



2018 PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANTS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Burnaby Public Library empowers the community to engage with and share stories, ideas and information. Our dream is a welcoming community where all people can explore, learn and connect. Our four library branches offer books, magazines, DVDs, audiobooks and other materials in a dozen different languages, including innovative collections such as My First Language Kits, which provide families with materials and information to support home language development and cultural identity in the early years. Through our website, Burnaby residents can download free e-books and audiobooks, stream independent films and music, and access online magazines and newspapers.

Our innovative programming for children, teens and adults provides opportunities for more people in our community to interact with ideas and with each other, and seeks to excite and engage people's curiosity and imagination. We offer in-person programs at all four of our branches, including storytimes for babies, toddlers and families, Man in the Moon for male caregivers, and bilingual ASL storytimes. The Library is a gateway to literacy and online learning, and we provide opportunities for learning in-person through classes and individual help, and online through databases that help people learn a language or develop software, business and creative skills.

BPL's branches are important public spaces, meeting places and centres for discovery and dialogue. We provide access to computers and Wi-Fi, and our expert staff help people access the information that they need for work and study, and to navigate essential services online. Library staff work outside our branches too. The Home Library and Accessible Service Department provides personalized service and an exclusive collection of library materials to patrons who are unable to come to our branches due to health reasons or a physical disability; we visit private residences, care facilities, assisted living spaces and other institutions, and through services such as NNELS offer materials in alternative formats to clients who are print-disabled. BPL offers services to newcomers to Burnaby through partnerships with immigrant service organizations, and through our Library Champions program, which trains community members to connect newcomers with library programs and services. And our pop-up libraries, outreach van and Burnaby Public Library enable staff to reach community members at neighbourhood events, schools, farmers' markets and other community gathering spaces.

In 2018, 1.8 million people visited Burnaby Public Library branches. We know from the public, via conversations and via our comment card program, about the importance of the library as a place of solace and of refuge – as the city becomes more densified and private space shrinks, people are finding the space and community connection that they need at the public library.

People are using the library for a variety of purposes:

- to borrow materials – 3 million items were borrowed in 2018;
- we signed up 23,000 new library members;
- to find information and for research and study – our librarians responded to more than 223,000 information requests;
- to attend a program – we delivered 1700 programs to 62,000 people.

Guided by a board of citizen volunteers appointed by City Council, the Library is an integral part of the services offered to Burnaby residents. These dedicated board members work to ensure that the Library supports the City's goals and contributes to making Burnaby an outstanding place to live, learn, work, invest and play.

About Burnaby

Burnaby is the third most populated urban centre in British Columbia with more than 233,000 residents. It is a diverse community within a rapidly growing metropolitan area. The Burnaby of today is characterized by high density residential areas and major commercial town centres blended with an abundance of parks and dedicated green space, rapid transit, high technology research and business parks, comprehensive industrial estates and major post-secondary institutions.

Burnaby's population is growing:

- The population increased by 4.3% from 2011 to 2016 (232,755), and the *Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy* projects that Burnaby's population will reach 277,700 in 2021 and 345,000 in 2041;
- From 2011 to 2016, Burnaby's senior population grew by 19%;
- Burnaby's Indigenous population grew by 27% in the same time-period.

More Burnaby residents are immigrants than are non-immigrants:

- In 2016, just over 50% of Burnaby residents were immigrants;
- 14.1% of Burnaby's population immigrated to Canada during the previous 10 years;
- A majority of Burnaby residents (56.4%) have a mother tongue other than English, and 34.6% most often spoke a language other than English or French at home.

While Burnaby's diversity and the variety of languages spoken in Burnaby is one of this city's greatest assets, it does pose a significant challenge for the library – in terms of collections, programming and staffing. BPL is fortunate to be a member of Public Library InterLINK and reciprocal borrowing helps BPL address some of the demand for materials in languages other than English. BPL's participation in the NewtoBC initiative, funded initially by the Province of BC through Welcome BC and now by the federal government, has also greatly contributed to BPL's ability to serve people who speak and read in languages other than English. The Library

Champions project has been particularly important to BPL's ability to connect with community members, and the Library Champions themselves have been powerful advocates. In addition, BPL works closely with settlement-serving agencies in Burnaby and other community partners to provide programming in several languages, including Chinese and Korean. The library actively seeks people with proficiency in languages in addition to English when recruiting new staff.

Strategic Plan

The BPL Strategic Plan 2019-2022 launched in January 2019. In developing the plan, the Library Board heard from:

- 509 people who completed our online survey
- more than 400 people in our four branches
- 782 community members in conversation with staff and board at community gathering spots and on the street
- 12 community leaders in one-on-one conversations
- 166 library staff in small group meetings

The 2019-2022 BPL Strategic Plan looks outward to our community and inward to our capacity to develop services that support our community's needs. The Board outlined four main priorities:

Connect with Community

- Discover and understand our communities' needs and aspirations
- Identify and remove barriers to library services
- Act as a hub, connecting people to each other
- Recognize and celebrate Burnaby's diverse communities

Encourage curiosity and exploration

- Inspire learning and critical thinking
- Cultivate imagination, creativity and play
- Support skill development and digital knowledge
- Enable creation and sharing

Create welcoming and innovative spaces

- Build a new Cameron branch
- Reimagine existing spaces
- Activate new spaces
- Enhance virtual spaces

Invigorate people and culture

- Support staff to reach their full potential
- Deepen our learning and integration of the principles of Truth and Reconciliation
- Transform our work processes and systems
- Strengthen our partnerships
- Promote our services

ADDRESSING STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Provincial funding has helped Burnaby Public Library to address our community's priorities, in line with the four strategic priorities identified in *Inspiring Libraries, Connecting Communities*.

