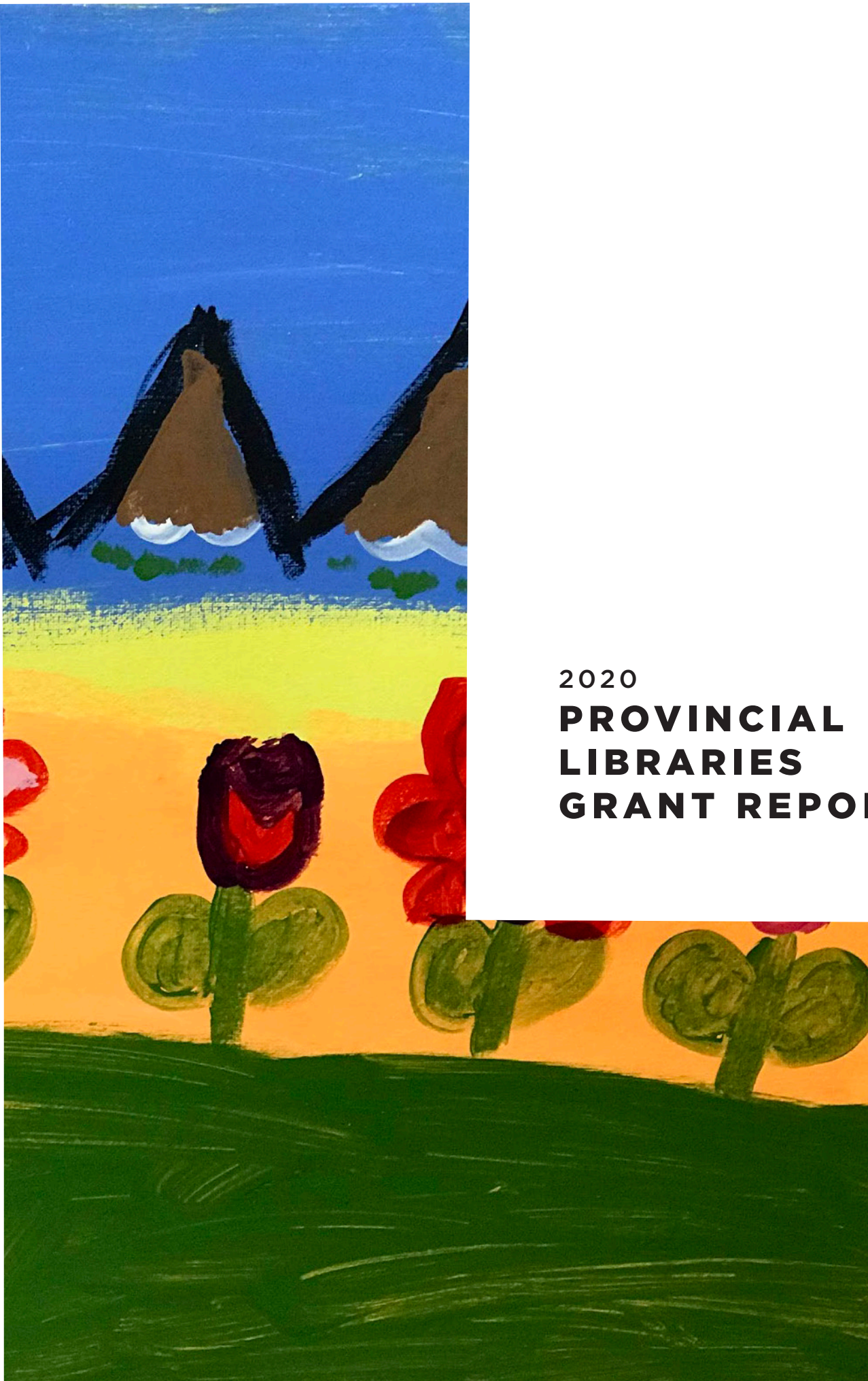


OKANAGAN REGIONAL LIBRARY

2020
**PROVINCIAL
LIBRARIES
GRANT REPORT**



Introduction

The Okanagan Regional Library (ORL), is one of the largest public library systems in Canada. The ORL is a Regional Library situated in the southern interior of BC, created in 1936, currently serving just over 400,000 people in a diverse geographic area the size of Ireland. The administration center/ head office is centrally located in Kelowna. The ORL provides service on-line, and via 31 physical branch locations. Our communities include some of the fastest growing urban areas of Canada such as those in the central Okanagan, as well as very rural and sparsely settled regions. Because of our natural beauty, thriving economy, and favorable climate our citizens include an above average percentage of retirees, and a rapidly growing number of college age and young entrepreneurs and families drawn by UBCO and thriving hi tech or other business start-ups particularly in the Central Okanagan.

Each year we deliver millions of service transactions thru providing access to physical and online material, connecting people to the web, providing community space, delivering programs and learning

sessions, offering public use of and training on tech equipment, and referral to other resources and services.

We are governed by a 24 member board entirely comprised of elected councillors, mayors, regional district directors and elected first nation leaders. We have a staff of just under 275 employees totalling approximately 115 FTE. Our direct service points include 30 full service branches ranging in size from just a few hundred square ft to close to 40,000 square feet, one small pocket unstaffed location within UBCO Library, 2 active book deposits run by volunteer organizations, and of course our website.

