

Gibsons & District Public Library
2021 Provincial Library Grants Report

Introduction

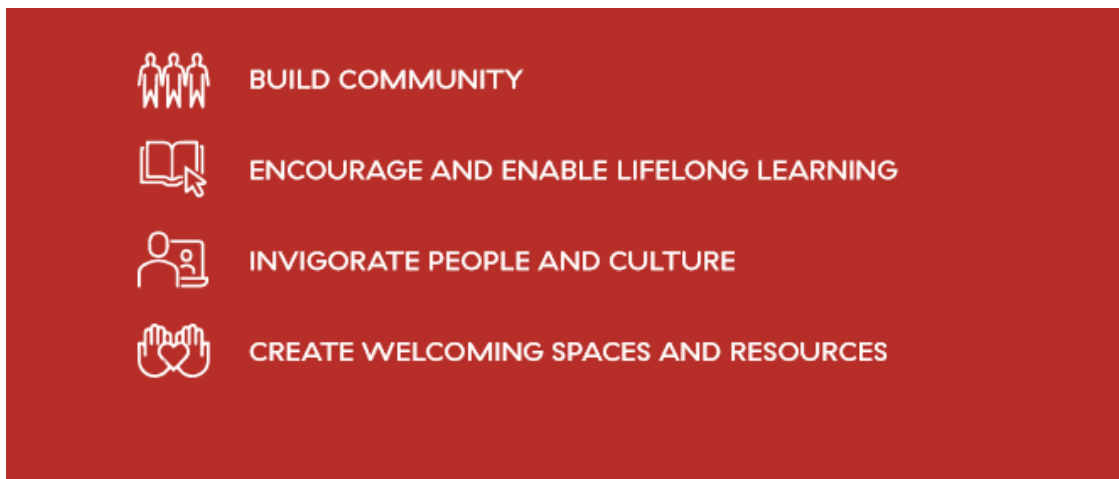
“When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.”

— Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning

This quote has brought me strength during the ongoing challenges of these pandemic times. Amidst changing public health orders and community needs, our library has adapted and continued to evolve. As the Sunshine Coast experiences growth, housing challenges and increased cost of living, the library is our most accessible public amenity and resource. People count on us to connect with each other, with information and technology, and with the world of culture, knowledge and ideas. We are also relied on for shelter from inclement weather, particularly during the intense heat wave of this past summer and the extreme cold of winter.

The pandemic has caused us to re-invent how we offer programs and in 2021 we introduced a hybrid model combining limited capacity in person experiences with the option for online zoom participation. Our circulation of physical items increased 56% from 2020, and the digital collection increased 20%. These rises in circulation have been consistent over the past 10 years, as have our number of active patrons reaching 8,016 this year. Looking forward, we know our library needs to expand its services and space to meet the needs of our patrons. Working with the Holland Lands Task Force and our stakeholders, we are actively seeking creative ways to increase our physical space and our services.

I thank our GDPL Board, our library staff, our patrons, the SCRD, the Town of Gibsons, the Gibsons & District Library Foundation, the BC Libraries Branch and all of our supporters for helping us to move through the pandemic with resilience and stability. As we embark on the final year of our current Strategic Plan, we aim to fully meet our primary goals of building community, encouraging and enabling lifelong learning, invigorating people and culture and creating welcoming spaces and resources.



Some of our key accomplishments in 2021 were:

- Our staff team remained strong and consistent throughout the pandemic
- We delivered hybrid programming accommodating people effectively in person and online
- Our digital circulation increased by 18% from 2020 to 32,965
- Facilitation of learning opportunities around Truth and Reconciliation
- Facilitation of learning opportunities around Sustainable Living
- Improved accessibility and services to people living homelessness and/or poverty
- 36,631 website visits
- 11,763 Wi-Fi logins- up 53%
- 83,537 in person visits- up 41% from 2020



Community and Library Profile

GDPL is a strong, locally driven public library that improves quality of life, and generates personal, community and economic development: a free and accessible public space where everyone has the same rights and access to resources regardless of income or background. Our library is a hub for community connection and participation, inclusion and sharing.

Our mission at the Gibsons and District Public Library is to connect our community to the world of culture, knowledge and ideas. We continued to meet this mission throughout the challenges of the pandemic. In 2021, we took every possible step to offer full, robust and safe services during the pandemic. We were one of the first libraries to re-instate programming and services in 2021.

We re-invented how we offer programs, and introduced a hybrid model combining limited capacity in-person experiences with the option for online participation. Our Child and Youth Librarian has offered a range of progressive programs to children and youth that integrated online and in person programs such as Story-times, Coding with Spheros, Escape Rooms, Writing Series with local Author Kallie George, Lego builders club, Tween Book Club, Teen Book Club, Story walks, Youth Advisory Group and special events.

Community events included Book Clubs, Conversational Japanese and French, Knitting Drop-in, Writers' Groups, Open Microphone Nights, Seed Saving workshops, Sustainable Living Events, Author Readings such as Seth Klein presenting his book *The Good War*, Storytelling Workshops, Scrabble Tournaments, and more.

