



## **INTRODUCTION**

The Invermere Public Library is located at the edge of Lake Windermere in the Columbia Valley of the East Kootenays. The Purcell Mountains to the west and the Rocky Mountains to the east draw outdoor enthusiasts and tourists year-round.

The Invermere Public Library serves a large geographical area of the Regional District of the East Kootenays (RDEK). The area encompasses the residents of the District of Invermere (DOI), the Village of Radium Hot Springs, the Village of Canal Flats, and Areas F and G of the RDEK. The total population is approximately 9000. This number increases significantly in the summer months due to our proximity to Alberta and the number of recreational property owners who call the Columbia Valley home. This results in significant swells in the population that we serve at various times of the year, particularly in the summer and during holidays as well as over school breaks throughout the year. The library is located within the municipal boundaries of the District of Invermere which is the commercial centre for the Columbia Valley. It is where most of the residents throughout the area come to access medical and other health services as well as their groceries and retail needs. The children of the area attend elementary school in their own communities, but the regional high school is in Invermere and provides the only public schooling for students in Grades 8 through 12.

The library had another exciting year in 2019. The approximately 40,000 visits to the library confirmed that services and programming are being accessed by people at all stages of life. This increase in traffic through the library is one of the most notable benefits of our space because it is much easier to access our building and it is also in a much more visible location, near the centre of Invermere. The library continues to receive positive feedback about the extended hours and community outreach services. There is also increased foot traffic to the library as members of the community attend events in the community centre that is connected to the library. This increased exposure to community members who have not been regular library users in the past has been a positive factor contributing to the growth in the number of visits. The library has continued to define itself as a vibrant community hub over the past year and has provided services to a broader spectrum of the valley's population.



The current strategic plan 2018-2021, which directs our programming and services, outlines three overarching goals: Community Engagement, Regional Collaborations, and Services. These goals

continue to recognize that the geographic size of our library's service region remains a key consideration when making decisions for library programs and service delivery. As such, the Invermere Public Library will continue to provide options for easier access to our services including ways that can bring services out to where people are already gathering while still providing a broad range of services at the library itself. A new target in the library's strategic plan is to develop a long-range capital plan to investigate the feasibility of purchasing a vehicle that would give the library the ability to provide mobile services in the future.

These are the goals that are used to guide the work of the Invermere Public Library from the present through to 2021.

1. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** The Invermere Public Library is a collaborative community resource in the delivery of public library services to the communities of the Columbia Valley.
2. **REGIONAL COLLABORATION:** The Invermere Public Library is recognized as a community hub that provides programming and services to the communities of the Columbia Valley.
3. **SERVICES:** The services provided by the Invermere Public Library will meet the needs of the communities of the Columbia Valley.

## **GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES, GOALS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, PARTNERSHIPS**

### **GOVERNMENT PRIORITY:**

IMPROVING ACCESS: ADVANCING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

### **LIBRARY GOAL THAT SUPPORTS THIS PRIORITY**

From our strategic plan, there are several different objectives where the plan aligns with this priority. The objectives listed under our second goal for regional collaboration state that IPL will work to have "the Library recognized as a community hub that provides programming and services to communities of the Columbia Valley" and "to raise the awareness of the regional scope of library service delivery that currently takes place and seek out ways to enhance it."

### **PROGRAMS AND/OR SERVICES THAT ARE CONNECTED WITH THIS PRIORITY**

1. ***Delivering services people can count on:*** IPL offers a wide range of free programs and services. Most of these services are available to people even if they do not have an IPL or other BC public library card. In April 2019, after securing additional funding from the Columbia Basin Trust's Career Internship Program, the IPL was able to hire a full-time Library Assistant for Community Outreach. With this dedicated permanent position, the library was able to markedly improve access to services by increasing the children and youth programming as well as outreach services for residents living a long distance from the library. The Invermere Public Library has become a hub of services that people have come to rely on that meets a broad range of needs.
2. ***Collaboration with community groups and organizations:*** IPL partnered with several other community groups and organizations in 2019 to connect more people in our service area with information and resources. One highlight of the year was a successful "How To" festival that brought together more than 30 individuals and organization to share their skills with others in 10 minutes or less. The library staff heard about many community connections that were made that day and understand that there is enthusiasm to participate again in 2020.

## PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT THE PRIORITY

The Invermere Public Library partners with organizations such as the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, Windermere Valley to provide free community literacy programming to a variety of groups including young families for Baby Goose programming and seniors for iPad support sessions.

