

Introduction:

The Coquitlam Public Library (CPL) has served the citizens of Coquitlam since 1976. We are located in two large branches (Poirier Branch and City Centre Branch), from our Library Link, a mobile library that provides services in the community four days / week, and through our website and mobile app.

CPL serves an estimated population of approximately 150,000 people (BC Stats), making Coquitlam the 6th largest municipality in BC. We also serve many people living in the lower mainland, specifically Port Moody and Port Coquitlam, our neighbouring municipalities.

Our community includes people from a wide variety of ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds. We have a growing senior's population and are a family oriented community.

The City has a number of plans for the development of specific areas of the City, including the north east corner and Fraser Mills, in the south of the community. We are seeing plans for the development of community facilities, such as the new YMCA building in the Burquitlam area. All this development will impact our library as we try to provide services for those who will ultimately live in these areas.

The results from the City of Coquitlam's 2019 Citizen Survey indicate that 98% of residents ranked their quality of life as good or very good. The biggest positive impact to quality of life is reported as growth and development, the new Evergreen line, improved transportation and roads, and improved recreational facilities and parks. The majority of citizens believe they receive good value for their municipal tax dollars. Citizens suggest that focussing on transportation, affordability and parks and recreation will improve their quality of life.

The City is developing a Parks, Culture and Recreation Master Plan, which will lay out the plans for the City for the next 5, 10, 20 and 30 years. We will be involved in supplying input as to the resources required to maintain a thriving library system within the City. We are also working with our City to establish a Service Level Agreement to ensure we are providing services that are of a high level and are cost efficient while maintaining excellent facilities to that end.

Our Community's demographics:

Our community is steadily growing. The latest census figures show that our community is “aging” – Coquitlam now has 14% of its population over 65, which is 3% larger than 10 years ago. Our City has produced a Seniors Services Strategy covering the next 10 years.

From the 2016 census, we know that a large portion of our community speaks Chinese (both Mandarin and Cantonese), Korean and Persian. These 3 languages are spoken at home by 20.7% of the community. The number of French speakers has declined and is now at 350 in our community, which has been traditionally a French language hub. It is noted that 5% of the population does not speak one of Canada's two official languages (6835 people).

Coquitlam has a large percentage of university (30% of people over 15) and college graduates (21%). We are a very well educated community.

Our community is family oriented, with a large portion of traditional family household – the average family size is 3. Lone parent households account for over 6,000 families. Providing services for these families is something the library will be working on.

About 2.2% of our population is Aboriginal. The Kwikwetlem First Nation is located in the Coquitlam area.

New Strategic Plan:

Our new 3 year strategic plan went into effect in 2019; we went through a planning process that included our Board, focus groups, staff at all levels and our online users. The plan has four strategic goals and a number of objectives:

Goal 1 – Excellence in Governance and Service – develop a culture of governance and service excellence

- Focus on: positive staff culture, service excellence, governance excellence and staff learning

Goal 2 – Empower our community to navigate future-focussed critical skills and ideas

- Focus on: Engaging the community around public policy and critical thinking, enhancing digital inclusion and developing a technology centre

Goal 3 – Strengthen community connections – expand the development and awareness of services, programs and partnerships that connect the community

- Focus on: developing and deepening community partnerships and raising awareness of the library through marketing

Goal 4 – Library everywhere – Our Library reaches all community members through an online presence, physical space and mobile services

- Focus on: taking the library out into the community and improving our online presence

In addition our plan includes an outcome metrics component in order to demonstrate the impact of our services and programs and increase satisfaction with the library.

Challenges facing the library:

CPL still faces challenges due to constantly changing technology.

In 2019, we purchased a new wifi radio system in order to keep up with the growing demand. We replaced our 3D printers to accommodate the public's need for larger, faster machines. We also added spheros, ozobots and telescopes to our collections in order that all members of our community could experience learning with multiple formats. We completed the replacement and/or upgrade to all our public and staff computers to Windows 10 and the latest Microsoft Office product.

Our staff members are faced with devices and software that are ever changing and requires them to be on top of the problems faced by our users. We now have a staff member dedicated to providing our front line staff with training; staff, in turn, assist members of the public with individual help sessions, most of which involve technology.

Meeting the needs of our local seniors and especially those who are homebound or in care homes is often difficult given the numbers who could use our service and balancing that with our staffing levels. We have been looking at various ways to include more capacity while building efficiencies to make it happen.

We try to meet the needs of our multicultural community by developing collections specific for Korean, Chinese and Farsi speakers; materials and cataloging/processing is expensive, not to mention the difficulty in getting the materials from publishers to our vendors.

One of our biggest challenges is finding space for those who want to come to the library and use our service. We continue to have more people visiting our City Centre Branch and we do not have enough seating space –it is especially busy. We have devised a plan to purchase new furniture in order to meet the needs of our users. This is an additional burden on our budget.

