Introduction
The Greater Victoria Public Library Strategic Plan, 2016-2020, saw GVPL adopt a Community-Inspired Service Model that inspires and is inspired by all areas of our community life. We connect individuals and community members to services both in and outside the library walls, in person and virtually. We provide facilities and programs that are convenient and engaging for people of all ages, inspiring curiosity and supporting individual growth. We transform lives and our communities.

Our service area is made up of approximately 320,000 residents in 10 municipalities and 5 indigenous communities:

- Central Saanich
- Colwood
- Esquimalt
- Highlands
- Langford
- Metchosin
- Oak Bay
- Saanich
- Victoria
- View Royal
- Beecher Bay Band land
- Esquimalt Band land
- Songhees Band land
- Tsartlip Band (South Saanich Indian Reserve)
- Tsawout Band (East Saanich Indian Reserve)

The service area spans rural, urban and regional areas from farmland and forests to urban built environments, high rises and shopping centers. The Greater Victoria area is the second largest population center in British Columbia with a vibrant arts and cultural movement, burgeoning tech and small business ventures, as well as innovative education and trades sectors.

Progress made on our strategic plan in 2018
GVPL’s Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is now past its mid-point and celebrating significant achievements. In the last year we have launched many exciting new initiatives including opening our twelfth branch, introducing a new community e-pass and launching new community partnership collaborations.
Community-Inspired Library Service
GREATER VICTORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY’S STRATEGIC PLAN
2016 TO 2020

Key Priorities

CREATE
great library spaces to meet unique user needs – in person and through our multiple e-service channels.

ENGAGE
passionate library members, funders and partners to expand the library’s reach and impact.

INSPIRE
discovery through programs, collections and services that enhance literacy and lifelong learning.

LEAD
with support for innovative ideas, service models and governance.

Goals

1. DEVELOP local, community-inspired branch plans to increase the accessibility and impact of library services in Greater Victoria.

2. CULTIVATE the development of 21st century skills to bridge the digital divide in Greater Victoria.

3. OFFER new tools and learning opportunities that support the creativity and self-expression of individuals in our community.

4. CONTINUE investing in programs, services and collections for early learning and family literacy.

5. INVEST in new ways to extend the reach of the library beyond existing facilities and traditional venues.

6. INCREASE use and awareness of existing learning opportunities, leisure opportunities and resources the library has to offer.

7. CELEBRATE the unique local talents of the community by providing space, resources and opportunities to build connections.

8. CULTIVATE new supporters and engage existing donors, funders and members who expand the capacity of the library to meet community needs.

9. CREATE opportunities for staff to flourish in their roles through mentorship, leadership development and team building activities.
Provincial Strategic Priority 1 — Fostering Connected Communities: advancing access to information and resources

Alignment with GVPL’s Key Priority:

- Create great library spaces to meet unique user needs – in person and through our multiple e-service channels

In 2018 GVPL opened its twelfth branch, sxʷeŋxʷəŋ taʔaxʷ James Bay, as part of the Capital Park Development in the City of Victoria, fostering equitable access to information and services in James Bay. This highly anticipated Library has quickly surpassed all expectations as a community hub with record attendance at the opening day ceremonies, high demand for new cards (1,203 since April) and logged the second highest in-branch use of material in the system during our Typical Week Survey. (Opening Day photo: right)

It is also the first branch in the GVPL system with an Indigenous name and with dedicated spaces to honour outstanding local citizens. The Dr. Elmer Seniemten George M.S.M Community Room was named in honour of the Songhees Elder and fluent speaker of Lekwungen who stewards the traditional teachings and culture of the Songhees Nation. The Mifflin Wistar Gibbs Study Room was named in honour of the James Bay resident and local merchant who served as a Victoria City Councillor from 1866 to 1869, the first black person elected to a public office in British Columbia.

The new branch also offered opportunities to expand our art spaces and to partner with the City of Victoria’s 2018 Artist in Residence, Luke Ramsey. Luke provided weekly programming for children in the summer and fall and will incorporate the children’s artwork into exciting large public artworks: four illuminated hangings will be visible both within the library and from the street and a large vinyl interior wall decal will be visible throughout the library in 2019. The Artist in Residence and the artwork was funded by the City of Victoria and will be installed at the sxʷeŋxʷəŋ taʔaxʷ James Bay Branch to enhance the welcoming, animated and inclusive library space.
The Goudy Branch in Langford (above) was also refreshed this year with expanded space for quiet study to meet the needs of the community.