Our annual operating budget is approximately \$20 million dollars. Approximately 92% of our funding comes from local tax revenues. Provincial grant funding has dropped to only about 5% over the past several years as the base grant funding has been frozen by the province for over a decade. The remainder comes from minor other sources such as fines and lost book charges or room rentals.

VISION

The ORL provides for learning, innovation, creativity and a connected community.

ORL'S 4 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS & THEMES

Our library advances learning, creativity, and imagination

Our priority has always been on reading and learning, but technology is changing the way people learn. The library is evolving to reflect that.

Our library is an integral part of life in our diverse communities

Our communities are diverse, but we are stronger together. This Direction is about listening to those in our communities and addressing their unique needs. It is about making ORL a library system that represents the best of working cooperatively combined with the best of providing flexible service responses.

Our library branches are innovative, inviting and reflect their communities

Is the library a bit bland? Maybe. Does it need to be? No! We have the unique opportunity to refresh and reinvent in response to changing needs in our communities. Bring it on.

Our library is focused on customer service, staffed by learners confident in their abilities

ORL staff care about their patrons – we see it every day. We need to make structural changes to enable staff to provide effective services that continue to make a difference in peoples lives.

Library Strategic Direction

The current ORL Strategic Plan was created in 2015 and has guided the Library vision from 2016 to the present. This plan closely aligns to the provincial strategic plan and is focused on our mission, vision and values to connect curious minds by providing for learning, innovation, creativity and a connected community.

