declared and the library closed in March 2020.

As pandemic restrictions have eased, we have seen individuals experiencing homelessness return to the library. Many of these individuals require additional supports beyond the information and referral service, access to collections, and public technology access which library staff are trained to provide.

City Library collaborated with the three North Shore municipalities in a successful application for a Strengthening Communities Services grant from the Union of BC Municipalities. With this funding, the library opened an enhanced drop-in program, providing year-round, twice-weekly dedicated space and services for unsheltered individuals, augmented with refreshments and care packs for distribution to individuals who need them. This “relaunch” of our warming station is called the Open Door Community Hub.

Most significantly, the grant provided funding to hire a part-time community access worker (CAW) who has additional skills and training to address the referral and service needs of vulnerable individuals, both directly and in coordination with other service providers – and who has helped build the library’s and staff’s capacity to respond to the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness. The CAW has brought a trauma-informed, culturally safe lens to the services we provide for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness – and works to ensure all library staff are aware of information and resources that can help them to appreciate the experience and respond to the needs of community members who are struggling.

How does this project/program support the library’s strategic goals and/or community?

This program reflects the library’s strategic priority to “Enhance Access & Inclusion” and our goal to “work to identify and resolve barriers to accessing library services.”

Despite our best intentions, the public library is an institution that presents barriers to vulnerable community members who could benefit from or enjoy our services if those barriers were not present. The Open Door Community Hub signals to people in our community who are unsheltered that they are welcome at the library and helps them learn about and connect to the variety of services we offer, as well as the services available to them in the wider community. It also provides library staff the opportunity to learn more from community members about their experiences, needs and aspirations

so that all staff can better serve and support all residents, including those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal\(s\) for public library service](#)? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.

<p>3. Building Capacity for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)</p>	<p>Working with vulnerable individuals can be challenging for library staff. While library staff come to their work with the community with good intentions, they often do not have the specific training or knowledge to assist customers experiencing homelessness. Having a community access worker on staff expands our capacity to deliver trauma-informed and culturally safe service and also creates stronger links and mutual understanding between staff and individuals who are struggling.</p> <p>The Strengthening Communities Services grant also includes funding for training and professional development that will support all library staff to bring a more empathetic, trauma-informed lens to the services they provide to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>In addition, working closely with the other partners (including our local First Nations, the three municipalities, and the Lookout Shelter) has helped us to create and strengthen connections to one another and bring more services into our facility.</p>
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What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.

The Open Door Community Hub started in November 2021 and during the last two months of the year, 117 people attended the twice-weekly sessions, with additional participants each week. This has already led to two significant outcomes:

- Stronger relationships with, and deeper appreciation of the needs and experiences of, library users experiencing homelessness
- More individuals are connected to the services they need, in the library or through interaction with library staff

As one attendee of the program wrote:

"I want to express my gratitude to the two librarians who came to my aid yesterday.... [L]ast Thursday, while preparing dinner, I accidentally cut my thumb. Even though I tried my best to tend my wound, I could not get it to stop bleeding. The whole episode was enough to make me feel sorry for myself.

But Rebecca [community access worker], one of your new hires, came to my rescue. She got hold of her colleague to clean my thumb and change the dressing. Most of all, she took the time to talk to me. We talked about art, a field which I'm pursuing, and origami, which I'm most passionate about. I end up feeling much better, able enough to go to my card group at Shakespeare House that afternoon. I'm so fortunate to have these two ladies to support me, especially Rebecca. To these two, I give my heartfelt thanks."

The stated outcomes of the granting body (UBCM) for the Strengthening Communities' Services grant are:

- Improved health and safety of unsheltered homeless people living in public or private spaces, including reduced risk of COVID-19 or other disease transmission;
- Reduced community concerns about public health and safety in neighbourhoods where unsheltered homeless populations are seeking temporary shelter and services;
- Improved coordination among eligible applicants and health/social service providers, Indigenous organizations and others working on housing, homelessness and service provision; and
- Increased capacity of eligible applicants to work with homeless persons and Indigenous organizations towards culturally safe and trauma-informed responses.

