

# PROVINCIAL LIBRARY GRANTS REPORT 2020

## SQUAMISH PUBLIC LIBRARY



### INTRODUCTION

*The Squamish Public Library serves a community of approximately 22,000 residents in our municipality and surrounding district. Squamish is a vibrant, young community; almost 60% of its residents are under the age of 40. We are on the traditional territory of the Squamish Nation, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, and many of our residents have chosen to move here from outside of the province and country to make Squamish their home.*

*Squamish is a dynamic community undergoing rapid socio-economic transformation and growth. In our highly active, multicultural, and family oriented community, opportunities are emerging in tourism, knowledge-based industries, education services, manufacturing, and retail industries. We are fast becoming one of British Columbia's most talked about tourist destinations, with some of the best mountain biking, rock climbing, kite boarding, hiking, and snow sport opportunities anywhere.*

*In addition to our seven public elementary schools (including French immersion and Francophone options, as well as a Cultural Journeys elementary school program with an emphasis on outdoor education), three public secondary schools (including Learning Expeditions, a fully project-based, technology infused middle and secondary program), a Montessori school, a Waldorf school, and Coast Mountain Academy high school, Squamish is also home to Quest University Canada.*

*Our library is an important community hub to the residents of Squamish. It is a gathering place for many community groups and partners, and it is central to a variety of local initiatives, including those that promote early literacy, and welcoming new families to our community. We aspire to provide the collection, services and programs best suited to the needs and interests of our community. In 2020 we were successful in receiving grant funding from the Union of BC Municipalities and the Squamish Arts Council to undertake two special projects. We also received municipal capital funding to expand our public computer services and undertake some interior space renovations. While these projects have been carried forward to 2021 due to COVID, we are looking forward to seeing them carried out with additional municipal and regional district funding that has been added this year.*

*As with any community, Squamish and our library face challenges. Our neighbourhoods are spread out and public transit is limited, making our library's downtown location a barrier to access for some. Housing is expensive, and the vacancy rate in the rental market is close to zero. We are a diverse community with a range of needs and expectations; it can be a challenge to maintain a welcoming environment for all while being faced with safety and security concerns, including mental health and addiction issues. The opening of Under One Roof in 2020, a hub that provides food, shelter and social services, is a significant milestone in meeting the needs of many people in our community.*

*2020 marked the second year of our 2019-2023 strategic plan. The plan contains four strategic priorities: inspire inquiry, learning and literacy; engage and welcome everyone; deliver outstanding service; and build a strong team and healthy workplace. While 2020 was not a typical year, we are proud to have achieved many of the priorities of our plan by using innovation and creativity to work within COVID-19 constraints, making progress towards the strategic goals of our library.*

## DISCUSSION AND EXAMPLES OF SQUAMISH PUBLIC LIBRARY'S GOALS, SERVICES, PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO PROVINCIAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### PROVINCIAL PRIORITY #1

#### IMPROVING ACCESS

##### **Squamish Public Library Goal that supports the priority:**

*As the provincial strategic plan describes within the priority of Improving Access for British Columbians, "As community hubs, libraries are providing vital access and helping people connect and navigate the digital world." The Squamish Public Library's strategic plan touches on this provincial priority in more than one place in our plan, including our goal to "Engage and welcome everyone: We facilitate community connections, and we provide the space and programming to meet our diverse community's needs."*

##### **Programs and/or Services that align with the priority:**

*One of the priority initiatives listed in our strategic plan was to update our library website to make it as user-friendly as possible. 2020 provided an unexpected opportunity to dedicate staff resources to carrying out this project. Rather than updating what we currently had, the staff member in our newly created marketing and communications specialist position led a complete rebranding of our library, and this work was then incorporated into our newly designed website. The website itself was done entirely in-house by our technology librarian, and was built based on extensive user experience testing. The result is an easy to use, professional, and attractive new look and feel for our library's presence on our website and social media channels, in our bi-weekly newsletter, and in our print publications.*



##### **Squamish Public Library Launches Rebrand With New Website, Logo and Colour Scheme**

**Squamish, B.C.** – The Squamish Public Library is pleased to unveil its new website, which features a new logo and colour scheme. The homepage layout and menu structure were designed based on extensive testing and user feedback. The updates to the branding incorporate a hexagonal motif and are a reflection of the library's role as a welcoming community hub. "We decided on a hexagon pattern, like honeycombs in beehives, which are places of community, creation, working together, and interconnectedness," explains director of library services Hilary Bloom. "The library is more than just books; we want our branding to reflect the variety of library services we offer to our diverse community, as well as our warm and welcoming atmosphere. Hexagons are one of the strongest and most common shapes in nature, and hexagonal basalt pillars are a common natural occurrence in the Sea to Sky region. We like to think of our library as a source of strength and support to Squamish."