Public computer and Wi-Fi use increased dramatically in 2021 as online access became a daily necessity of managing life. We increased our bandwidth and kept our Wi-Fi on 24/7 to ensure connectivity access to our most vulnerable community members. Library staff effectively assisted our community with every aspect of navigating online pandemic life

including registering people for vaccine passports, assisting with CERB benefit and other benefit applications, assisting with tax reporting etc.

The housing crisis and increased cost of living on the Sunshine Coast has led to a dramatic rise in people living with homelessness and/or in poverty. Our role as a free and safe resource became more essential. The library's public computers, resources and Wi-Fi are always free to use to ensure there are no barriers for people with low income, and we keep the Wi-Fi on 24/7 so people can use it outside when the library is closed. GDPL continues to offer and distribute many library cards to people who may be living with homelessness and not have an address or phone number. We also provide personalized information assistance to support newcomers to make connections and feel welcome and included in our community.

Lifelong learning and the pursuit of education continued to be supported as GDPL provided people with tools, space and resources they need to educate themselves in 2021. Exam proctoring continued to be in high demand as the pandemic increased community participation in online education. The library embraces its dual role in being the ambassador and gateway to the digital world while equally providing opportunities for people to engage with others and themselves in authentic, in person ways. The Library's digital infrastructure ensures that everyone has public access to online connectivity; its welcoming and vibrant physical space serves as a sanctuary and gathering place; and the diverse range of resources and services the library offers dramatically increases the quality of life for our community giving individuals the tools they need to move forward.



GDPL Hybrid Programs

In order to accommodate the changing public health orders, GDPL has implemented a hybrid approach to all of our child, youth and community programming. As our workshop room had a reduced maximum capacity of 20 instead of the usual 47, we also provide zoom access to programs. Using our projector system and a laptop with a high quality camera and microphone, we enabled zoom participants to see and hear the people in the room and vice versa.

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

Offering a diverse range of hybrid programs has been a respectful way to meet the needs of our community. This project supports all four of the library's strategic goals of building community, encouraging and enabling lifelong learning, invigorating people and culture and creating welcoming spaces and resources.

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.


1. Improving Access for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)	The GDPL hybrid programs project improved access for people as it enabled individuals to participate according to their personal comfort level around COVID, and enabled people with mobility issues to take part from home.
2. Building Capacity for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	This project increased the capacity of the library facility to offer progressive online options to patrons and training was implemented for the Outreach and Child & Youth Staff in how to implement a hybrid program successfully using up to date technology.
3. Advancing Citizen Engagement (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing)	Citizen engagement was advanced in a multitude of ways as the various programs included book clubs, open microphone nights with differing themes, author events, advanced care planning etc. We worked with the Siyaya reconciliation movement, the Squamish Nation and the Sechelt Nation to offer a Kairos Blanket exercise in the library that was very impactful for community learning and engagement around Truth and Reconciliation.

Challenges in 2021

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)	The biggest challenge for GDPL from COVID was the enforcement of the mask mandate to patrons and the emotional toll it took on staff to manage non-compliant patrons. Our library had a comprehensive COVID safety plan with thorough surface cleaning daily, Plexiglas and PPE used and 100% of our staff being fully vaccinated.
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	During the extreme heat dome in the summer of 2021, we had a large number of people seeking respite from the heat in the library. Our quality HVAC system enabled us to keep the library environment cool and comfortable.
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	Due to the lack of affordable housing and the extreme increase in the cost of living on the Sunshine Coast, there were staff shortages in businesses and organizations across the Sunshine Coast.
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health and wellness)	Our library created a mental health fund for staff to access as the need for support was so evident. Staff can provide receipts for counseling or other services they feel assist their health and are reimbursed up to \$300/ year. We implemented this above and beyond our Pacific Blue Cross benefits as our group plan was to exclusionary of local practitioners.
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	The lack of a public service office in our community puts tremendous pressure on the library as we help people with all of their online government forms and applications, and their health related documentation such as vaccine passports.
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	The provincial technology grant enabled GDPL to increase our Wi-Fi bandwidth, to upgrade the software on our public computers, and to purchase new laptops for public use.
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	Our parkade pipes froze in the winter time and we had various leaks from our washroom facilities. We are working with the Sunshine Coast Regional District to address these issues and to make repairs in 2022.

Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	Lack of sufficient public transit and the geographical challenge of Upper and Lower Gibsons being so separated are issues we aim to address.
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	The lack of affordable housing on the Sunshine Coast had a significant impact on the library. Daily, patrons used the library who were living in their vehicles or were living with homelessness. Our washroom facilities were used for daily hygiene and some people spent whole days at the library. There was an increase in incidents at the library of people with mental health issues or addiction issues becoming verbally abusive and threatening to staff and other patrons. We worked in partnership with Rain city services, the VCH mental health team and the RCMP to manage these situations.

4. Submission and Approval

Library Director Signature:  _____
2022

Date March 18,