



2020 Provincial Public Library Grant Report

Coquitlam Public Library

Introduction

The Coquitlam Public Library (CPL) serves the residents of the City of Coquitlam with two library branches (Poirier and City Centre), a mobile library called Library Link, as well as an online branch and a mobile app. CPL also serves many people living in nearby communities, especially Port Moody and Port Coquitlam, our neighbouring municipalities.

Demographics

CPL serves a population of approximately 150,000 people (2019 estimate, City of Coquitlam website), making Coquitlam the 6th largest municipality in BC. The community includes people from a wide variety of ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds and is steadily growing. The 2016 Census figures show that the community is “aging” – 14% of Coquitlam’s population is now over 65, which is 3% larger than 10 years previous. A large portion – 20.7% – of the community speaks Chinese (both Mandarin and Cantonese), Korean and Persian. Though the community has traditionally been a French language hub, the number of French speakers has declined and is now at 350 people. It is noted that 5% of the population does not speak one of Canada’s two official languages (6835 people).

Coquitlam is a well-educated, family-oriented community. There is a large percentage of university (30% of people over 15) and college graduates (21%). The average family size is 3, with lone parent households accounting for over 6,000 families.

About 2.2% of the population identifies as Aboriginal (Census term). The Kwikwetlem First Nation is located in the Coquitlam area.

Challenges and influences

Coquitlam is experiencing rapid development, which has accelerated since the completion of the Skytrain Millennium Line extension in late 2016. As with much of the lower mainland, this has resulted in less housing affordability, and a shift from single-family homes to more condominium high rises and townhomes. The Northeast sector in particular has seen massive housing development but little in the way of civic services and amenities. The City of Coquitlam and CPL are currently in discussion about future library service to this and other growing areas.

The global COVID-19 pandemic was a major challenge for CPL and our whole community in 2020. This will be discussed further in the upcoming COVID-19 section.

Strategic goals

CPL's Strategic Plan, 2019-2021, has four strategic goals and a number of objectives:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our plan includes an outcome metrics component in order to demonstrate the impact of our services and programs and to measure satisfaction with the Library. In July and August, we implemented a Customer Satisfaction Survey with 492 respondents. Key findings are summarized below:

Overall Results:

	2020 Results	2020 Range	2019 Results*
Satisfaction with Coquitlam Public Library Overall	75.1	66.9 – 87.4	89
Satisfaction with Meeting Community Needs	77.4	71.8-82.0	66.1
Connections between people, resources, and ideas	75.9	62.9-88.6	39
Awareness of services, programs, and partnerships	58.6	42.1-80.5	32.4

* Differences between the 2019 General Customer Survey and the 2020 Customer Satisfaction Survey make it difficult to compare the data directly. However, we were able to match questions from the 2019 survey to the Outcome Metrics in the Strategic Plan. We then calculated overall scores and compared them.

Additionally, in 2020 the CPL Board issued the following policy statement on Anti Racism and Social Equity:

- The CPL stands unequivocally in opposition to racism and racial violence against Black people, Indigenous people and people of colour. We acknowledge our responsibility to further social justice by confronting and addressing the history of systemic bias and inequity in libraries and in librarianship, which may be found in our collections, spaces, services, and traditional recruitment practices.

Since June 2020, Coquitlam Public Library (CPL) has had a Calls to Action staff group assigned to investigating and making recommendations to further the tenets of reconciliation at CPL.

Provincial priorities

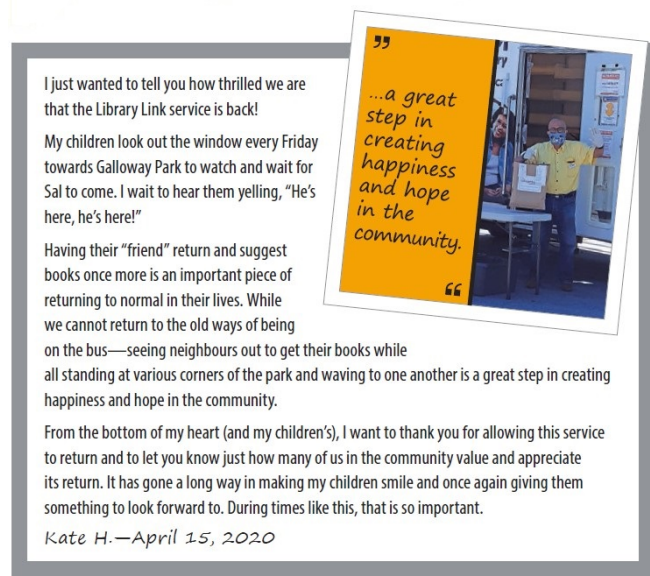
The operating and technology grants we received from the Province of BC were used to enhance and expand many of our programs, services, and collections. In particular, expanded WiFi and e-collections were made possible with this funding. During 2020, the following Library activities supported the provincial priorities:

Improving access for British Columbians

Strategic alignment: CPL Strategic Goal 2, Objective 2: Enhance digital inclusion in our community by offering programs related to digital literacy, future technology skills and making technology accessible; CPL Strategic Goal 4: Library everywhere

Activities:

- Expanded Library Link (mobile library) service from 4 to 7 days per week
 - Outputs: 7 days per week of service with 9 regular stops plus various additional deliveries to seniors' homes; 46,000 items circulated (compare 50,000 for 2019, which had almost 2 full months' more of service)
 - Outcomes: More residents able to safely access library materials during COVID-19; more community connections during a time when many families were feeling isolated
- Added WiFi capability to Library Link for use within the vehicle and to serve the surrounding areas at City parks and other locations.



- Outputs: 1 high-powered WiFi hub installed (August 2020); added 100 connections available to public
- Outcomes: free WiFi available to lower-income and remote neighbourhoods; safe to access during COVID-19
- Expanded WiFi capacity into the parking lots of our two branches
 - Outputs: 5 additional radios added (August 2020); 500 additional connections available to public
 - Outcomes: more access during COVID-19 restrictions (Library shutdown and reduced hours); increased physical distancing
- Added funding to digital collections (eBooks, eAudio, streaming video) to meet increased demand during COVID-19
 - Outputs: \$104,000 in additional funds spent on digital collections; circulation of e-materials up over 35% for all services
 - Outcomes: more Library customers able to access materials for learning and recreation during COVID-19 lockdowns; new Library users attracted by more robust collection; individuals quarantined or self-isolating due to COVID-19 had less need to travel or handle physical materials

Building capacity

Strategic alignment: CPL Strategic Goal 1, Objective 4: Invest in staff learning; CPL Strategic Goal 4, Objective 2: Improve online presence for Coquitlam Public Library

Activities:

- Pivoted programming – story times, homework help, language practice groups, book clubs, etc. – to online formats (video, streaming, and interactive) as a response to COVID-19 restrictions
 - Outputs: 479 online programs delivered (since April 2020); 31,136 attended (both live attendance and subsequent views)
 - Outcomes: increased learning opportunities for public; increased supports for school and home learning for families; increased community connectedness during COVID-19; increased capacity for staff to deliver programming in new formats; more options for access to programs going forward
- Launched new Online Branch, www.coqlibrary.ca, with enhanced accessibility features, clearer wayfinding and more services including online library card applications and resource tutorials. Replaced outdated website.
 - Outputs: 1 website replaced and relaunched as an Online Branch; usage doubled from 30,000 to 60,000 page-views in the first month after launching (August 2020).
 - Outcomes: digital collections and other online resources easier to access; more ways for Library staff to interact with public and gather feedback



Advancing citizen engagement

Strategic alignment: CPL Strategic Goal 2, Objective 1: Engage the public in community conversations around public policy, critical thinking and knowledge sharing to prepare for the future

Activities:

- Hosted an Accessibility Conversation with a SPARC BC grant to discuss new proposed legislation and provide public input to the provincial government. We had a very diverse group of participants representing a variety of accessibility concerns including seniors, and people with physical disabilities, mental or learning disabilities. Our staff engaged community partners to offer supports to those with autism and other participation needs. Recommendations from our staff included: asking for accommodation needs when registering participants for programs, improving the ingress/egress of our programs in general, and exploring more community conversations in the future.
 - Outputs: 1 community conversation conducted; 25 attended; feedback provided to Province of BC
 - Outcomes: citizens engaged in public issues of accessibility; Library staff identified strategies to welcome people of all abilities to our programs and spaces

Enhancing governance

Strategic alignment: CPL Strategic Goal 1: Excellence in Governance and Service

Activities:

- CPL was nominated for the Tri Cities Chamber of Commerce 2020 Business Excellence Awards for Non-Profit of the Year and was voted as a top 3 Finalist by the business community
 - Outputs: 1 nomination and Finalist position accepted; 1 video showcasing CPL's achievements created and broadcast to hundreds of award ceremony attendees
 - Outcomes: the award nomination raised the profile of CPL in the business community and gave us additional marketing opportunities

Additional reporting for 2020

Technology Grant – Final Report

There have been no substantial changes since we submitted the Interim Report. See attached.