COVID-19 forced creativity out of all of us, and gave rise to several new programs and services we would not have otherwise launched in 2020. With a switch to digital-only resource lending for the first two months of the pandemic, we quickly mobilized to offer support and instruction to our patrons for accessing eBooks, eAudiobooks, and more. We expanded our digital collection thanks to the provincial digital initiatives grant. We saw a 51% increase in usage of our digital resources in the first six months of COVID, before we reopened our doors for in-library services. Our staff created very creative and engaging how-to videos, spent time via e-mail and phone to individually coach patrons through processes, issued new memberships and renewed expired memberships at lightning speed. We added Kanopy, a video streaming service, to our suite of digital resources, which has been warmly received. We pivoted to offer programming in a virtual format, recording and publishing weekly storytime videos, running various adult programs via Zoom (and helping patrons learn how to use Zoom).

While our Wi-Fi access remained available from the building's exterior throughout all of 2020, we officially restored computer lab service in July. As part of that milestone, we chose to relocate our entire computer lab from the main public area of our library to our meeting room, as we knew it would be quite some time before we could use the meeting room again for in-library programming or meetings. Housing the computer lab in the meeting room allowed us to spread out the workstations and create a staff work space with adequate COVID safety precautions such as plexiglass and appropriate distancing from the public workstations.

With the relaunch of our computing services, we decided to try using Princh for mobile printing and payment functionality, two services we hadn't offered previously. Princh has proven to be a very effective and convenient cloud-based printing solution, as it allows users to print and pay from their mobile devices, laptops, or our library PCs. We have found that the number of people requiring use of our PCs just for printing has decreased significantly, as so many people have their own mobile devices and laptops. Princh users and library staff have all been pleased with the easy app interface and very minimal troubleshooting required. We no longer require the use of a coin box, which often proved problematic and interfered with the functionality of our public printing services.

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## PROVINCIAL PRIORITY #2

### BUILDING CAPACITY

#### Squamish Public Library Goal that supports the priority:

The provincial plan states that this priority is about "reducing barriers for library staff and board members to access training opportunities so that they can continue to provide quality and future-focused library services." Our own plan reflects this same focus within our priority of "Build a strong team and a healthy workplace: We ensure that our team continues to grow and develop. We will ensure that the team has the skills and resources in place to fulfill our mission."

#### Programs and/or Services that align with the priority:

Our library staff undertook training in a variety of areas in 2020, including customer service, coaching, and homelessness training. One of the most significant additions to our suite of training opportunities was Niche Academy, which allows us to create and share our own training modules with staff and/or the public. We are now developing a series of training modules to assist with consistent onboarding for new staff, and as a repository for our procedures that we can edit as they need to be updated.

*We began using a scheduling software called When2Work, which has greatly reduced both the amount of time required to schedule staff as well as the risk of errors. As we've moved through various stages of reopening to the community, it has been invaluable to have an easy scheduling system to model various scenarios to help with scheduling decision-making. The new tool aided the decision to try moving full-time staff to a four-day work week orientation, which has been very positively received as a schedule that allows for extended weekends and minimizes the number of staff members in the facility at any one time.*

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### **PROVINCIAL PRIORITY #3**

#### **ADVANCING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT**

##### **Library Goal that supports the priority:**

*The provincial plan states that this goal is about increasing opportunities for people to access the information and resources they need to thrive as engaged individuals, workers and lifelong learners. The Squamish Public Library's plan has a goal to "Inspire Inquiry, Learning and Literacy: The Squamish Public Library is a place of inspiration and a defender of imagination. We offer innovative, inspiring programming and services that strengthen our role as a community hub and as a place of creative learning for increased literacy." In addition, our goal to "Deliver Outstanding Service" guides us to ensure that we are a reliable source for current information on community services, issues and events, and to ensure that our proactive personalized service is the reason people return to the library time and again.*

##### **Programs and/or Services that align with the priority:**

*A significant accomplishment for our library was the removal of late fines, approved by our board in June 2020 and received with positivity and gratitude by our community. Similar to the libraries who paved the way before us, we found that while fines accounted for roughly 1% of our annual revenues, the associated labour and negativity associated with them (administration of fine collection, conversations with patrons about their incurred fines, barriers that fines impose disproportionately on vulnerable populations) outweighed the modest financial benefit to the library. We have tightened our timing on issuing bills for outstanding items, and find that patrons are receptive to returning materials in a timely fashion. Nearly 1,000 people in our database were no longer blocked from using the library as a result of our policy change.*