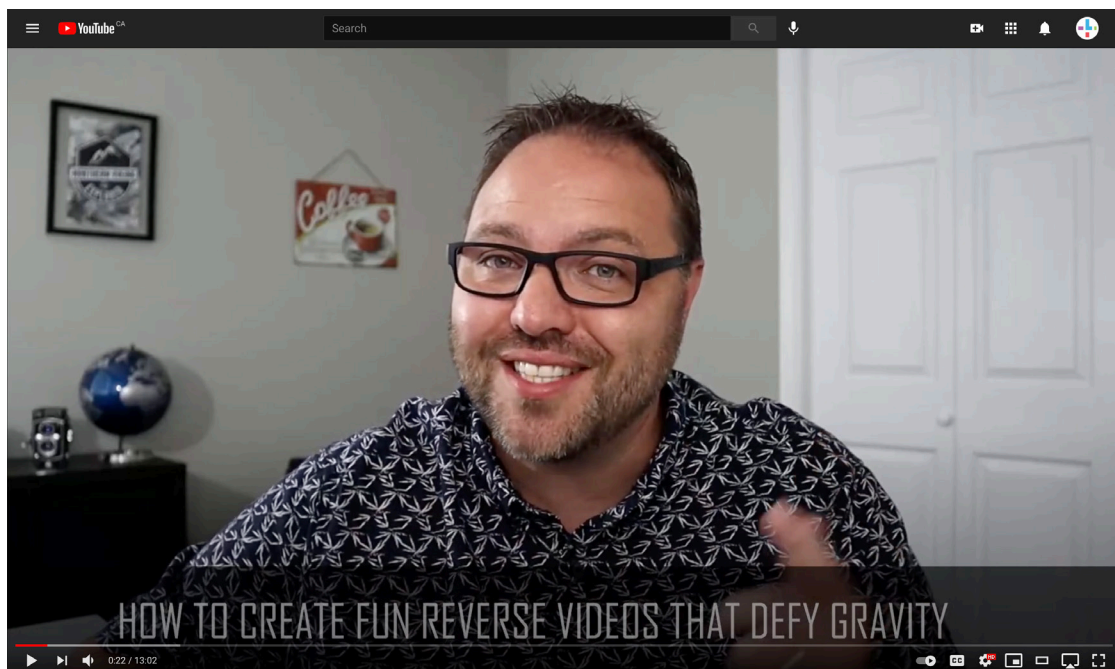
The importance and challenge and critical need for this service to our communities was never more apparent than during this past year where our world was turned upside down by Covid-19. The Board and staff had begun work on a new strategic plan which was to have been completed fall 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated setting that aside as all of the ORL energy had to be focused on the constant adaptation to be able to serve our communities amidst the constantly changing environment.

For the past 6-8 years, the focus of the ORL has been shifting. Because of limited funding, the previous focus had been limited to offering a large and diverse floating collection of materials through our branches, as well as the provision of some children's programming like story time and summer reading club. Over the past number of years, the library has broadened its focus to include a wide

range of adult programming, as well as introducing technical literacy programming and training, and additional partnerships. As part of these broader thrusts, several maker spaces were created in a few branches, with some portable technical equipment available for the rest of the system. These additional programs and technology, as well as expanded services, have largely been funded by internally having to reallocate almost \$1 million dollars of resources. This happened by reducing traditional services in some areas to fund growing communities and new initiatives. The Library was also able to get some important donations for some of the equipment. A lot of staff training and hiring focused on helping develop staff with a passion for new technology and services has happened. This has helped the ORL to expand its focus and pivot to meet the changing needs of its communities.

The primary business of the ORL remains the provision and circulation of physical and on-line resources which has generally totalled between 3 -3.5 million circulations per year. The circulation of physical items has been gradually decreasing by a few percentage points per year, while digital circulation and usage has been rapidly increasing to more than offset the loss of the physical. Obviously, the ability to access digital resources was increasingly critical during the enforced isolation and partial lockdown periods of 2020.

The ORL has also been renovating its branches and adjusting its physical locations, moving some collections online and using the freed up or redesigned spaces for programming and a place for the community to meet and enjoy. The Library is one of the few remaining public spaces open to all in the community regardless of their socio economic or other situations. Branches are now seen as inviting and vibrant community spaces as opposed to the traditional image of carefully monitored quiet study rooms warehousing books.



STEAM @ the Library - How to Make Reverse Videos that Defy Gravity

COVID-19 impact on ORL

The Library was expecting 2020 to continue to build on these same thrusts and expansions and this did happen for the first two months of the year. However, in early March everything that had been normal and expected ceased. Overnight, the library shut down all branches, and all staff were pivoted to working from home.