Fostering equitable access to information and services

The Burnaby Pedal Library debuted in July at the Willingdon Linear Park Grand Opening. Since then, it has travelled more than 300 km to events, schools and parks and all of our branches. Several staff members have been trained to ride it and members of the community are always excited to see it in their neighbourhoods – one kid told us, “Wow! That is the coolest bike I’ve ever seen.” Pictured below are MLAs Raj Chouhan and Anne Kang together with Councillors, Library Trustees, School Trustees and community members.

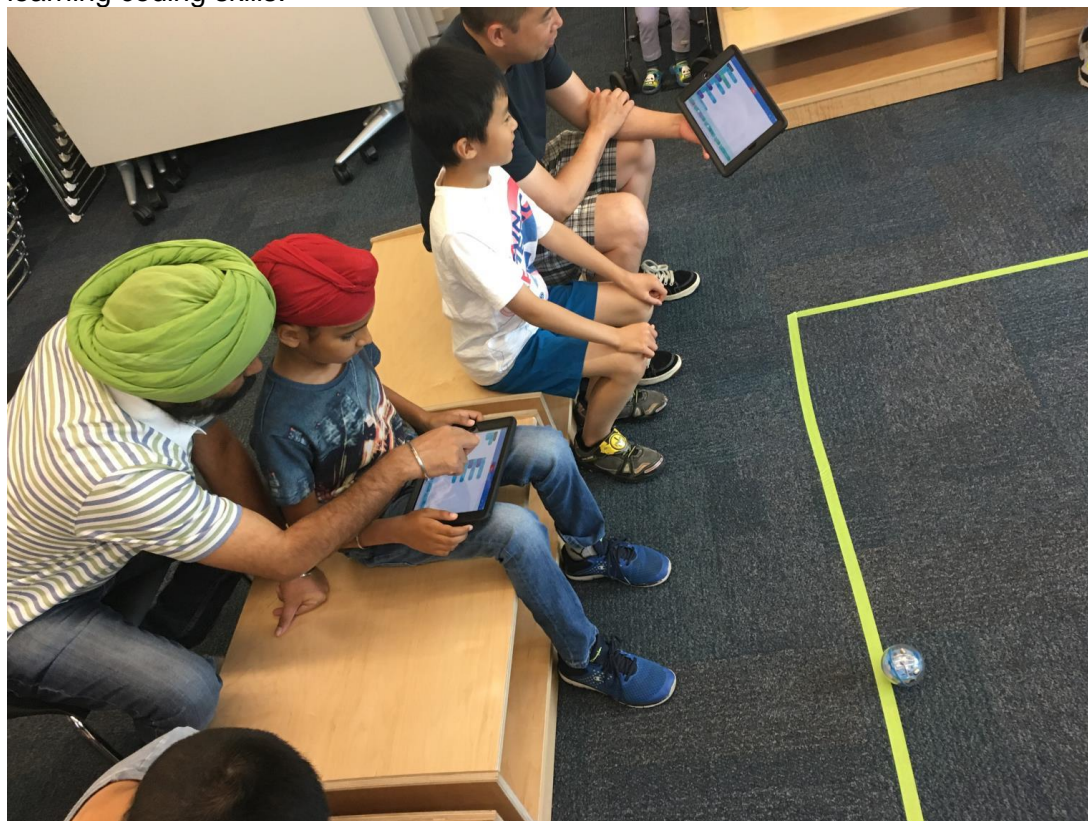


Renovations at the Bob Prittie Metrotown Branch and the Cameron Branch improved library spaces and increased our ability to offer space to community members, including two new meeting rooms and a new multipurpose room. In 2018, 4,225 patrons used community rooms, compared to 1,915 in 2017 – a 120% increase.

Developing skills and knowledge

In 2018, BPL introduced programming with virtual reality headsets, coding tools and programmable robots. We began with programming for children, but soon expanded our offerings to include teens. Given the reaction of parents and caregivers at our children's

programs, we're also planning to create intergenerational programs. Participants learned to drive Spheros – small round robots that are controlled by an app on a tablet – around a maze by learning coding skills.



Programs and events at BPL continued to showcase the diversity of our community, and included indigenous author Lee Maracle, a panel discussion for World Refugee Day, and our second annual and immensely popular Drag Queen storytime.

BPL's creative and innovative staff also continue to develop fun and unusual programs, including Star Wars Day (pictured) and an Escape the Library! program for Family Literacy Week, an after-hours program where groups of patrons had to solve a series of puzzles in order to move from one "escape room" to another and eventually escape the library.