*Soon after the library closed in mid-March, we were in communication with our municipality, who was seeking out space to provide a temporary warming centre during the morning hours for our community's vulnerable population. While Squamish had overnight shelter services within the same block as the library, clients were required to vacate during the daytime hours, and COVID precautions were limiting access to community amenities more than ever. Without the library being open as usual, clients had very few options for where to spend their daytime hours, and vacating the shelter in the morning made for some chilly scenarios. We worked quickly with the municipality to make our meeting room, foyer and public bathrooms available as a warming centre from 8 am – noon, seven days a week, from April 2 to June 30, 2020. In the warming centre, visitors could warm up while using WiFi and reading materials stationed at appropriately distanced tables. By the end of June, our municipality had set up a new temporary housing site to provide people with adequate daytime and nighttime shelter.*

*We were able to launch a very successful library take-out service beginning May 21, 2020. This service provided contactless curbside pick-up for library materials, which was very well received after over two months without*

access to physical items. We set up our service to utilize our staff entrance, adjacent to our parking lot, to enable patrons to easily park and wait outside while we retrieved their materials. As part of this service, we offered the option for staff to select items on behalf of patrons, based on interests, target age range of materials (e.g. children, teen, adult) and favourite authors. This reader's advisory service allowed our staff to spend time doing one of the things they do best: personalized and proactive recommendations of library materials. We also launched a new web submission form and e-mail inquiries process to responsively manage patron requests and help patrons with whatever library-related questions or challenges they were facing. This assistance can be provided by staff who are working in the library or remotely.

Our take-out service continues in full force to this day. While we did open again for in-library services beginning in July for computer access and in August for browsing, our take-out hours are more extensive and allow us to serve our community without requiring everyone to come inside. A very positive result of take-out has been the uptake in patrons learning how to access their online accounts, place holds, and renew items. We saw a 70% increase in hold placement in 2020 over the year before. With such a successful outcome, it is anticipated that this service will remain in some capacity well beyond pandemic limitations. An additional positive partnership that emerged from our take-out service was with Better at Home, whereby their local volunteers connected with homebound and/or immunocompromised library patrons and delivered library materials direct to their doorsteps.

The pandemic has caused some happy accidents when it comes to the way we can offer programming to our community. While at first it felt very limiting not to provide any in-person programming, once we were up and running with a Zoom platform, we realized that geography was no longer a barrier in terms of who could attend, and who could present. We ran a number of programs in collaboration with the other Sea to Sky libraries, Whistler and Pemberton, and were able to cross-promote anything each library was planning. It has been wonderful to participate in programs and notice attendees from other communities on the video call. As a follow-up to a successful online book club to discuss 21 Things You May Not Know about the Indian Act, author Bob Joseph did a presentation that reached its maximum registration capacity of 500 people with registrants from across Canada. This is something that we would not have imagined being able to do when we operated within an in-person programming framework before 2020..

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#### PROVINCIAL PRIORITY #4

##### ENHANCING GOVERNANCE

##### Library Goal that supports the priority:

The provincial goal sets the context that boards provide strategic direction and are responsible for ensuring libraries meet their financial, legal and community obligations. Our own plan aims for building and fostering a "Strong team and healthy workplace," and the library board is part of that team. Our goal is that our board is seen as a strong advocate and respected partner in the community, and that the board ensures the library has adequate financial resources to fulfill our goals and descriptions of success.

##### Programs and/or Services that align with the priority:

Our library board has done a great deal of work to ensure they are fulfilling their governance role. In 2020, they formally established three committees: the governance committee, the functional planning committee and the executive committee, and created terms of reference and regular monthly meeting times for each. This change has alleviated the need for various items of business to be handled during the regular meetings of the board, as they

*are now handled at the committee level and communicated back to the board via committee reports. This has allowed for less time pressure during regular business meetings.*

*In the past few years, the board has consistently undertaken a self-evaluation at the end of each calendar year, and 2020 was no exception. The results are shared during the first meeting of the new year, and they help to shape future year's onboarding process for new trustees, recruitment efforts, and ways to make meetings and communication most effective. The board has also been able to track back to previous surveys and compare scoring over time. The board's commitment to establishing and following a robust annual calendar has further contributed to their ability to ensure that all annual duties and responsibilities of the board are consistently and thoughtfully carried out.*

*One significant change to the way board business is conducted has been adopting the use a board management software program called OnBoard, which provides a repository for board files, upcoming agenda packages, scheduling information, public links to minutes, and more. It is a sophisticated method for sharing out meeting packages ahead of time, and acts as a central dashboard for all trustees to locate any relevant board information.*