## OUTCOMES THAT WERE IDENTIFIED

1. ***Delivering services people can count on:*** With improvements to our technology services, members of the community have come to expect a wide range of services available to them six days a week. A new printer was added to our network that gives people more autonomy and flexibility when printing, copying, scanning or faxing. With a pay station and wireless capability, users can now print from their own wireless devices, and pay with cash or a credit card. These expanded services have been appreciated by small business owners who rely on the library to support them in their goals.

Partnering with the local literacy organization, Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL), to run a vital program for parents with young babies supports the provincial goal of equitable access to literacy development. The IPL and CBAL co-facilitated this program from January to June 2019. Baby Goose is a CBAL program that uses our space on Monday mornings which was the only day of the week that CBAL was able to run the program and prohibited this partnership in the past. This program has been very well attended and the parents have told library staff how much of a difference it has made for them to have the chance to meet with others. They have made new friendships and have been able to develop community support for themselves and their babies.

As well, more evening open hours have added an extra day each week that groups can book the library's mezzanine space to hold evening meetings and presentations. The library does not charge non-profit groups a fee to use this space. There are very few spaces like this one in the Columbia Valley that can be used at no cost. It has also allowed for the library to run additional evening programming which has improved access for people whose schedules didn't allow for them to come during the daytime.



2. ***Collaboration with community groups and organizations:*** There has been a noticeable increase in requests from community groups to work with the library on a project or to make use of the library services in support of the goals and objectives that they are trying to achieve. For instance, a doctor from a local medical clinic requested the mezzanine space to host an information session for members of the community. He wanted to address the need to bring sound, reliable medical information to members of the community who had also been seeking information from the library. The evening was well attended and will likely be a repeat event.

## **GOVERNMENT PRIORITY:**

**BUILDING CAPACITY: ENABLING INSPIRATION AND INNOVATION.**

### **LIBRARY GOAL THAT SUPPORTS THIS PRIORITY**

From our strategic plan, IPL will “encourage the public’s awareness, participation, and perception of the library as an important resource for the communities of the Columbia Valley” and will also “continue to provide the communities of the Columbia Valley with access to current technology.”

### **PROGRAMS AND/OR SERVICES THAT ALIGNS WITH THIS PRIORITY**

- Outreach services brought library programming and services outside of the library building and into the community. By continuing to bring the library to places where people are gathering, the library has continued to extend its reach of service provision. In 2019, IPL provided a variety



of outreach opportunities including outdoor pop-up story times during the summer at playgrounds and beaches throughout the service area. Library staff also provided a monthly visit and book exchange to elementary school children in Canal Flats; this community is at the south end of the library’s service area and it is often not convenient for these students to visit the library in Invermere so staff brings the library to them instead. Additional outreach activities included Geocaching outreach workshops in Edgewater, a small community north of Invermere, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, and math) activities for youth and families both at the library and the senior’s residence in

Invermere.

- In-library programming for a wide variety of target populations, from parents with new babies all the way to retirees and seniors. For example, the library has partnered with the District of Invermere to provide an indoor walking space for people of all ages, but it has been particularly attractive for seniors. On a weekly basis, the library staff opens the community hall on the lower level of the library building and the community at large is welcome to come in and walk laps around the space. It has provided people with a venue to keep up with their fitness and activity goals, especially when it is cold and slippery outside.
- In-library programming has also included workshops that provide people with information and instruction about using different technology such as the Ancestry.ca database as well as tech support for seniors facilitated by the local literacy organization, CBAL, but the library’s meeting area was used for the sessions. This allowed CBAL to reach a larger number of participants.
- Funding and administrative support from the Kootenay Library Federation (KLF) helped IPL to continue to incorporate the principles of STEAM into our library programs and resources that we have made available to our community. Programming was developed to offer age specific hands on learning experiences to youth and their families while achieving the goal of reaching out to our community by running the programs in the common room of the local senior’s residence.

### **PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT THE PRIORITY**

- For the outreach services, IPL’s partnerships included connections with local government to host pop-up events on their properties throughout the Columbia Valley as well with a variety of local community organizations who were coordinating events such as the Bear Aware Festival

organized by WildSight BC. The District of Invermere also continues to be a very strong partner in the delivery of many of the library programs with the provision of the community hall space for things such as Indoor Walking.