Working together

BPL continued to enhance our partnerships with local organizations in 2018. BPL strives to provide welcoming, inclusive to all community members, but we know that we reach some community members better than others, and that some community members aren't reached at all. In 2015, BPL began to allocate staffing and other resources to community outreach work, building relationships with community members to discover what's important to them. Thanks to ongoing funding, we created a new community librarian position in 2018, with a mandate to build relationships and make connections with Burnaby residents, in particular our most marginalized communities. Connections included:

- An Arabic Women group that meets monthly at the Edmonds Resource Centre. Most of the women don't speak English so we worked with a volunteer translator from ISSofBC. Only two of the 11 women had a library card before our visit. We found out that they had

thought about using some of the library's books and videos to learn English, but weren't sure they could. They also didn't know about Mango Languages and some of the other online resources, tools they found very exciting.

- Clients in MOSAIC's Refugee Training and Employment program. Some of the young men in the program had never been to the library, and some never thought about it.
- A group of job seekers at GT Hiring Solutions, all Burnaby residents, learned about how the library's online resources, such as Lynda.com and Reference Canada, can support their job search and skills building efforts. They were happy to learn that the library, in addition to books and movies, has "practical tools for every day needs", as one of the attendees said.
- Attendees at the Multicultural Settlement Fair at Edmonds Community School. Focused on newcomers who are struggling to settle in Canada, it was an opportunity to spend time with families who recently arrived to the country, speak little or no English and are living in isolation. We asked questions about their challenges to find support, where and how they spend their days, and how they learn. We're using that information to find new ways to connect with them and provide support. Many got library cards, and others picked up donated books or got information about programs for children in the library.

In the summer of 2018, Burnaby Public Library collaborated with other local service providers in creating Burnaby's first ever LGBTQ2S+ Pride Street Party. The August event illuminated LGBTQ2S+ presence within the city and was attended by more than 600 people representing a broad spectrum of ages and audiences. BPL staff were instrumental in conceiving, organizing and planning the event, and BPL made valuable connections with service providers and community members through our involvement.



Enhancing governance

The past year has been a time of change for the BPL Board, with one-third of board members replaced over the course of 2018, and a change in Mayor and Council. Developing the 2019-2022 strategic plan was an opportunity for new and existing board members to deepen their understanding of the community by learning about community and library trends and by connecting directly with community members to discover their needs.

Key themes emerged that guided our new strategic plan:

- As the cost of housing increases and living spaces get smaller, the demand for library space for study, work and meeting increases. We need to balance and rethink quiet and active spaces. How our spaces feel is also important: patrons appreciate features like light and connection to nature.
- Social isolation is a key issue for many community members. The library has a role to play in connecting people with each other through passive and active programming.
- Burnaby is a culturally super-diverse city. We need to expand our services in languages other than English. This may involve increasing world languages collections, but we need to check in with the community on what their needs are first.
- The library has a critical role to play in digital inclusion – in making sure that people have the tools and skills they need to navigate their lives online. There is excitement about potential new technology directions such as digitization, recording, robotics and virtual reality.
- BPL has a role to play in honouring Indigenous perspectives and knowledge.
- The library can play a key role as a centre for debate and dialogue on key community issues such as housing, mental health & addictions, racism and discrimination, and the environment.
- Many of BPL's services aren't known by the community, and our branches lack obvious signage. Marketing and promotion can help the community discover services that meet their needs.
- The Cameron branch is the weak link in the BPL system. The size of the space and lack of program space mean that staff struggle to offer the range of services, spaces and collections that the community needs. A new Cameron branch is overdue.
- BPL's programs are highly valued by the community, who express interest in expanding the range of programs we offer, particularly to teens and adults.
- BPL is a trusted source of information. We continue to play a key role in connecting people with the information and resources they need, and to sift through "fake news" and online noise.
- BPL collections have a reputation for richness, depth and breadth across the lower mainland. There is a strong desire to maintain this reputation, as well as some demand to expand the type of materials we lend.
- BPL's patrons and staff value in-person service. There is a strong desire to maintain face-to-face contact and a warm body on the end of a phone line. Our in-person service needs to expand beyond our walls into the community, and we need to make sure we offer inclusive service to all community members and remove barriers to library use.

These themes and findings will continue to guide our work over the next few years.

After learning that many BPL services were unknown to the community, BPL staff created a series of engaging bus shelter ads to share some of our services with patrons. These visually arresting images helped bring information about BPL services to different corners of the community.

Can't get to the library?

Apply for home delivery

 **Burnaby Public Library**
www.bpl.bc.ca

SUMMARY

Burnaby Public Library is excited to begin work on the ambitious goals in our new 2019-2022 Strategic Plan and our dream of a welcoming community where all people can explore, learn and connect. The BPL Board and staff are determined to build on our successes in 2018 in serving the needs of our dynamic and diverse community.

Burnaby Public Library would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Education and the Minister for the financial support we received from the province of British Columbia in 2018.