

## INTRODUCTION

The City of North Vancouver (the “City”) is a small community located at the base of the mountains on the North Shore. It is bounded to the south by the Burrard Inlet, and the District of North Vancouver to the east and west. With a land area of approximately 12 square kilometres, the City supports a population of 57,325 people. Due to its central location on the North Shore, relatively high density, transit accessibility with a SeaBus connection, and proximity to Vancouver’s central business district, the City is recognized as a Regional Town Centre within the Metro Vancouver region.

The City of North Vancouver’s population continues to flourish, and grew by 353 residents (0.6%) between 2018 and 2019. Recent census documents tell us that 67% of the population speaks English or French, with 32% identifying English as a second language. The most predominant languages after English are Farsi, Tagalog, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Korean and Spanish. We have a large contingent of newcomers in the community due its relative affordability. Settlement support and services are in high demand. Other trends show that the population is aging, over 16% of the population is over the age of 65 and it is predicted that this percentage will increase. At the same time, there are more young people than ever and this population is growing at one of the fastest rates in Metro Vancouver.

The City’s Official Community Plan (OCP), adopted in 2014, provides direction while balancing the diverse needs of the community. City Council recently completed a Strategic Plan to complement the OCP and provide focus and direction for its current four-year term. Key issues in the community include mobility, transportation, sustainability, access to child care, access to affordable housing and social connectedness. Our library actively seeks to support municipal priorities and strategies.

North Vancouver City Library (NVCL) is a 36,000 square foot single-site library system, located in the heart of the City. Situated on the civic plaza across from City Hall, in one of the densest neighbourhoods of the City, it is easily accessible by many City residents. It is within walking distance for many residents and school children; 58% of our daily customers walk to the facility. We are located close to a thriving elementary school and in the midst of a number of condominium developments and a busy business corridor on Lonsdale Avenue. We have many daily visitors of all ages, who come to the library as their community hub.

In 2017, the library Board and staff undertook in-depth research on major drivers of change in our community and environment, and engaged with stakeholders and residents about their library use, needs and aspirations. The result was a new mission, vision and strategic priorities, captured in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan.

**Mission:** We foster the love of learning in all its forms, connecting people to ideas, experiences and one another.

**Vision:** We will be the welcoming, vibrant hub of a thriving community by empowering growth, sparking curiosity, fostering creativity and innovation and galvanizing community potential.

### **Strategic Priorities:**

- Inspire Learning, Discovery & Creation
- Create Vibrant Spaces
- Honour Indigenous Perspectives
- Enhance Access & Inclusion

### **Strategic Goals and Accomplishments**

2019 was the second year of our four-year Strategic Plan. In 2018, our work focused on foundational initiatives to lay the groundwork for future projects, and now this year we are able to track progress on our priorities.

Key accomplishments in 2019 included:

#### **Inspire Learning, Discovery & Creation**

- Launched the **North Shore Authors Collection** in collaboration with North Vancouver District Public Library and West Vancouver Memorial Library
- Launched **exam invigilation services** to support self-directed learners
- Piloted **STEAM programming** to foster and stimulate numeracy, design, creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking skills

#### **Create Vibrant Spaces**

- Relocated self-service checkouts and removed the wall separating the café from the library to form a **new community living room** near the main entrance
- Updated **meeting room policies and procedures** to clarify guiding principles and ensure usage is aligned with operational needs

#### **Honour Indigenous Perspectives**

- Expanded **community programming** to increase representation of Indigenous creators, presenters and content
- Became a member of the **Sema7maka canoe family**, part of Pulling Together Canoe Journeys, which seeks to build relationships between Indigenous youth and service agencies
- Conducted a **Coast Salish weaving** workshop for staff and trustees with Chief Janice George of Squamish Nation

#### **Enhance Access & Inclusion**

- Promoted **cross-cultural connections** by distributing four Library Small Grants to residents as seed money for programs and initiatives to promote learning, understanding and friendship
- Inventoried **all languages spoken by staff** to improve our ability to deliver services in other languages
- Initiated monthly **visits to the Lookout Shelter** to delivery library services and decrease barriers to access for homeless and vulnerable individuals
- Connected with the **Seniors Go Bus** to promote their service and collaborate to bring seniors to the Library