This was a massive undertaking, which was only possible because of the significant advances in technology and infrastructure that the library had implemented over the past couple of years. One of the critical tools necessary was Microsoft teams, which allowed staff spread all over the southern interior to work from any location where they could get internet service and hold video meetings, share files and resources, and access all of the ORL system. The technological backbone for this had only been completed in early 2020 and most staff were unfamiliar with it. Necessity required everybody to pivot, leap in, and learn on the job. ORL

librarian teams pivoted to assisting other staff, and then supporting and creating virtual programs and resources for the public. This included launching an e-card for the public to self register for service not access our collections, and creating virtual programming. Purchasing of materials switched primarily to digital formats from physical for several months to help build up these in demand collections. Most support staff and functions such as payroll, accounting, cataloguing, and senior administration including completing the annual audit work also had to happen from home or remote locations.

FULL PERIOD OF TOTAL BRANCH CLOSURE TO THE PUBLIC

All ORL branches were closed to the public with a few hours notice at the end of day Monday March 16, 2020. The Library pivoted efforts to serving online via the website. As mentioned above, this included rolling out online library card registration, developing and staffing an online chat and phone service, creating virtual programs such as storytime and online bookclubs, as well as switching a significant amount of materials purchasing to focus on digital resources like e-books and e-audiobooks. A small number of staff were laid off, but the Library was able to keep most frontline staff gainfully employed supporting the digital efforts and with significant and long overdue staff development and training. This will greatly increase the skills of staff as they serve the public post covid19. As Covid19

health guidelines were clarified by the province, the Library worked with staff and Worksafe BC to create safety plans for reopening 31 locations, and to source and purchase the necessary supplies such as plexi shields, cleaning products, masks, and gloves which were all initially in short supply. Physical spaces were adjusted to make them Covid19 safe by creating space for social distancing through moving collections, eliminating most public seating, spacing out public computers, creating signage, and spacing out staff work areas. The Library also shifted for almost 7 months to quarantining all returned books and materials which required a lot of space and effort. The ORL also increased cleaning and trained staff in the constantly changing necessary protocols.



Christmas Puppet Show with Ardie

GRADUAL REOPENING AND REINSTATING OF SERVICES

The Libraries were finally able to restart some provision of physical material circulation with

The introduction of curbside holds pickup by early June. This took a massive effort to get safety plans, training, and protocol in place and restarting internal support and delivery systems. Hours of public service were still significantly reduced in most locations.

By late July our branches were able to transition to Browse and Borrow service which allowed the public back into our buildings with limited stay which the public greatly appreciated. Over the next month open hours were extended to what they had been prior to Covid19. However, in house seating and in person programming within our buildings was not possible the remainder of 2020 which greatly impacted the traffic to our buildings and reduced the programming services we were able to offer to those that were on-line. In spite of this, by the later part of the year, our volume of physical circulation of items had returned to over 90% of the level that it was at for the same month the year before. E-material circulation had also increased during our closure period and stayed at higher levels than the previous year even after we were reopened.

The statistics below clearly demonstrate the significant impact that covid19 had on the usage of our resources and system compared to two years prior. The actual impact on services is not as bad as might be anticipated considering:

That only 2 months were normal service,

2.5 months were totally closed to physical service, and

Another almost 2 months only allowed holds placing and pickup at the door

No regular in person programming has been allowed since March 16

The public have been encouraged to quickly enter and get materials and leave

For covid19 safety the number of public computers has been reduced and seating removed for most of the year

Data	2020	2018	Change
Total number of programs offered*	2,363	6,644	-64% **
Total attendance at ORL programs*	35,636	145,742	-76% ***
Number of adult programs**	1,134	3,274	-65%
ORL eBooks & eAudio Checkouts	858,496	519,567	65%
Books, magazines & other materials borrowed	1,628,760	2,796,537	-42%
Hours spent learning new languages through Rosetta Stone	1,540	740	108%
Hours spent learning new skills through Lynda.com	4,145	2,799	48%
Number of devices connecting to ORL wifi	296,271	n/a ****	n/a ****
Number of Patrons walked through our doors	632,224	1,622,850	-61%
PressReader Articles Read	946,538	620,143	53%
Active Cardholders	102,172	106,003	-4%
Number of ORL Public Use Computers	358	250	43%
Patrons visited our website	2,141,267	2,303,332	-7%
Terabytes of wireless data traffic	36	57	-37%

* In-branch and “live” active virtual programs have been provided. Self-directed or take-away programs (aka “passive” programs) have been excluded, but were widely available and used by patrons in branches when pandemic restrictions disallowed in-branch programming.