*Several trustees took the opportunity to participate in training offered by the BC Library Trustees Association (BCLTA) in 2020. Both these formal training sessions and the regular BCLTA newsletter have been wonderful sources of information and support throughout the pandemic.*

*Under the board's direction, the library began the process of an organizational review in 2020. Though not yet in the completion stage, this undertaking will enable our organization to build capacity and establish a degree of succession planning.*

## TECHNOLOGY GRANT UPDATE

*As mentioned in our interim report, the one-time provincial technology grant funding enabled us to expand our digital collection of eBooks and eAudiobooks and support the improvement of our Wi-Fi infrastructure. The municipal funding we received in 2020 to update our public computing service has been carried forward to 2021, and we look forward to augmenting that project with the provincial technology grant funding to purchase an increased number of loanable devices to deploy to community members.*

## SUMMARY

*2020 was not a typical year, but it opened up opportunities for us to try new things, scale back on activities that were not required during a pandemic, and reassess workloads and areas of responsibility. We look forward to new opportunities in the year ahead, including some capital improvements to our interior space, launching a new visiting library service for homebound and socially isolated patrons (leveraging the power of volunteers), and unveiling new window art based on a Squamish legend and designed by a young Squamish Nation artist.*

*This year's report would not be complete without acknowledging our appreciation for the support of the Association of BC Library Directors network, InterLINK and its Administrators Advisory Group, the BC Library Trustees Association, our neighbouring Sea to Sky libraries, our municipality and regional district, and our community. Our library staff members and the trustees on our library board each deserve a medal for stepping up, jumping in, Zooming, improvising, closing the library, re-opening the library, safety planning, sanitizing, quarantining and keeping everyone safe, all from at least six feet apart.*



## Library Technology Grant Interim Planning Report

Submitted by: Hilary Bloom

Director of Public Services

The Squamish Public Library is very appreciative of this one-time Ministry of Education grant of \$16,182 towards the enhancement of digital services, technology and broadband connectivity initiatives. The timing of this funding aligns with plans that were underway for 2020 and 2021 with municipal funding to enhance what our library provides in terms of public access to computers, internet and digital resources.

With this provincial grant funding, we are able to improve wireless internet coverage by adding a second wireless access point, increase the number of loanable devices (laptops and tablets), implement mobile printing and mobile payment solutions via an app called Princh, and expand our suite of digital resources to include movie streaming. All of these focus areas are ones that were in need of upgrading and improvement, and we are able to expand these services even more, in thanks to this provincial funding. Our community will benefit greatly from these streamlined and augmented library services.



2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: SQUAMISH PUBLIC LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount: \$16,182

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Connectivity (internet speed, connection capacity, etc.)	Faster internet speed and farther reaching wifi coverage	Internet speed data (we are able to monitor this) and observation of wifi coverage within and outside of the building	Improving access for British Columbians and Advancing citizen engagement (providing internet access is a crucial user-centred service)	Purchase of additional wireless access point and license	Collaboration with our municipality to deploy	Fall 2020	\$1,500	\$40,000 capital grant from our municipality (for hardware, software and connectivity upgrades to our public computer and internet access service)	
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.)	Expanded and more flexible public computer access	Number of workstation sessions annually	Improving access for British Columbians and Advancing citizen engagement (providing computer access is a crucial user-centred service)	Purchase of laptops and tablets to lend for in-library use	Collaboration with our municipality to deploy	Winter 2021	\$10,000	\$40,000 capital grant from our municipality (for hardware, software and connectivity upgrades to our public computer and internet access service)	
Patron software upgrades	Seamless printing, including mobile printing and mobile payment using an app	Amount of staff time spent assisting patrons with print jobs	Improving access for British Columbians and Advancing citizen engagement (providing computer access is a crucial user-centred service)	Subscription to Princh	Collaboration with our municipality to deploy	Summer 2020	\$1,600	\$40,000 capital grant from our municipality (for hardware, software and connectivity upgrades to our public computer and internet access service)	
Electronic collections (licensing)	Expansion of our digital collection	Circulation of e-resources	Improving access for British Columbians and Advancing citizen engagement	Overdrive Advantage purchases of eBooks and eAudiobooks Subscription to Kanopy (movie streaming service)		Summer 2020	\$3,000	BC Libraries Cooperative’s use of funds to increase the provincial Overdrive collection and provide provincial access to Lynda.com and TumbleBooks frees up some of our	



								funds that would otherwise be required to cover these resources	
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