IMPROVING ACCESS: SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Provincial priority: Fostering equitable access to information and services

*Connectedness and engagement are vital to the well-being of communities. Despite the library's central location and 72 open hours, many community members struggle to access our services. The North Vancouver City Library aspires to improve access to library services for those who are challenged by distance, transportation, disability or poverty.*

**Library goal that supports the provincial priority:**

**Strategic Priority:** Enhance access and inclusion

**2019 Goal:** Develop services for homeless and other vulnerable populations to decrease barriers to access.

**Program/service that supports the provincial priority:**

North Vancouver City Library's Warming Station began in fall 2018 as a pilot project with the North Shore Homelessness Task Force. Given that the local shelter requires people to leave at 8 a.m., the Warming Station provides a weekly dedicated space where our community's vulnerable people can come to get a warm beverage and snack during inclement weather, and at the same time connect with library and outreach staff from local service agencies through intentional programming.

This initiative was conceived in response to the lack of warm, dry places for individuals to go during the day, especially during cold weather. Since the library is already recognized as a welcoming place for everyone, it made sense to augment our service with a designated Warming Station.

The space is hosted by library staff and volunteers who have received training on respectful behaviour, de-escalation techniques, and empathy-driven approaches to homelessness. The Warming Station is open every Friday from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. starting in November and ending in March.

Library staff have also begun to visit the Lookout Housing + Health Society shelter on a monthly basis in addition to continuing biweekly visits to the local food bank. At these outreach visits, staff deliver donated books, sign people up for library cards, and promote library services and programs including our Warming Station.

**Partnerships that support this priority:**

The Warming Station began as a partnership among North Vancouver City Library, the North Shore Homelessness Task Force, and the Salvation Army.

As the program enters its second year, we have added additional partners including:

- Lookout Housing + Health Society
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- North Shore Alliance Church.

Further, we have been asking individuals about what type of programs they would like to see in the Warming Station space. Based on their feedback, we are planning workshops with additional partners for 2020, including:

- Canada Revenue Agency (for income assistance and tax filing help)
- WorkBC (for employment services)

### **Outcomes:**

In 2018-2019, we connected with 51 individuals who visited our Warming Station. In 2019-2020 to date (November 2019 – January 2020), those numbers have already increased dramatically to 175 individuals. During our outreach visits to the local shelter and food bank, we connected with over 40 community members in 2019-2020.

Outcomes of our work include:

- Repairing and strengthening relationships with individuals experiencing homelessness
- Deepening partnerships with community agencies
- Increased awareness of the information and service needs of vulnerable residents
- Decreasing barriers to library service
- Connecting individuals with resources and programs they need

We have received a positive response from the public in response to this programming. One food bank user who “*didn’t want to do anything with libraries anymore*” is now attending computer classes at the Library and regularly visiting the Warming Station after repeatedly hearing about them during food bank outreach visits.

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## **DEVELOPING SKILLS: STEAM PROGRAMMING**

Provincial priority: Developing skills and knowledge

*Key skills for learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century include creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking. The North Vancouver City Library aspires to empower discovery and inspire creativity, weaving 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills into library programs that inspire, motivate and support skills development and application.*

**Library goal that supports the provincial priority:**

**Strategic Priority:** Inspire Learning, Discovery and Creation

**Library 2019 Goal:** Pilot STEAM programming to foster and stimulate numeracy, design, creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking skills

**Service that supports the provincial priority:**

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) is an approach to education that integrates these topics into hands-on, fun experiential learning. STEAM programs help children develop needed and valuable skills like problem solving and critical thinking. They also help stimulate creativity and curiosity.

As recognized by the BC Ministry of Education, career opportunities in BC's thriving technology sector continue to grow at a rapid rate<sup>1</sup>. By introducing children and their families to STEAM learning at a young age, North Vancouver City Library helps bridge the gap to make these topics fun and accessible for all, and prepares children for possible futures in these growing fields.