Lastly, Coquitlam is growing in population and neighbourhoods. We have many people who do not live reasonably close to one of our library buildings; our Library Link, mobile library service helps to meet demands in these neighbourhoods. This vehicle, however, is now past life and requires replacement, which again is very costly.

a) Value for funding from Province

The largest portion of our budget apart from staffing and benefits goes to the direct purchase of materials for our collection. The provincial funding is integral to what we are able to purchase and the quantities needed, especially in a growing community. It covers almost one third of our total materials budget. It allows us to provide the variety, the formats and numbers needed to sustain a basic collection.

Our rate of both physical and electronic circulation has increased and our rate of unused materials has declined significantly. We are purchasing the materials that people want and need in the numbers required to ensure that our community gets quick access to very popular materials.

Outcome: Our collections are improved and we are able to supply more variety.

b) Strategic goals and how we met them

Strategic Plan 2019 - 2021

CPL Strategic Goal 1 - Excellence in Governance and Service – Staff training

In 2019, we evaluated the results of an internal survey on what our staff needed in the way of technology training. Our staff told us that they needed additional training in order to feel confident in their abilities to assist our customers. Specifically they wanted training in services like our databases, more training re our ILS searching capabilities, etc. We have moved a librarian to our Customer Experiences Department to assist staff in training, have staff from Technical Services train and provide training materials in order to assist

Our Senior Staff have implemented an ongoing staff training plan that meets the needs of our front service desk staff, allowing them to be confident in their knowledge and stay up to date with new technologies, thereby providing better service to our customers.

Outputs: 21 training sessions; 30 staff trained; 5 staff trainers

Outcome: Staff are more confident in their dealings with the public and have asked for additional training as they learn. We are providing better service to our public, giving them

options for immediate assistance and/or the ability to book individual sessions where more complex assistance is needed. We will be conducting post training surveys to ensure we are meeting the needs of staff.

CPL Strategic Goal 2 - Engaging with the Future – Family Technology

In order to provide our community with resources that will allow everyone to apply the knowledge we have been showcasing in our programming, CPL purchased telescopes, Ozobots and Sphero kits as part of our circulating collection. We are very proud of the fact that we have been promoting STEM learning through our programs, including our popular Science Expo, for many years now. Taking that one step forward, we purchased 15 of each of our “Family Tech” items and within days, we had hundreds of holds registered. This increased when we had a mobile planetarium visit each of our branches. In order to keep up with the demand, we now have 20 each of the telescopes, Ozobots and Spheros and we still have many holds. We are meeting the needs of our community by providing sources of engaged learning that will assist young and old.

Outputs: 56 new Family Tech items circulating; 907 holds placed in 2019

Outcome: The number of holds placed on our Family Tech indicates a huge appetite for this type of material. We are providing our customers with new formats to learn from and we are now, as an organization, looking to future focussed areas where the library can assist the community in learning in different and tangible ways.

CPL Strategic Goal 3 = Strengthening Community Connections – Community Development Liaison

In 2019, the Library hired its first Community Development Liaison. This addition to our library recognizes the need to hire specialized staff who have the skills and connections to ensure we are an integral part of the fabric of our community. This role involves the development and maintenance of partnerships organizations including businesses, agencies, governments, community groups who focus on seniors, immigrants, home bound people, students and more. We now have the capacity to serve on community committees, working groups and broader interest groups, with a view to educating our community and learning from them.

One tangible product of this addition was our part in the Community Conversation Meeting submitted to SPARC BC in aid of the review of Provincial Accessibility Legislation. Having served

on the local Accessibility Committee, our staff member was able to harness information and community members in order to facilitate a conversation where people with disabilities and other interested parties had the chance to give feedback and have a voice where it really matters.

We are very confident that this role will give the Library an even larger “role” in our community.

Outputs: Staff member started late in year but developed or worked on 8 additional programs

Outcome: The library is better able to connect with the community, engaging our citizens and building relationship. We have increased the number of programs and making stronger connections with our citizens, of all ages.

CPL Strategic Goal 4 - Library Everywhere - The Library Link

There is no better example of a Library being everywhere than CPLs Library Link mobile library. In 2019 we had over 13,000 visits to the Link and circulated over 50,000 items. We use the Link to promote the library and its services by going to regular weekly stops, including schools, parks, a firehall, as well as events such as Neighbourhood Nights, Canada Day celebrations, and other major city festivals. We receive more customer comments about our Library Link, than any other service, proving its popularity, and especially the staff who are so integral to its success:

“We always get an awesome experience at Library Link. The Staff are friendly and very helpful in finding the most fitting book collection to my 4 yrs old and 2 yrs old! There is always something new and we always get what we wanted at Library Link! Thank you and looking forward to meeting you soon” ... Yane

“Our family loves the library truck! Sal does such an amazing job of engaging the children and recommending books of our interests. My children look forward to visiting he truck every week and the NEW PRINCETON PARK location is so much more convenient and makes it possible for me/us to participate ... “ Alice

In 2019, we made 421 stops throughout our community and took part in many community events. Our amazing Library Link staff help to make this service a true community gem.