COVID-19

On March 16, 2020, our Board decided to temporarily shut down CPL, consistent with closures of public services across the province. Our entire staff, including management, stayed home for 2 weeks in self-isolation due to a family member COVID diagnosis early in the closure. However, during this time, with no infrastructure yet in place to work from home, our staff improvised to respond remotely to customer voicemails, emails, and social media messages. Management immediately began to develop plans to resume services and enable staff to work remotely more effectively, as well as bring staff back to our branches with physical distancing protocols in place. By April 1, a skeleton staff was able to return to our branches. By mid-April we resumed partial service via curbside pickup, and on June 22nd we reopened our branches to the public with slightly reduced hours. We believe we were the first public library in the lower mainland to do so. By November we resumed full open hours to the public.

Service changes

Fines and fees

On March 16, the CPL suspended all fines and fees for overdue materials due to the COVID emergency, in 2021 the CPL Board approved extending the suspension until December 31, 2021. This was done when our branches, including book drops, were closed during the initial 2-week shut-down. We decided to continue the practice for the duration of the pandemic in order to alleviate concerns of the public who did not want to travel to a branch, or were unable to do so due to quarantine or self-isolation restrictions. This has also been a time of extreme financial difficulty for many families, and eliminating fines has been one way to help ease the burden on the community.

Quarantined materials

In March, we set up a system to quarantine all materials for a 3-day period after they were returned. This was based on the best information we had at the time to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 and to alleviate the fears of the public about handling shared materials. Since then, studies have suggested that the risk of transmission via library materials is very low, and many libraries have reduced the quarantine period to one day or have eliminated quarantine completely. In late 2020, CPL did a small survey of our customers and found that most preferred we continue to keep a 3-day quarantine. For now, we continue with this practice, but will likely revisit it in the coming months.

Curbside Pick-up

The first physical service we resumed was filling customer requests for materials via curbside pick-up. This involved changing procedures from our standard self-pick-up model to pre-checkout and pre-bag materials, calling customers to inform them when their items were ready, and respond to customers on-demand when they arrived outside a branch. We issued staff additional equipment including cell phones, bags, gloves, and masks to facilitate this process. Though labour-intensive at first, eventually we were able to automate and streamline the process. While most customers are now comfortable with self-pick-up, curbside remains an option for those who want it, and we expect to be able to offer it as an additional service post-COVID-19.

Grab Bags

While curbside pick-up filled the public's need for specific items that they requested from our online catalogue, many preferred to browse or discover things serendipitously. As this was not possible while our branches were closed to the public, we started offering Grab Bags – a collection of 5 items on a theme, e.g., "Cozy Mystery" or "Children's dinosaur books and movies". These became wildly popular, and our staff had a hard time filling the demand at first. Age-appropriate bags for children and teens were especially well-used, with many parents expressing their gratitude during a time when their kids were not at school and needed additional learning materials as well as non-screen recreation. Though our branches are now open, we will continue offering this service as long as there is demand.

Digital collections

As reported above under the provincial priority of Improving Access for British Columbians, we were able to use part of our provincial grant as well as some reserve funds to increase our e-collections by 20%. During the COVID-19 restrictions, use of standard eBook, eAudiobook and eMagazine checkouts were up an average of 35% percent over the previous year. Usage of streaming services Hoopla and Kanopy were up 87% and 229%, respectively. We expect this pattern to continue.

Virtual programs

As discussed under the Building Capacity provincial priority, during the pandemic our staff have pivoted most of our programming from in-person to online. Using various platforms (including Zoom, Facebook, and YouTube) staff have continued to offer innovative programs that meet our strategic objectives and keep us and our community connected to each other. Some examples:

"Thank you! Thank you! Our family is so lucky to have you as a resource during this challenging time. We have used your efficient curb side pickup and accessed ebooks through your website. Our 3 year-old is now enjoying storytime with her favourite librarians on YouTube. It is really making a difference for us and we are so grateful. Keep up the great work and ingenuity!!" Christine C., May 3, 2020

- Story Times for Babies, Toddlers, Dads & Tots
- Multicultural Story Times in Korean, Farsi, Mandarin/Cantonese
- STEM Science Experiments at Home
- Sphero Coding for Kids
- Homework Help Club
- Teen Advisory Council
- Super Fun Family Trivia Night
- Online Chess Club
- Virtual Book Club
- Psychology Series: Stress & Relaxation; Sleep Hygiene; Cognitive Triangle
- Financial Literacy: Planning for a Reduced Income; Budgeting 101; The Truth About Credit
- English Practice Groups

As we move forward and expect COVID-19 restrictions to eventually be reduced, our staff are planning a hybrid model to be able to reach people both in-person and remotely. We also have seen engagement with new audiences through the online platforms, and see a real growth potential for our reach in the years to come. We are currently working on expanding staff capacity to deliver impactful online programs as part of our ongoing core services.