Not only are we inspiring learning and discovery by offering relevant and modern learning opportunities, free STEAM programming at our library also enhances access and inclusion in our community. Many of the tools and projects we are able to offer at the library may be prohibitively expensive for an individual family to purchase. By providing access to STEAM education, the library brings together children and families from economically diverse communities through unique programs that include children and their caregivers, helping to integrate STEAM learning into families.

Some of the fun, hands on STEAM programs facilitated by library staff and community partners included:

- Slime Making
- Building Bristlebots
- Marshmallow Engineering
- Computer Coding with Scratch
- Paper Airplane Challenge
- The Science of Taste: Oreo Cookie Challenge
- Egg-Drop Engineering Challenge
- In The Garden storytime.

We also hosted a special "Summer of STEAM" program series for children of all ages. Through this series we developed and piloted STEAM workshops on Geometric Bubbles, Oobleck Fun, Keva Planks, Paper Spinners, Circuit Flowers, Lego WeDo, Scratch Jr., and more.

### **Partnerships that support the priority:**

At North Vancouver City Library we believe partnerships are a powerful tool to share expertise, and to form connections, build relationships, and grow community. In 2019 we created a calendar of inspiring and creative STEAM programs by leveraging partnerships and our community's expert educators to offer enriched and meaningful learning opportunities. Our partners included:

- Code Mobile Canada
- UBC's Geering Up
- C3D Labs
- Carson Graham Secondary School (School District 44)
- Zen Maker Lab
- Vancouver Aquarium

### **Outcomes:**

There is a high demand from our community for STEAM programming. Throughout 2019 we offered 397 technology related programs and had 1,703 attendees. Of these programs, we offered nearly 20 unique one-off STEAM programs, as well as on-going STEAM programs such as our LEGO Robotics Club and LEGO Building Club.

As a result of participating in these programs:

- Children are challenged to use and extend their problem solving skills
- Participants must collaborate and share information to overcome the challenges they encounter
- Parents and caregivers learn skills and methods to support 21<sup>st</sup> century literacies
- Family members engage and learn together, building inter-generational bonds
- Families without access to fee-based programming or special equipment have the opportunity to encounter STEAM concepts and explore interests in science, technology, engineering, arts and math

In addition, offering STEAM programs shows our community we are responsive to their needs and interests.

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## COLLABORATING ON SHARED GOALS: NORTH SHORE AUTHORS COLLECTION

Provincial priority: Working together

*North Vancouver City Library values working together. We work in collaboration and partnership, recognizing we are stronger together. We work toward common goals and collective impact while building on our unique strengths. We believe in the power of partnerships.*

**Library goal that supports the provincial priority:**

**Priority:** Inspire learning, discovery and creation.

**2019 Goal:** In conjunction with the other North Shore libraries, launch local authors programming and collection to promote and celebrate creators in our community.

**Program that supports the provincial priority:**

Each of the three North Shore libraries (North Vancouver City Library, North Vancouver District Public Library and West Vancouver Memorial Library) has independently collected the works of local authors. Recognizing a mutual desire to showcase local talent while streamlining the work of engaging with authors, many of whom are independent, the libraries decided to build on the success of the venerable North Shore Writers Festival by launching a North Shore Authors Collection.

In 2019, the collection went forward on a pilot basis with four objectives:

1. To raise the profile of North Shore authors by giving them the opportunity to have their print works prominently displayed for a defined period of time;
2. To give community members the opportunity to discover local authors and their work;
3. To give authors and community members the opportunity to celebrate local writing and writers; and
4. To facilitate staff interactions with independent authors requesting to have their work included in Library collections.

As a result of this work, a physical collection was collaboratively acquired, catalogued and prominently displayed in each of the library systems. A gala event to launch the collection was planned. Follow-on programming opportunities featuring panels of participating authors were a third component.

The project was launched in early spring 2019 with a marketing campaign to solicit local authors to apply to have their materials included in the inaugural collection. The collections were made available in October 2019 after a gala “unveiling” celebration, and author panels and book sales were organized at all three North Shore libraries to conclude the first year of what is expected to be an ongoing service program.