- IPL is an active member of the Kootenay Library Federation (KLF). It is this partnership that allows our library to access consortium pricing when purchasing library materials, including books. In 2019, the KLF provided many libraries in the federation, including IPL, with access to several travelling resources. These included a tour from UBC-Okanagan students who provided a half-day workshop for children and their families entitled “Hydration Nation.” Participants explored principles of science and climate in a fun and exciting way. As well, the KLF arranged for the library to have two “Tech-Up” Kits that came from BC Science World that provided STEAM activities for primary and elementary aged children. Additionally, IPL received two travelling exhibits from the Royal BC Museum that brought museum materials into our rural setting for the public to experience, which was a wonderful opportunity for people who may never have the chance to travel to visit the museum in person. As well, the local community was treated to a puppet show during our Summer Reading Club programming that discussed the importance of environmental stewardship. The KLF sponsored the performance that saw close to 100 adults and preschoolers attend. These contributions from the KLF in 2019 greatly enhanced the programming that IPL was able to offer to the community.



#### OUTCOMES THAT WERE IDENTIFIED

- Throughout 2019, IPL staff noticed that there were more people who mentioned how impressed they were with all of the amenities we have to offer and that they didn't realize that the library had such a wide variety of services. The mezzanine space in the library was in demand to many community members and the awareness of being able to use this space during library hours increased over the year. This has allowed for many people to use the space either for their personal use such as studying for online courses or for more organized meetings with other community members, either informally in small groups or more formally by booking the space and meeting as a larger committee. Access to this space has been a way that IPL has made life more affordable for people.
- With continued support for STEAM programming from KLF, IPL has continued to provide opportunities for the community, particularly children and youth, to access to the latest technology to learn skills such as computer coding and innovative thinking through playing with science and engineering concepts. The spin-off has been the interest that parents have taken in the STEAM resources as well and the knowledge that they too have gained while also deepening their connection with their children as they play and learn together. Our collection of robots has a real wow factor for many people.



#### **GOVERNMENT PRIORITY:**

**WORKING TOGETHER: CREATING LASTING AND SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **LIBRARY GOAL THAT SUPPORTS THIS PRIORITY**

From the library's strategic plan: "To continue to develop a network of partnerships with other community organizations in order to enhance the delivery of services to the communities of the Columbia Valley" as well as continuing "to connect with our major funding partners on a regular basis to keep them informed of our performance and plans."

#### **PROGRAMS AND/OR SERVICES THAT ALIGNS WITH THIS PRIORITY**

IPL makes it a priority to stay connected with a variety of community organizations to ensure that the library is informed of the plans and goals of other groups as well as to ensure these groups are equally informed about the library's plans. By doing so, the library can then seek out opportunities for collaborating with groups in a variety of ways. From the local literacy agency to the local government representatives and staff to the schools and day cares, the library values the relationships with each of these entities.

#### **PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT THE PRIORITY**

- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, Windermere Valley has been a partner with IPL on several projects and programs in 2019. Some have involved co-facilitating programs and others have involved IPL providing CBAL with a free space.
- District of Invermere has supported several library programs over the past year that have required the use of municipal space. They have provided the library use of the community hall at no cost to present special events such as the "How To" Festival as well as use of the hall to run the library's Indoor Walking program.
- The Columbia Basin Trust, as well as several local service groups, have been instrumental in supporting the vision of a technology hub for IPL. Funding for this initiative was secured at the end of 2019 and the project will be implemented in 2020.
- The Friends of the Library continues to be a very supportive group of volunteers who host a few fundraisers annually and all proceeds are provided to IPL. These funds are used to enhance programs and services that IPL offers.



### **OUTCOMES THAT WERE IDENTIFIED**

Being actively involved with each of these partners throughout 2019 increased the visibility and awareness of the Invermere Public Library throughout the community. As an organization like ours becomes involved with other community groups, our reach increases as well because we created additional avenues to share information about the services and programs at IPL. In each of the partnerships listed above and many others that are not listed, the beneficiary of the partnerships are the residents of the Columbia Valley because each connection is an example of another program and/or service we have been able to provide for them free of charge. These efforts combine to improve the overall well-being of the people of our service area.



### **GOVERNMENT PRIORITY:**

**SUSTAINING OUR SUCCESS: ENHANCING GOVERNANCE AND DEMONSTRATING IMPACT**

### **LIBRARY GOAL THAT SUPPORTS THIS PRIORITY**

From the library's strategic plan, this priority is best supported by IPL's intent to "maintain and enrich a range of relevant library services" and "develop and implement a long-range capital plan."