** “Live” virtual & in-branch. Meetings excluded in 2020 and 2018. 2018: 8832 less 2188

*** “Live” virtual & in-branch. Meetings excluded in 2020 and 2018. 2018: 157601 less 11,859

**** Metric reworked when new IT system was installed

OTHER SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOR ORL IN 2020 EVEN WITH COVID-19

Even in the midst of covid-19 the ORL was able to complete some significant projects.

Golden Library closed for a few weeks while they repainted and all the flooring in the buildings was replaced. *

Oliver Library branch relocated to a slightly larger location which was conveniently located in a shopping mall. *

* Doing both of these in the midst of a pandemic was challenging but the public greatly appreciate the improved spaces.

The ORL hired a new position to increase services to the shut-in and those with visual or other special challenges with print.

USE OF PROVINCIAL ONE-TIME TECHNOLOGY GRANT

The special one-time technology grant from the Province is also allowing the ORL to

Replace the routers and other hardware in many of our branches that are at end of life, throttling bandwidth and speed for users in these locations. This will allow the Library, using the same contracted services, to more than double the speed and bandwidth for users of library equipment and of wi-fi. This will enable additional programs and equipment to run and users to have a less frustrating and quicker experience.

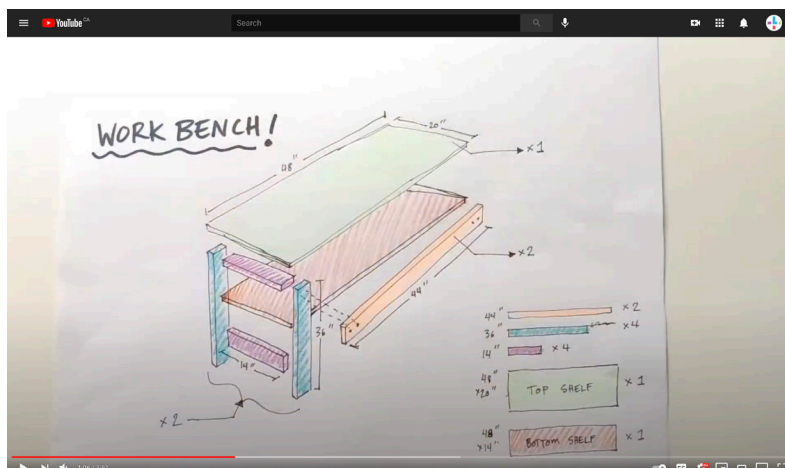
Address connectivity issues in Golden branch which had a very poor connectivity to the web. This grant funds fibre being pulled to the Library and will cover the additional costs for this service for the next three years. In addition to normal branch services this location had recently added a maker space and this proper internet connection will allow that equipment to function as it should.

Summary

In conclusion, 2020 is a year that was like no other, and one that caught most of the world by surprise. It has impacted the Library and its users significantly through disrupting all library services, closing branches for extended periods

of time, and requiring us to move from promoting the Library as the community living room where everybody can gather, to a place which encourages its users to keep their distance and minimize their time within our walls.

In spite of this, there have been many positive changes. Some first-time and regular users have discovered the Library's virtual offerings. Staff have had time to train on some of the many new products and technology that exists. We have learned how to connect and serve digitally through technology like Teams and Zoom. Our digital resource circulation has increased and our physical material circulation levels have significantly recovered in spite of less in branch activity to draw people in. Citizens have indicated that they greatly missed their Libraries being open, and that they are looking forward to a return to all in-person services. This has been shown through both by their comments as well as by the strong bounce back in circulation of materials in spite of visits to our buildings being restricted. The ORL looks forward to the anticipated day when the Pandemic is behind us and the Library can return to all the important services that it normally provides and is working to expand.



