

## 2021 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

### LIBRARY NAME

Whistler Public 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).**

Incorporated in September of 1975, the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) was the first resort municipality in Canada. According to recent census numbers, Whistler now has 13,982 permanent residents, a 19% increase over the 2016 census. Beyond those accounted for through the census, the resort experiences on average more than 3 million visitors per year, equating to an average daily population of 29,265 (based on visitation in 2020). It goes without saying that Whistler is one of the more unique communities in BC. Whistler's economy, built on adventure and hospitality, contributes over 25% to BC's tourism export revenue.

Since 1986, the Whistler Public Library has evolved and adapted according to the unique challenges of supporting a vibrant and resilient tourism economy. Our small resort community, like many others, was faced with many unprecedented challenges in 2021, including significant staffing shortages, a P1 Variant COVID outbreak, shut-down of the ski area (the resort's main economic driver), record hot and cold temperatures, and a massive local government cyber breach impacting library operations. In alignment with the library's commitment to continuous improvement, we looked for the opportunities to transform these hardships into growth in 2021.






As highlighted throughout this report, the library rose to meet community challenges in 2021, honoring the work that the team and facility are uniquely positioned to do while being guided by our strategic plan. Our values and priorities have helped us establish a clear "brand", which both holds us accountable and helps us advocate for ourselves. Over the last four years, these priorities have helped us to commit to:

- Building a framework for strong partnerships
- Creating a more adaptable space that makes inclusiveness visible
- Raising expectations for the library experience
- Building community through our space and technology
- Reducing our environmental footprint

## 2. MAJOR PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Please describe any new or major ongoing projects/programs the library has delivered in the past year. To report on multiple projects/programs, “copy” the blank table below and insert additional tables as needed using the “paste” function. Use one table per project/program.

<b>Project/Program Name</b>
New Staff Schedule and Unified Service Team
<b>Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.</b>
<p>This was a large project and the culmination of many months of work. In order to determine what our new schedule would look like, we surveyed the public to determine what hours of each day of the week were most important to them to have access to our spaces, resources, and services.</p> <p>This information helped us select our open hours (eight hours per day Monday – Saturday, six hours on Sunday). We used this opportunity to realize a long-held dream of creating a unified service team, co-managed by the Public Services and Youth Services Librarians, consisting of highly trained service specialists who rotated through roles in the library and could confidently provide service and solve problems for all patrons.</p> <p>We gathered information from our staff (what days they could absolutely not work, if they would be willing to work weekends, etc.) and then started to solve the puzzle of how to divide shifts and roles equitably, and create schedules for all staff that met most of their preferences while still meeting our operational needs.</p> <p>When we implemented the new schedule, we also identified a need for additional casual support and, with the new structure of our schedule, a new approach to training.</p>
<b>How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Increasing daily open hours to 8 per day, adding back Sunday hours at request of community</li><li>- Kids desk staffed for all open hours</li><li>- Dedicated programming shifts for youth programmers – creating and delivering new programs that are responsive to changing requirements and evolving community needs</li><li>- All staff working 8.5 hour shifts – compressing schedules, reducing number of staff in building at one time</li><li>- Unified service team – all staff rotating through the same roles (front desk, kids desk, break coverage) – more equitable distribution of work and off-desk training/project work time, delivery of more reliable and responsive service experience for public</li><li>- Consistent training &amp; development time built in to the schedule</li><li>- Increased ease of coverage for sick and vacation</li></ul>

How does this project/program support the <a href="#">B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service</a> ? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.	
1. <b>Improving Access</b> for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)	<p>Based on the results of our community survey, we returned to being open seven days a week on October 12. We also added one hour per day Monday through Saturday, providing the community with as much access as possible given the constraints of our budget. The changes are a hit with our community; below are two happy comments from Facebook:</p> <div>  <b>Dana Carmichael Elliott</b>         This is the best thing that has happened since COVID ruined everything!!!        Love · Reply · 2d  2     </div> <div>  <b>Diana Foster</b> Parent of Multiple Kids        I didn't realize how much I missed Sunday's until I couldn't go!! 🍌🍌🍌        Love · Reply · 2d  1     </div>
2. <b>Building Capacity</b> for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built in time for training and development activities with our new schedule</li> <li>• All staff have at least one shift biweekly as the Break Coverage person, who gets off-desk time to work on assigned trainings and other projects</li> <li>• All staff trained in tasks previously reserved for either front desk or youth services staff – this means all staff are confident providing service to all patrons, minimizing the need to pass customers along to coworkers to solve problems or answer questions</li> </ul>
3. <b>Advancing Citizen Engagement</b> (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	
4. <b>Enhancing Governance</b> of the library system (e.g., board/trustee training, developing best practices, strategic planning)	

**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 operational hiatus forced upon us by the pandemic created a much-needed opportunity for change within our organization. Like many organizations, we had struggled for years to reduce the level of over-coordination and energy spent on ensuring that staff were well trained and schedules covered. In addition, we were challenged to create a more equitable workload across the management team.