Additional stated outcomes of the North Shore Unsheltered Homeless Temporary COVID-19 Supports project (the larger project of which the library's project is a part) include:

- Taking the "front door" of services to individuals in need
- Expansion of fixed locations and staffing attached to these locations based on meeting basic needs while offering a conduit to other supports that address more complex needs
- Creating a sense of normality and familiarity for unsheltered individuals to reengage with the wider community
- Providing access to basic supplies through provision of comfort kits
- Increased coordination in and consistency of service provided

Specific outcomes for the City Library project (in addition to those listed above) are:

- Increased capacity to provide trauma-informed, culturally safe services to people experiencing homelessness – both directly and through partnerships
- Expanded staff skills and knowledge in areas including referral, de-escalation, cultural safety, and empathy-driven service provision
- Stronger connections and increased collaboration between library staff and health and social service providers, Indigenous organizations and others working on housing, homelessness and service provision to people experiencing homelessness
- Increased awareness and use of library services and resources that meet their needs among people experiencing homelessness
- Improved sense of community and belonging in the library for all library users

Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)?

Funding for the project is being provided through the Union of BC Municipalities.

The grant application involves multiple partners including:

- Squamish Nation
- Tsleil-Waututh Nation
- City of North Vancouver
- District of North Vancouver
- District of West Vancouver
- Lookout Shelter
- North Shore Homelessness Task Force

The Open Door Community Hub program at City Library incorporates programming and outreach coordination in partnership with many community service providers, including:

- Canada Revenue Agency
- North Shore Alliance Church
- Salvation Army
- Health Connections
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Lookout Shelter
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Impact North Shore (formerly North Shore Multicultural Society)

Project/Program Name
City Library Strategic Plan Refresh
<p>Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.</p> <p>2021 was to be the final year of our four-year Strategic Plan (2018-2021). The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted operations and planned initiatives in 2020 and 2021. Rather than initiate a new strategic plan, the North Vancouver City Library Board elected to refresh the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan with language and content that reflects our current priorities, conversations, and commitments. These revisions extend our current strategic plan by two years and enable us to move forward with fresh direction and vision.</p> <p>The process began with a status update on work completed to date, and a facilitated “gut-check” with trustees and staff about how the relevance and effectiveness of the existing strategic plan. There was strong consensus that City Library’s mission, vision and values continued to resonate and communicate our purpose and reason for being.</p> <p>Mission: We foster the love of learning in all its forms, connecting people to ideas, experiences and one another.</p> <p>Vision: We will be the welcoming, vibrant hub of a thriving community by empowering growth, sparking curiosity, fostering creativity and innovation and galvanizing community potential.</p> <p>Similarly, trustees agreed that the priorities to “Inspire Learning, Discovery and Creation” and “Create Vibrant Spaces” had resulted in significant progress and could continue to effectively frame and drive the library’s work into the future.</p> <p>Reflecting growing community awareness and calls for action in response to the racism, colonialism and structural discrimination that continue to hurt and exclude people with Indigenous and other marginalized identities, the Board agreed that two other priorities – to “Honour Indigenous Perspectives” and “Enhance Access and Inclusion” – needed to be revisited to reflect current priorities, conversations, and commitments.</p> <p>While the wording of the priority to “Honour Indigenous Perspectives” did not change, changes were made to the context statement, aspiration, and specific goals of what we were committed to achieving. These changes were important to reflect and build on work that has already taken place, to</p>

recognize the position of staff with Indigenous identities, and to outline actions we can take to acknowledge, amplify and reflect Indigenous cultures and experience – both historical and current.

Aspiration: Indigenous community members will see themselves respectfully reflected in library spaces, services and staff. The library will be a partner authentically committed to reconciliation and decolonization. Staff will be knowledgeable about the cultures and priorities of local Nations and be able to provide culturally sensitive services to Indigenous community members.