### **Partnerships that support the provincial priority:**

The North Shore Authors Collection (NSAC) project was supported by a networks of partners including:

- North Vancouver City Library
- North Vancouver District Public Library
- West Vancouver Memorial Library
- North Shore Writer’s Association
- Friends of the Library groups at all three libraries
- Authors from across the North Shore

### **Outcomes achieved:**

Public response to the North Shore Authors Collection initiative was enthusiastic. We received suggestions for 123 distinct titles for the NSAC collection, submitted by 75 authors. The majority of the titles were new to the three North Shore libraries, and at least half of the authors had never previously approached the library to have their work(s) included in the collections. The gala launch event in November 2019 was a huge success with over 140 people in attendance.

The key outcomes of the project so far include:

- Strengthened interdepartmental relationships between the three North Shore library systems.
- Streamlined and consistent policies and procedures for working with local authors and for handling and treatment of materials.
- Improved collaboration opportunities with local authors and the North Shore Writer’s Association.
- Establishment of an impactful and on-going program that provides the community with exposure to local authors – and local authors with the opportunity to develop their passion for writing, providing perspective, and telling stories.

Providing an open and engaging service for local authors to participate in having their works available in the public library was one of the key benefits of this project.

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## **ENHANCING GOVERNANCE: COMMUNITY REPORT**

Provincial priority: Enhancing governance

*North Vancouver City Library strives to create effective, strategic and inclusive communications and advocacy that tells the library story, demonstrates our community and regional impact and sustains funding.*

### **Library goal that supports the provincial priority:**

**Priority:** Sustain our fundamentals, the resources, infrastructure and activities that support everything we do.

**2019 Goal:** Create a new annual report template that tells our stories and demonstrates impact.

### **Program that supports the provincial priority:**

Until 2019, North Vancouver City Library's annual report was a basic and underwhelming snapshot of the work our library staff completes on a daily and annual basis.

In reimagining our annual report, our aim was to not only communicate the good work that happens in and around the library, but also to spotlight the initiatives advancing the priorities outlined in our 2018-2021 Strategic Plan while demonstrating the impact of our work, acknowledging the contributions of donors and partners, and building support for our services.

With broad support from our library Board, the report was transformed from an overview of our financial health into an inspiring collection of stories about our library and its community. We highlighted four personalized stories associated with our core strategic initiatives and included a feature dedicated to our partners on the North Shore who help us in achieving our goals. The *2018 Report to our Community* was a chance to speak directly to our users, to inform them of our progress on our Strategic Plan, and spark curiosity about all of the things a 21<sup>st</sup> Century library does and is.

The process of envisioning the report started with a look at our proudest achievements of the previous year:

- With input from the library Board and the senior leadership team, our communications team created a colorful infographic to highlight our most powerful and surprising metrics: we answered more than 40,000 research questions, read 300 books to babies, booked our Creation Station 1,200 times and increased our seed collection to 2,800 packets.
- We honored a longstanding donor with a feature about how — at 96 years old — she still sees the library as a place of wonder, curiosity and joy.
- We showed readers the nearly 50 kilometers of routes ridden by the library book bike, Spokes 'n' Words, and how the library is so much more than a collection of books in a building.
- We shared the success of a mountain biking podcast that is recorded each month on site and how our various Creation Stations make storytelling in any medium accessible to all.
- We acknowledged the work we have done and the work we still need to do to honour the Indigenous peoples whose land we now share with a staff reading list of nine must-read books.

The challenges of completely redesigning this piece meant focusing the voices of many into a single, unified narrative that celebrated our achievements and acknowledged where we currently sit on the path to realizing our current Strategic Plan. In addition, we needed to spend time documenting our community — interviewing our feature subjects, photographing library events — in order to present this piece in an upscale, magazine-like format.



### **Partnerships that support the priority:**

In developing the annual report template, North Vancouver City Library sought examples from other libraries including the Whistler Public Library, Vancouver Public Library, New York Public Library and various university academic libraries and looked to other non-profit and community organizations about how they tell their success stories. We were fortunate that we had a clear vision in mind for transforming our annual report into a report to our community that invited curiosity and dialogue about our library initiatives and programs.