### **PROGRAMS AND/OR SERVICES THAT ALIGNS WITH THIS PRIORITY**

The Library Director and the board of volunteer trustees meet regularly to review the programs and services of the library as well as explore various ways in which the board can promote and support the library. Governance is priority for the BC Library Trustees Association, and they are working with boards to improve trustee orientation so that board volunteers may be as effective as possible. New board members have voiced their enthusiasm for the library and are eager to endorse the library's programs and services.

### **PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT THE PRIORITY**

The partnership for this priority comes from the board of volunteer trustees working collaboratively with the library director and library staff to achieve the goals of the library in a coordinated way. This priority is also supported by the relationships that have been developed with local government for the continuity of annual operating funds as well as with local organizations that provide a variety of granting streams which the library accesses to enhance programs and services.

## OUTCOMES THAT WERE IDENTIFIED

Invermere Public Library staff continued to implement the goals and objectives as defined in the library's current strategic plan throughout 2019. The library director provided quarterly updates on the action plan as a way to inform the library trustees of the progress of the plan and to ensure that both the library staff and trustees are maintaining the core focus of the plan. This practice has been a positive way to acknowledge many of the smaller achievements that occur in the short term as the goals and objectives of a four-year plan are implemented.

## PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT'S KEY COMMITMENTS

### HOW OUR SERVICES AND PROGRAMS ALIGN:

- The Invermere Public Library **makes life more affordable** by providing extensive programs and services, free of charge, to all members of our community. The IPL provides free access to a broad range of databases and online services which enables members of the Columbia Valley to access the information and tools they need to learn, work and create in our continually changing world.
- The IPL delivers a wide range of **services that people can count on**. In addition to traditional book lending, residents of the Columbia Valley also have access to a large collection of eBooks and community programming. Barrier free access to technology is also available through the IPL, both within the library and beyond. We are committed to communicating with our patrons and residents through print and social media, so that all are aware of services, upcoming special events, and opportunities for connecting with others through library programming.
- The IPL is committed to **building a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone**. Offering free programming and services as well as free use of the mezzanine space for meetings, studying, and gathering with others, ensures that members of our community have the information and tools they need to develop skills and engage in knowledge creation to further develop themselves and their community. With changing economic markets, there is a demand for learning and skill development in order to remain competitive. The library supports the interests of life-long learners as well as youth needing to acquire new competencies and skills.
- The IPL is committed to **true, lasting reconciliation with First Nations in British Columbia through the adoption and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission**. We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional unceded territory of the Ktunaxa and Shuswap Peoples. We recognize the importance of developing a collection of resources that reflects our community. Thanks to collaboration with the Ktunaxa, we created a children's resource that contains English and Ktunaxa pronunciation. We proudly provided the space for the book release of a local Indigenous poet whose poetry collection was very well received, and became part of the library. In 2019, the IPL hosted an Elder from Yaqan Nukiy, who is a member of the Ktunaxa Nation in Creston BC. As well, there was a member from Akisqnuq who came to the "How To" fair to teach participants some simple words in Ktunaxa. We are often asked for Canadian Indigenous authors and are able to direct readers and book clubs to a broad range of titles.



## **SUMMARY**

The Invermere Public Library's greatest achievement in 2019 was the establishment of the permanent staff position Library Assistant for Community Outreach. Thanks to our partnership with The Columbia Basin Trust, we secured the funding which made this position possible. With "improving access to programming and services" and "enhancing regional services through outreach programs," core goals and objectives in our strategic plan, the permanent staff member developing outreach services has had a huge impact on the library's overall programming for children and youth. The library has been able to offer story time, crafts and activities, and book exchanges for all ages in the distant communities served by the IPL. Connecting children and youth with seniors in our community has been wonderful for all, as children participating in STEAM programming or seasonal reading clubs, share the joy of discovery and learning with older adults who would otherwise be alone or unable to travel to the library to join in library programming.

Moving into 2020, the Invermere Public Library is looking forward to continuing the connection with our community in the provision of public library programming and expanded technology services. The successes that have been achieved over the past few years will certainly provide us with inspiration and motivation to continue achieving our vision of being a welcoming community hub that meets the diverse literacy needs of our valley's population.