We will:

- Respectfully approach and actively consult with elders, knowledge keepers and community leaders
- Collaborate and connect with Indigenous community members in a respectful and inclusive way
- Honour Indigenous voices, knowledge and cultures in library spaces and services
- Support staff and community learning about the impacts and legacy of colonialism and the principles of reconciliation

Some of what you will see...

- Coast Salish art installations
- Community programming around reconciliation and resurgence
- Collections and programs that amplify Indigenous voices
- Indigenousization of the library catalogue
- Engagement with cultural advisers

Updating “Enhance Access and Inclusion” to “Champion Equity, Diversity, Access and Inclusion” was a more wide-ranging revision. Trustees wanted to specifically name and consider the spectrum of diverse library users – and explicitly acknowledge the structural inequity and discrimination, including systemic racism that creates barriers to access in our institution. We also wanted to retain statements about the critical role of public libraries in strengthening community connection and belonging and about our abiding values of accessibility and equity.

Aspiration: Members of our community, in all their diversity, will see their lived experiences reflected in library spaces, collections, programs, service and staff, including leadership. Accessing library services will be barrier-free, seamless and intuitive, both in person and online. People using the library will feel recognized, respected and a sense of community belonging.

We will:

- Reflect the diversity of the community in library spaces, services and staff
- Embed equity and inclusion in our policies and decision making
- Dismantle structural and systemic barriers to library spaces and services
- Amplify the voices of people marginalized on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, racialization, abilities and other discriminatory grounds

Some of what you will see...

- Library information translated into additional languages

- Enhancement of spaces and services for accessibility and inclusion
- Implementation of inclusive and anti-racist employment policies and practices
- Warming and cooling station for unsheltered residents

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?

Reviewing and refreshing the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan keeps this core policy fresh and relevant and firmly connected to the community's priorities and needs. Clear, relevant strategic direction enables staff to plan and undertake initiatives and changes to achieve our aspirations.

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal\(s\) for public library service](#)? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.

<p>4. Enhancing Governance of the library system (e.g., board/trustee training, developing best practices, strategic planning)</p>	<p>The strategic plan is a key governance document and is the Library Board's main tool for setting the strategic direction of the organization in support of community needs.</p> <p>The process of updating the strategic plan was collaborative, consensus-driven and deliberate. Staff supported trustees in their considerations with research, reports and drafting. We used the same facilitator who helped us to develop our 2018-2021 strategic plan to guide the Board's conversation about whether to move into a fresh round of planning. A working group of trustees and staff synthesized suggestions and feedback from all trustees into the updated language.</p>
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What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.

As a result of participating in the process, trustees and staff became re-engaged with the strategic plan.

The update and extension of the strategic plan also injected fresh energy and direction into planning for the future.

With changes to two of our strategic priorities, we defined revised strategic indicators, specifically:

Honour Indigenous Perspectives:

Outputs:

- Number of staff with Indigenous identity
- Number of staff with Indigenous identity in senior roles
- Circulation of materials from Indigenous collections
- Number of programs with Indigenous content

Outcomes:

- Indigenous customers will feel culturally safe and welcome in the library
- Library users will have increased knowledge about reconciliation and Indigenous history and experience as a result of using the library
- Staff will have increased knowledge about reconciliation and Indigenous history and experience
- Staff will feel better able to provide culturally sensitive services to Indigenous community members

Champion Equity, Diversity, Access & Inclusion:

Outputs:

- Number of programs centering historically marginalized voices and stories
- Attendance at programs focused on newcomers and language learners
- Number of staff with diverse identities
- Number of staff with diverse identities in senior roles
- Number of accessible services customers
- Number of items in accessible formats borrowed

Outcomes:

- Library visitors feel a greater sense of community belonging
- Library with diverse identities feel a greater sense of community belonging
- Website visitors agree the website is intuitive and easy to navigate

Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)?

This project was completed by trustees in partnership with staff, and with support from an external facilitator.

3. KEY CHALLENGES

The following topics have been identified as recurring themes in previous years' PLGRs. The intent of this section is to collect detailed information in a structured, consistent format.