Only five months into this new way of operating, we have observed short-term outcomes that include staff doing more “pointing with their feet and not with their fingers” when it comes to helping a broad spectrum of patrons with their information needs; greater appreciation for the nuances across the various service roles; increased accountability to one another as part of a team; and, making the most of dedicated off-desk time for training and programming to focus on quality and improvement vs. quantity.

From the service perspective, this restart gave us the chance to revisit our library operating hours by surveying our patrons to understand when the total hours we had to offer would be most needed. The return to seven-day operations made the public very happy; Sundays historically have the lightest traffic overall but are the most desirable days for many of our local families.

A qualitative outcome is that staff have been able to work with people they previously would not have – they have noted feeling more confident providing one another with support during challenging patron interactions, and have appreciated having the opportunity to learn from each others’ service skills. Additionally, strengths that were previously unknown have come to the forefront. For example: previous youth services staff who have found that they love tech troubleshooting on the front desk, and former front desk staff who have learned that they love spending time in the kids’ area and making recommendations to kids and families.

<b>Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery?)</b>
None.

[Copy and insert additional tables below for each additional project/program as needed]

### 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>Maintaining service levels while responding to changing Public Health Orders, WorkSafe BC requirements, and local COVID-19 case numbers required ingenuity and perseverance on behalf of our team. A few examples that illustrate how we continued to provide library services while being limited by occupancy constraints, restrictions on organized indoor gatherings, and surges in local case counts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully keeping the library building open to the public from October 2020 to present. Despite the ever-changing restrictions throughout 2021, we haven't had to close our doors since re-opening in October 2020. This has meant capping the number of people in the building, limiting visits to 30 minutes or less, and removing or limiting seating options as needed.</li> <li>• Promoting 'Library at Home'. While a significant amount of our community was isolating after an outbreak early in 2021, we created a flat sheet on how to use the library from home, which Whistler Community Services Society included in the self-isolation kits they were giving out. We also shared this document with Vancouver Coastal Health, so that contact tracers could share the information.</li> <li>• Partnering with Pemberton &amp; District Public Library and Squamish Public Library on virtual programs. This collaboration began in June 2020 with our (ongoing) Virtual Quest Lecture Series, and has continued to present</li> </ul>

	<p>with several author events and Sea to Sky Book Club meetings. This partnership allows the three libraries to pool resources to offer more programs and connect our communities over shared interests and important conversations.</p>
<p>Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)</p>	<p>During the extreme heat event in June and July 2021, Whistler Community Services Society (WCSS) identified the library as a central location to offer cold water, snacks, and sunscreen to keep our community safe. This initiative was supported by the Whistler Blackcomb Foundation.</p> <p>From December 26 to January 1, the library once again partnered with WCSS and the Emergency Services Department of the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) to activate Whistler's first ever Emergency Weather Response Shelter. This was in response to Environment Canada's Extreme Arctic Outflow warning, the first significant weather warning issued since the heat dome.</p> <p>During the day, WCSS Outreach Workers provided a warming space in the library's Community Room. In the evening, this space turned into an overnight shelter, which was overseen by guards from Black Tusk Security. Over six days, the warming space was visited by over 75 people, while 19 people used the overnight shelter over the course of seven nights. Through this initiative, several individuals were able to connect with crucial mental health support and other social services.</p> <p>Due to the success of this initiative, we were able to create an Extreme Weather Shelter pilot project through April 2022, in which the shelter at the library would be activated if an extreme arctic outflow alert was issued by Environment Canada. Policy surrounding this project was approved by Council, which could pave the way for expansion of this type of support in our community. Funding was provided by the British Columbia Municipal Safety Association.</p>
<p>Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)</p>	<p>Due to the significant impact of reduced tourism on municipal revenues, the library did not see an increase in operational budget for 2021. We maintained this status quo budget through a reduction of discretionary funds; in addition, over \$150,000 in capital budget allocation for space improvements were postponed until 2022.</p>
<p>Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health and wellness)</p>	<p>Supporting our team through the uncertainty of the pandemic has been challenging. We've responded by having daily mini-meetings where we celebrate successes; share critical information, including health &amp; safety updates; and brainstorm solutions when problems arise. Supervisors also meet with staff 1-on-1 every two weeks to discuss what is going well, what is tricky, and what we could be doing differently. Staff are supported with training opportunities provided by the library, the municipality, and our Employee and Family Assistance Plan, with a focus on mental health and wellness.</p>