Outdoor programs

Outdoor programs have long been part of our summer programming activities, but during COVID-19 we greatly expanded them. When public health orders have allowed, we have been able to deliver outdoor family story times at many of our City's parks and other outdoor facilities, as well as outside our Poirier branch. We have also been leading Story Walks from our Poirier branch. Feedback from families has been very positive. Staff are recommending that beyond COVID-19 we continue to seek these opportunities – to get out into more neighbourhoods and enhance learning with physical literacy.

Library Link

As mentioned in the section on the Improving Access for British Columbians provincial priority, during COVID-19 we have expanded our Library Link mobile library service to 7 days a week (up from 4). A Letter of Understanding with our union, in effect during the pandemic, has enabled us to reallocate staff to this service. This allows us to get materials and WiFi service to more neighbourhoods and to those who have transportation or other barriers to visiting a Library branch.

Marketing

As our services have been in constant flux since the onset of the pandemic, keeping the public informed has been a challenge. Our Marketing and Communications department staff have been busy with constant signage changes, press releases, website and social media updates, as well as mail-outs,

print and online advertising, and internal staff messaging. We reallocated a significant amount of operating funds to support these efforts (25% increase).

Partnerships

Many of our partners have been instrumental in helping us get the word out, and in turn we have been helping to promote our partners' programs where we can. We have leveraged our partnerships to provide a greater variety of programming. Some of our most effective partnerships during the pandemic include:

- City of Coquitlam
- Credit Counselling Society
- Douglas College
- ISS of BC
- Mosaic BC
- School District 43
- SHARE Family and Community Services
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
- Tri Cities Local Immigration Partnership
- Tri-Cities Seniors' Action Society
- WorkBC

One of our biggest partnership successes was the Holiday Hellos program. In order to address social isolation, our staff proposed a community project for Coquitlam children to send "Holiday Hellos" to seniors in our community who might be especially vulnerable to isolation over the holidays during COVID-19. We were absolutely overwhelmed by the response. We received over 2,500 unique "Hellos" including letters, cards, and art projects.

Many individual children and families participated. As well, we partnered with at least 16 public and private elementary schools who enthusiastically offered to bring this project into their classrooms, as well as multiple senior-living residences and care centers who received the packages. We also partnered with the City of Coquitlam's Meals for Seniors service, which enabled us to deliver to an even wider range of seniors living in individual homes.

Emma, one of the participating children, wrote, "Have a wonderful holiday at your house. I wish [you're] safe and feel okay. And I wish this little hello can bring a little happiness to your family." Our staff reported that this project "was an absolute joy to work on" – we feel that we were also able to share that joy with our contributors and recipients.

Supporting healthcare workers

With our Innovation Hub at City Centre branch closed to the public due to COVID-19 we began to seek other ways to use our resources to help in the fight against COVID-19. One of our City Councilors gave us the idea of using our 3D printers to create ear savers to alleviate the pressure healthcare workers



experience on their ears when they have to wear a mask all day. We partnered with the BC Community 3D Association (BCC3D), a grassroots, volunteer-based organization dedicated to providing PPE for health care providers, first responders and front line workers. Library staff printed nearly 3,500 ear savers that were donated to BCC3D and other organizations and individuals.

Additionally, we heard from several healthcare workers that they found it challenging to work with the anonymity of a mask and extensive PPE, especially those who work with children. We started a program to use our button-makers to create buttons with healthcare workers' photos on them so patients could see their smiling faces that were hidden by their masks.

All the letters of thanks we received made us feel incredibly proud to have made things a little easier for our front line workers.

Budget impacts

In 2020, CPL spent approximately \$107,000 on COVID-related costs including PPE, Plexiglas, cleaning supplies, and equipment to allow remote work. We also lost approximately \$110,000 in revenue in 2020 from various sources, including: overdue fines and fees, meeting room rentals, vending machine sales, book sales and other fundraising activities. We spent an additional \$104,000 on digital collections (eBooks, eAudio, streaming video) to meet the increased demand from the public during the shutdown. We were able to cover some of these expenses with our reserves, and we have subsequently received a Community Support and Recovery Plan grant from the City of Coquitlam to help offset these continued costs.