Please select the most significant challenges that the library has faced in the past year that you wish to comment on. Leave any other listed topics blank.

Use the 'Other' row to include any ongoing or past challenges that are not included in this list. If you have more than one 'Other' item to add, please insert additional rows into the table.

Challenge	Briefly describe how this challenge has impacted the library/community, and what steps the library took to address it in 2021. Please specify if any provincial funding was used, e.g., annual library funding, the technology grant, other non-PLB provincial grants (up to 250 words per topic).
COVID-19 (e.g., safety protocols, proof of vaccination)	<p>While daily in-person visits have increased by over 30% since 2020, they have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels. At the start of 2021, City Library was operating with reduced hours and services. On January 16, 2021 we increased our hours to 75% of pre-pandemic hours, and on September 7, 2021 we restored nearly all remaining hours.</p> <p>Staff worked throughout the year to rework and reinstate services in line with public health guidelines – and as a result, we saw year-over-year increases in library visits, computer use and program attendance. Visits to nvcl.ca remained at pre-pandemic levels, while demand for digital collections exploded and borrowing of materials in all formats increased to the highest level in five years.</p> <p>Requirements to maintain safe distancing, reduce space capacity, and restrict in-person events and gatherings continued to impact use of the library facility.</p> <p>Library programming is a vital way for the library to connect with community, and COVID-19 seriously impacted our ability to offer in-person programming. Library staff were creative and proactive in shifting their programs to virtual formats so they were able to continue this important aspect of library services.</p> <p>As restrictions allowed, City Library also offered in-person programming both inside and outdoors. By limiting capacity and requiring registration, we were able to safely deliver in-person programs for demographics that most benefit from it, namely children, new parents and seniors.</p> <p>City Library also expanded our book bike program to daily service in the summer of 2021. Provincial restart funding (through the municipality) allowed us to hire a full-time "book bike ambassador" to bring library services into plazas, parks and other community spaces when visiting the library in person was not feasible for many community members.</p>

	<p>City Library was also able to access some provincial restart funding (through the municipality) to boost digital collections and purchase required equipment, technology and supplies.</p>
<p>Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)</p>	<p>At all times of the year, City Library acts as an unofficial warming / cooling / clean air / respite space for community members. With (normally) abundant public seating, access to technology and reading materials, long hours, modern HVAC systems and few barriers to access, the library is a refuge for people.</p> <p>In 2021, City Library stepped into an official role in response to extreme weather events in our community.</p> <p>In late June and early July 2021, City Library acted as the community's designated cooling centre in response to an extreme heat event. In support, City Library:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended service hours • Provided water and snacks to help people hydrate • Offered a cool space for community members • Coordinated with first responders to ensure individuals were transported to the facility or received prompt medical attention <p>The library welcomed hundreds of community members who sought refuge from the extreme heat. Staff pulled chairs from meeting rooms and staff offices so that we could fit in more people, some even sitting in the aisles between the stacks. In addition to elders, we saw many young families as well as workers bringing their laptops so they could work in an air-conditioned environment.</p> <p>On December 25, 2021 City Library opened as a designated warming centre in response to an extreme cold weather advisory. In this case:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The library opened on a stat holiday for use as a warming centre (no library services available due to limited number of staff) • Staff volunteered to work on this day to help manage the space • We provided warm drinks and care packs (toques, mittens, socks) for those who needed them <p>City Library is now participating in after-action debriefing and planning for future events with North Shore Emergency Management and other partners in our region.</p>
<p>Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)</p>	<p>City Library had reduced revenues from printing and copying (related to reduced services, seating and hours) – and no revenue at all from meeting room rentals, which were suspended throughout 2021.</p> <p>In addition, we absorbed extra costs for supplies, including personal protective equipment for staff and members of the public, as well as</p>