	<p>Retaining casual staff to cover vacation and sick days for our permanent staff has also been a challenge. All casuals employed by our municipality were laid off in 2020, and many decided not to return when we were able to invite them back. A temporary fix was to train staff from the municipal Recreation department (which, due to COVID-19 restrictions, was unable to offer their team enough hours) to work in the library. This worked until the Sport Centre was able to reopen.</p> <p>A more sustainable approach was to hire externally and increase the number of casuals we employ to cover the increase in sick days and short-term leaves our permanent team now take. We also improved our onboarding process and created online modules that could be completed remotely, in order to make training new staff less labour-intensive and to meet occupancy restrictions in staff work areas. The outcome of our latest round of hiring is the most skilled casual team in recent memory.</p>
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	<p>In April 2021, the RMOW was the victim of a cyber security breach that resulted in most of our digital services being unavailable, including staff and public internet, search computers, phones, voicemail, printing, and scanning. This required us to create new workflows and communication methods, and to reach out for support from our community and partners as the RMOW IT team worked tirelessly towards restoring our services.</p> <p>With no internet in our building, our on-site staff had to collaborate with remote staff to complete many tasks using their personal phones, as remote staff were able to sign into our library system. For example, to check in a returned item, staff would read out the item barcode to the person at home, who would type it into the system and relay if the item triggered a hold and for whom, and the person in the building would then handwrite the hold slip if needed.</p> <p>As our systems came back online, we continuously adjusted our workflows, much like during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and our team demonstrated their commitment to maintaining the standard of service the community has come to expect from us.</p> <p>This experience highlighted how vital internet access is, both for our day-to-day operations and for those without home internet or data plans on their personal devices to stay connected to the digital world.</p>

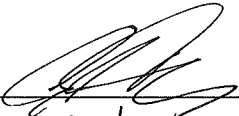
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	<p>Whistler Public library is once again a centralized and neutral location where the most vulnerable in our community can access services, thanks to funding from the Union of British Columbia's Strengthening Communities' Services Program (SCSP), which was created with Safe Restart funding from the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia. With this additional funding, organizations that provided outreach services in our building prior to the pandemic were able to return and expand their drop-in hours. This includes Whistler Community Services Society (four afternoons a week), the Whistler Women's Centre (two afternoons), and Sea to Sky Community Services Homeless Outreach (one afternoon).</p> <p>In addition to the organizations supported by the SCSP, weekly drop-ins are also provided by WorkBC Employment Services and the Whistler Welcome Centre Settlement Services.</p> <p>Thanks to these organizations, individuals experiencing challenges with mental health, financial insecurity, physical health and injury, housing and homelessness, food insecurity, substance use, employment, immigration and settlement, family/friend relationships, parenting support, or violence in relationships can find help at the library.</p>
<p>Other (please specify):</p> <p>Cyber Security Incident delaying technology initiatives</p>	<p>As discussed above, the cyber security incident at the RMOW had a significant impact on WPL's connectivity. The breach also impacted our ability to move forward with planned technology initiatives.</p> <p>In particular, we had to pause the launch of our laptop lending program, which would make use of our ComputeIT Locker from D-Tech International, purchased in late 2020 thanks to generous funding from the Province of British Columbia's Technology Grant. The cyber breach resulted in a full rebuild of our public laptops and accompanying networks as well as implementation of stricter security measures before the locker could be fully operational.</p> <p>In October 2021, rather than waiting for the locker to be functional, we launched our 'Borrow a Laptop' program, allowing patrons to borrow one of our twelve newly rebuilt laptops for use in the library by visiting a service desk. In</p>



	<p>the first two months of this initiative, we saw our laptops borrowed 250 times.</p> <p>We look forward to launching laptop loaning via the ComputeIT Locker in early 2022, which will align with easing provincial restrictions regarding capacity and seating guidelines for libraries as outlined by WorkSafe BC.</p>
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#### 4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

*Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.*

Library Director Signature:  Date: 3/16/22

Board Chair Signature: Mike Wahl Date: 3/16/22