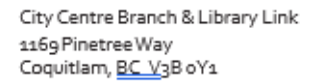
Staffing impacts

At CPL, our management and union have worked together to minimize the impacts of COVID-19 on our staff and keep as many people working as possible. During the initial shutdown, all staff were paid at 100% of their pre-COVID core wages. We then entered into a Letter of Understanding (LOU) on April 17th that will be in effect until the State of Emergency in BC is lifted. Under this, about half of our staff were temporarily furloughed and paid at 75% of their core wages. Since we re-opened our branches to the public in June, all staff who want to be working have been working their full core hours. On-call casual staff were also reinstated as needed between June and November. The Letter of Understanding allows CPL to utilize staff in a much more flexible way to adjust to the demands of the COVID-19 restrictions, including different duties and hours of work.

Summary

2020 was certainly a tumultuous year and since mid-March CPL has been in a pattern of continually adapting to the changes brought on by the global pandemic. Health orders, public perception, and staff well-being have been in constant flux. With the challenges, we have also seized on significant opportunities to improve and expand our services, and have taken a leadership role in supporting our community through these difficult times. The outpouring of support and gratitude from our community has been overwhelming and encourages us to keep striving for excellence in the year to come.





2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: COQUITLAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount: \$32,133

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.) Library Link WiFi Hardware	Library Link outfitted with Wifi radio and bonding appliance, with 4 rogers SIM cards	Increased the ability for customers Stats collection was not available until September 24, 2020.	Increased accessible internet connections support BC’s Strategic Plan Strategy #1, Improving Access for British Columbians	Purchased and installed on the Library Link	N/A	June 2020: Researched and determined vendor Aug 6, 2020: system went live	\$12,031.62, plus hotspot sign (\$390.88) and ongoing annual maintenance of approximately \$1,300/year. 5 year hardware maintenance for other equipment included in capital cost	Staff time, ongoing annual maintenance and connection fee of approximately \$1,300 / year	Added 100 connections available to public 200 MB/s internet connection.
Connectivity (internet speed, connection capacity, etc.) Public Wifi Extension	WiFi has been improved and the range has been extended to the parking lots of City Centre and Poirier branches. 1 indoor radio and 4 outdoor radios to expand outdoor Wifi coverage	Increased the range of the public WiFi into the parking lots of both library locations System reports back 14 days, preventing us from retrieving stats on specific radios	Increased accessible internet connections support BC’s Strategic Plan Strategy #1, Improving Access for British Columbians	Purchased and installed in both branches	N/A	June 2020: Researched and determined vendor July 20, 2020: system went live	\$24,654.48 5 year hardware maintenance included in capital cost	Staff time CPL Contribution: \$4,943.98	Added 500 connections available to public, with a maximum of 200MB/s internet connection shared between all Public systems. No additional bandwidth added



Poirier Branch
575 Poirier Street
Coquitlam, BC V3J 6A9

City Centre Branch & Library Link
1169 Pinetree Way
Coquitlam, BC V3B 6Y1

To whom it may concern,

In 2020, as with all libraries and organizations, Coquitlam Public Library (CPL) experienced an incredible impact on its operations by COVID-19. Despite the challenges that COVID-19 presented, CPL did move ahead with utilizing the 2020 Library Technology Grant, and focused on Strategy 1 of BC's Strategic Plan for Public Libraries: Improving Access for British Columbians.

CPL's first project was to install a public wifi hotspot into our Library Link, which is a mobile library vehicle. The Library Link connects the library service to underserved areas of our community, averaging 9 stops per week. These stops allow for the link to deliver and collect books, have programming in the community, and increase the connections that the library has with the population of Coquitlam. The public wifi hotspot that was installed brings the free internet connection that CPL offers into those areas of the community that may not have easy access.

CPL then moved to boost its public wifi capacity at the two branches, Poirier and City Centre, in order to increase the range into the parking lots. This allowed customers to continue utilizing free internet while the libraries were closed, and during the gradual reopening with reduced physical capacity.

This grant has had an immediate and positive impact on our community's ability to access both the internet and the online collections of the library.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ryan Jamieson", is written over a faint, stylized graphic of a bookshelf.

Ryan Jamieson
Director, Services & Facilities
Coquitlam Public Library

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