	<p>additional technology and equipment to support safe workspaces and service delivery in a pandemic context.</p> <p>Strong use of collections, especially digital collections, also demanded additional investment in library materials.</p> <p>Many of these pressures were anticipated in our 2021 budget, which was fully funded by the municipality. We were also able to access one-time funds from the Provincial Restart grant through the municipality – and used these toward supplies, additional book bike service, and a digital collections boost.</p> <p>Reduced hours early in the year, combined with staff turnover, resulted in some wage savings that helped to offset lost revenues and increased expenses.</p>
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health and wellness)	<p>2021 was a year of change for staffing at City Library. After temporarily closing the library and laying off auxiliary staff in 2020, we proceeded to recall staff and post vacant positions in early 2021. We also converted some of our auxiliary hours into (posted) part-time positions. And we saw a number of retirements, resignations, leaves and promotions in 2021, many of which triggered additional vacancies. All of this together resulted in significant turnover and a record number of postings - and gaps between a position becoming open and the appointment of new staff.</p> <p>With the Omicron variant, we also saw an uptick in staff illness.</p> <p>Staffing gaps arising from illness and vacancies/turnover left us tightly staffed at times and put pressure on remaining staff to cover public service responsibilities, with impacts on stress levels and mental well-being.</p> <p>The continued challenges of communicating and enforcing the mask mandate were also trying and tiring for staff and impacted their feelings of success and well-being at work.</p> <p>We worked to support staff mental well-being with daily scrums, regular individual and team check-ins, frequent communication, virtual and (briefly in-person) staff appreciation events, referrals to employee and family assistance programs, and regular mental health “tips” to the staff intranet. We implemented a “door hero” role to greet library visitors and remind people to follow pandemic protocols, to help take pressure of staff elsewhere in the facility.</p>
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	--

Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	A persistent and often vulnerable fraction of the population continues to lack internet access from home and relies on the library for access – through public computers or with their own devices on our Library Wi-Fi. This included many people who used the library for work or education in 2021.
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	<p>The extreme hot weather event this summer underlined significant deficiencies in the library's HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning) system which struggled in response to the demand. This system is in need of a complete recommissioning in order to be able to respond to climate extremes which are becoming increasingly common.</p> <p>The City Library facility is relatively young, at 14 years old, but years of robust community use have taken their toll and work is planned or underway to renew spaces, shelving and service points. Work has been slowed or delayed due to capacity in the City Facilities team which is responsible for building-related projects.</p>
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	<p>Library users, especially those on limited incomes who rely on personal vehicles for mobility, continue to struggle with limited access to free parking near the library.</p> <p>The steep hill that separates Lower Lonsdale from the library's Central Lonsdale neighbourhood is difficult for many to navigate and presents a significant barrier to access for one of the City's largest neighbourhoods, including many older adults.</p>
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	<p>The library sees many customers who are vulnerable due to their housing status, poor mental health, addiction or substance use, and poverty. The library provides valuable services to these individuals (access to information and entertainment, internet access, a space to rest, water, washroom facilities, etc.), but our staff are not necessarily trained or qualified to address some of the serious challenges that vulnerable people in the community face.</p> <p>There are limitations on the service we can provide, and we continue to struggle to provide compassionate, caring service to individuals when they are struggling to use shared public space safe in a safe and cooperative manner, often as a result of mental illness, cognitive or behavioural disorders and/or substance use.</p> <p>The Open Door Community Hub is a grant-funded temporary service for vulnerable people, where they can find information, connection and supports. Its purpose is to offer a safe and welcoming space where people can connect to one another, community and library services. It does not provide social work or clinical services.</p> <p>City Library continues to support staff in building their knowledge and skills in providing trauma-informed, culturally safe and compassionate service – through a subscription to Ryan Dowd's Librarian's Guide to Homelessness</p>

	<p>webinars, regular communications and tips for supporting people who are struggling, and training in de-escalation, mental health first aid, and trauma-informed response.</p> <p>We hope to learn from our experience operating the Open Door Community Hub so that we can define future service needs and identify options that will enable us to better serve our community.</p>
Other (please specify)	--

4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: _____

Date: March 25, 2022

Board Chair Signature: _____

Date: March 24, 2022