### **Outcomes achieved:**

We distributed 250 print copies of the *2018 Report to our Community* to library customers, library Board trustees, City Councillors, current and future donors, and our partner organizations. The feedback on the revamped design has been very positive. People have enjoyed seeing and reading about the variety of work the library undertakes and accomplishes. The infographic has been especially valuable in illustrating some of the expected and surprising metrics the library tracks each year.

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### *LIBRARIES IN ACTION – SUCCESS STORIES FROM BC’S PUBLIC LIBRARIES*

#### **Café Connection – A New Living Room for the Community**

North Vancouver City Library took down the wall separating the library from a poorly-used café, opening a shared community living room space in September of 2019. The space on the library side was a loud space dominated by self-service checkouts, while the café on the other side struggled with its relative invisibility to people in the library. With increasing demand for seating and space within the library, and a shared interest in facilitating ease of access to the café, we collaborated to invest in a shared space filled with tables, chairs and lounge seating available equally to café and library customers.

One of the fundamental roles of a public library as a contemporary community institution is to be a “third space” – a place where people gather outside of home or work. Since the opening, the Café Connection has emerged as a busy, vibrant and dynamic hub of the library and community. Customers have been excited about the transformation. A staff member recently reported: *“Just had a customer who hadn’t been here in a while, but was here for the program tonight, stop to say how wonderful it was to see the coffee shop and library integrated. He says our community living room looks great!”*

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### **Pulling Together Canoe Journey**

Link: <https://pullingtogether.ca/>

During the summer of 2019, North Vancouver City Library was honoured to be invited to join the Sema7maka Canoe Family—a partnership among several local public service agencies, such as the Integrated First Nations Unit, the Squamish Nation and the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. Sema7maka is also a part of the Pulling Together Canoe Society—an agency devoted to enhancing understanding and strengthening future relations between public service agencies and Indigenous peoples by canoeing the traditional highway. The society comes together once per year on the shores of one of BC’s many beautiful coasts to embark on a ten-day canoe journey to connect and heal as one.

In 2019, Head of Community Program and Service Development Mikale Fenton had the pleasure of participating in Sema7maka’s inaugural ten-day canoe journey along the shores of BC’s Sunshine Coast alongside Indigenous community members and youth, law enforcement officials, and public service agency members from organizations including the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Crown Prosecution Service. In October 2019, the library had the honour of hosting the Sema7maka Canoe Sleeping Ceremony, a longstanding and cherished tradition of our partners in the Squamish Nation and the Tsleil-Waututh Nation to formally close the canoe season and put Sema7maka to sleep.

By joining the Canoe Family, North Vancouver City Library has committed to fostering connection and meaningful relationships with our local First Nations, and our community as a whole.

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## SUMMARY

Following the launch of a new strategic plan in January 2018 and a lot of foundational work initiated in its first year, 2019 was a year to deepen our practice and move forward on our priorities.

The invitation to become part of the Sema7maka Canoe Family was a highlight for the Library in 2019, resulting from steady work by many staff to make connections, build relationships, take responsibility for our learning and work toward reconciliation. Hosting and participating in the sleeping ceremony for Sema7maka on the plaza outside our Library felt like a huge step in acknowledging the territory on which the Library operates, while at the same time underlining for us the gravity of the commitment we made in joining a Canoe Family.

The opening of the Café Connection was another highlight. With creativity and goodwill we transformed a loud, transactional library space and a tired, underused cafe into a comfortable, inviting community living room – and at the same time improved service for library customers while benefitting a local business.

Foundational work continued in 2019 as Library staff worked with City staff and consultants to understand and identify opportunities to improve library service in the Lower Lonsdale neighbourhood and other more-distant parts of the City as well as imagine how the layout of the library needs to evolve to meet the community's current and emerging needs and address persistent issues around noise, comfort and usability.

As the community continues to grow, and as use of the library continues to shift from short, transactional visits to longer stays for learning and community connection, we are experiencing pressure on our capacity to meet community needs and expectations. New or expanded services like digital literacy programming, seniors and accessible services, and community-based library service delivery are in high demand, but will be difficult to achieve without additional resources.

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<sup>i</sup> BC Ministry of Education (2019). K-12 students learn how STEAM connects to careers. Retrieved from Ministry of education website: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2019EDUC0092-002063>