Outputs: The Link made 421 stops, more than 13,000 people visited and we circulated more than 50,000 items

Outcome: The Library Link Staff made connections throughout the community, providing services to people who do not have easy access to our branches and raises the profile of our service at events.



CPL Outcome Metrics – Customer Satisfaction Survey

In May 2019, the Library conducted its first customer satisfaction survey. Staff interviewed customers leaving the library using a series of questions in order to determine whether or not we were meeting their needs. We conducted the survey over a full month, garnering at least 10 surveys per day at each of our branches and an online via our website.

After compiling results, we learned that a large majority of our customers are satisfied with the services of the library, including collections, staff and programs. We did learn that we do not have enough study space and seating in general, and that our wifi still needs work.

This was our first customer satisfaction survey and we did learn from the experience; we have created a staff metrics team who, going forward, will continue with this survey, among others, using these results to further develop the questions and the methodology in order to elicit even

more useful information – all in the effort of ensuring we are meeting the needs of our customers.

Outputs: 657 completed surveys (in person and online)

Outcome: Given the results, we are upgrading our spaces with new furniture and increasing seating, especially at our City Centre Branch. We are installing a new wifi system to be able to meet the needs of customers who need this service. We are meeting the needs of our community with these changes.

Provincial strategies

1) Improving Access – Kanopy and Hoopla

In 2019, we added another new streaming service to our collection, adding Kanopy films to our popular Hoopla subscription. This addition gives our residents the ability to view, read and listen to books, music, television series, audio books, ebooks and comic books. We now offer a very wide selection of streaming video that is available at home, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

In our community, as in many others, we have many people who stream entertainment and educational content. But as in many aspects of our current economy, not everyone has the ability to pay for such content. With Kanopy, we can now offer the Great Courses series to our users, with no direct cost to them. Our Hoopla subscription includes many of the popular Acorn British TV series, again at no extra cost to our residents. Our subscriptions include content other than in English. Given the increase in the usage of Hoopla, we see that there is a need and appetite for this content and we are happy to make it accessible.

Outputs: 2 streaming services with thousands of selections; 20,466 circulations

Outcome: Residents have the ability to stream media at home, giving them access 24/7. There is no need to physically come to the library, saving time and energy. Residents save money by using a library purchased product.

2) Developing Skills – Reading Buddies

At CPL, developing literacy skills is an integral part of almost everything we do. In order to assist young students, ages 6 to 9, who are struggling with reading, we have developed a very popular Reading Buddies program that pairs a teen volunteer with a child who requires

assistance in developing their reading skills. A large majority of the children come from newcomer families where English is not the language spoken at home.

The program is fully subscribed no matter what time of year it is offered. We regularly have over 25 pairs working together at each session.

Comments:

“My Grade 2 daughter is participating for second time and I can see the impact on her. She really enjoys reading with her buddy. She loves library and can’t wait for Thursdays to come to the library.”

Outputs: 42 sessions, 1483 attendance

Outcome: Children develop reading skills, improving their confidence re school work and recreational reading. Surveys indicate that parents notice that children have improved spelling skills and enjoy reading more.

3) Collaborating on Shared Goals – Tri-Cities Literacy Committee

The Coquitlam Public Library has been a member of the Tri-Cities Literacy committee since its inception. We work with partners in the community to run our Stories Galore and More Program in public parks, our Family Play and Learn at Coquitlam Centre, and more. Last year, the Library worked with committee members to run a “Learn About” series focussed on elections. Instructors taught over 100 newcomers how elections are run, at all levels. The group organized a mock election, with issues being discussed and ranked. Attendees had the opportunity to ask questions to ensure they understood what can be seen as a complicated process.

Outcome: Attendees left the program better understanding our levels of government and the election process, given them the knowledge needed to make informed choices when ready to vote. They were also given suggestions of how to get involved with the election process before they are eligible to vote which should increase their likelihood of voting in the future.

4. Enhancing Governance – Procurement Policy

In 2019, we began the review of many of our policies. One that required action was our Procurement Policy, especially given the legislative changes have been made re free trade agreements. We reviewed our policy to determine what was required legally and what was needed to ensure that we meet the needs of solid financial processes. We laid out the spending policies and procedures and advised any staff involved in procurement of the changes. Using these rules, we placed our first RFP on the BC Bid website and plan to issue more in 2020.

Output: 1 updated Procurement Policy

Outcome: Staff now understand the process and procedures for the purchases of the library; our 2019 audit confirmed our process but we will continue to update our processes to ensure proper procurement processes.

SUCCESS STORIES – CPL Anime Convention

It is not often that you see teenagers in a library dressed in their favourite anime characters but that's what happened at the City Centre Branch in August 2019. Our Young Adult Librarian, Chris Miller, organized a half day Anime Convention – where teens could celebrate anime culture, play games and take part in contests including Osu! and karaoke. We had 165 teens at the branch meeting new people, learning from one another and having fun.

This is just one example of how the Library can be a safe place for teens to come together to engage with others, which is so important given the issue of teen isolation. The picture speaks for itself.