STEAM @ the Library: Workbench from Salvaged Wood, Part 1



SERVING 31 COMMUNITIES:

Armstrong
Cherryville
Enderby
Falkland
Golden
Hedley
Kaleden

Kelowna
Keremeos
Lake Country
Lumby
Mission
Naramata
North Shuswap

Okanagan Falls
Oliver
Osoyoos
Oyama
Peachland
Princeton
Revelstoke

Rutland
Salmon Arm
Sicamous
Silver Creek
South Shuswap
Summerland
UBC-O

Vernon
Westbank
Westside Learning Lab



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Okanagan Regional Library

2020 Technology Grant Summary

The Okanagan Regional Library is very thankful for the special one-time funding that the province has provided for technology needs for 2020. In considering how this money would best be used to serve the needs of our communities, we considered many options which would further the strategic goals of the province and the Library. The selected uses were chosen because they matched one-time money to one-time projects and thus there was no concerns on sustainability. They were also projects that addressed the most basic connectivity needs of the most disadvantaged that we serve, who often have no other means of connecting to the internet other than the public library. The uses are for two projects.

The first use covers 13 of our branches, and replaces the existing routers that connect the branches to our providers. These routers are nearing end of life, and have the effect of throttling the bandwidth and speed that we are able to provide to users in these branches. The new equipment will allow us, using the same contracted carrier services, to more than double the speed and bandwidth for users in these branches of our equipment and wifi. This will enable additional programs and equipment to run and users to have a less frustrating and quicker experience.

The second project focuses on our Golden location. This location does not currently have fibre or good connectivity options. We recently, with the assistance of funding from the Columbia Basin Trust, added a maker space with digital suites, and audio recording and a training lab. The current connection does not allow equipment to function as needed, and is well over the capacity of the bandwidth provided. We are still finalizing options but it is anticipated, based upon previous similar situations, that the only short-term solution will require a 3-year contract for services that will be approximately \$500 plus tax more per month. It is anticipated that by the end of this contracted period other more economical solutions that will provide even better speed and connectivity will be available, but this interim solution will allow the community access that they currently are not able to have both in wifi and in the library computers and new makerspace technology. Should the final negotiated solution not require the 3-year contract, then we have a wireless printing app that we would like to implement in all of our branches which would allow the public to print to copiers and printers at their convenience and without needing staff intervention. We would redirect funding to wireless printing projects which would be implemented in as many branches as the funding will cover.

2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: OKANAGAN REGIONAL LIBRARY]

Total Technology Grant Amount: [\$41,635]

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Choose an item. Upgrade router hardware to 13 branches	This will facilitate more bandwidth and speed to the branches for public wifi and internet connections	We expect response speed to more than double and it will allow additional equipment such as in makerspace to operate better	To help the public who many have no other means of access be more connected to the internet and have the system responsive	6 80F routers 7 60F routers		New equipment will be purchased in late 2020 and installed by orl IT staff in 2020 or early 2021	\$26,135 plus tax	ORL reserve funding will pick up tax and any additional branches	
Choose an item. Resolve Golden library internet service	This will allow Golden Library to have additional bandwidth to connect to internet and makerspace equipment to operate	Makerspace and other equipment that has difficulty operating will be responsive and customers and library will have speeds several times what have had	To help the public gain access to the internet and develop knowledge and experience of additional technology	Need to upgrade service with local provider until unmanaged fibre is available – estimated 3 year contract required			\$15,500 plus tax – for 3 year contracted service	ORL will cover additional costs of taxes	If we can negotiate less term and/or get fibre pulled to site for small ORL contribution then we will redirect any saved funds to wireless printing solution in our branches