2018 Key Facts and Figures

- 1,603 people attended, sx̱w̱eŋx̱əŋ təŋəxʷ James Bay Opening Day
- GVPL.ca online registration for new cards reached 1,798 requests that year
- GVPL total new card registration increased by 9% over the previous year to 17,996.
- GVPL branches recorded nearly 2.5 million in person visits
- Over 4 million virtual visits
- Over 266,400 hours of public computer use system wide
- One of the highest circulation per capita of comparable Canadian Urban libraries

Share Your Story* Submission, November 29, 2018

“The new sx̱w̱eŋx̱əŋ təŋəxʷ James Bay Branch in our neighbourhood has broadened our family’s horizons in two ways — one for me and one for my kids. I am learning that we can incorporate indigenous language into our lives. I struggle to pronounce the name of the branch, but my kids have it down pat and correct me whenever I refer to it as the ‘James Bay Library.’ I went to school in B.C. in the 1980s and 1990s and I didn't even have a clue that indigenous languages still existed. This branch has enriched our neighbourhood so much better than another new store, restaurant, or coffee shop could. My kids are getting a little older (10 and 7) and we are experimenting with them getting a little more freedom and independence. A trip to the library by themselves after school with their own library cards is the perfect opportunity for them to learn to spread their wings. My son came up with the idea recently and they're currently trying it out as I write this. Maybe this message of thanks to the library is just a chance for me to calm my nerves as I wait for them to come home. Thanks for choosing James Bay for the new branch location!”

*Share Your Story is a virtual space on GVPL’s website for the public to share with us the impact the library has had on them, their family and friends.
Provincial Strategic Priority 2 — Building Capacity: enabling inspiration and innovation

Alignment with GVPL’s Key Priority:

- **Inspire** discovery through programs, collections and services that enhance literacy and lifelong learning

Throughout 2018, GVPL offered programs, collections and services that developed our communities’ skills and knowledge from bridging the digital divide and investing in early learning to creating spaces and events that support the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums) sector, healthy communities and lifelong learning.

GVPL bridged the digital divide with Creative Technology programs including coding programs for kids such as LittleBits code kits with modular electronics that snap together with magnets, One-on-One device consultation sessions for adults, our new preschool STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) Discovery Lab programs, with hands-on crafts and activities, and introductory classes on online classifieds and travel, Facebook, Google Translate, Cyber Security and even web resources for investing.

We invested in early learning by refreshing our 100 Books to Read before Kindergarten list (with titles also made accessible in Braille and DAISY versions through NNELS and CELA), by providing Educational Professional Development opportunities and by hosting and participating in the highly successful Books for Breakfast/Literacy for Lunch events with our community partners, which was developed and implemented with funding from the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Education.

The local GLAM sector was supported through our art spaces, new plein air easel collection and painting events as well as through our self-publishing platforms, the fourth annual Emerging Local Authors
Collection, teen writing contest and song writers’ meetups. We enhanced our healthy communities through the new Urban Learning Garden and Seed Library programming, information tables and Connected Community programming with local health professionals and experts on newcomer settlement.

2018 Key Facts and Figures

- 2,801 programs attended by 90,919 participants
- Over 500 outreach programs and events including 30+ seniors visits, Best Babies and monthly Strong Start sessions throughout the region
- 8,634 children, up to age 12 years, signed up for the 2018 BC Summer Reading Club (BC SRC), which contributes to maintaining reading levels, expanding children’s scope of reading and increasing reading independence
- 40.2% of BC Summer Reading Club participants reported completing the challenge of reading daily for 7 weeks helping them avoid the summer slump.
- Over 170 Creative Technology programs including 529 One-on-One device consultation sessions
- The launch of the Self-e platform for local self-published authors helps to make their ebooks available to library users across Canada and the US.
- 16 mobile DigiLab sessions introduced over 200 teens to technologies they would not otherwise have access to such as Drawing with Java Script, Arduino and Star War Droids.
- Approximately 2,000 GVPL Books for Babies bags for new parents were distributed throughout the CRD in 2018 by GVPL staff to midwives and Island Health
- Emerging Local Authors Collection and launch party now in its fourth year with 129 titles added in 2018
- 84 submissions received for the tenth annual teen writing contest
- Family Day Arts Festival pop-up library at Cedar Hill Recreation centre was attended by 700 people
- Launched creative series of GVPL library cards (featured in photo below, with Premier Horgan and Minister of Education Rob Fleming)
Provincial Strategic Priority 3 — Working Together: creating lasting and sustainable partnerships

Alignment with GVPL’s Key Priority:

- **Engage** passionate library members, funders and partners to expand the library’s reach and impact

In seeking a path towards reconciliation in 2018, GVPL offered educational opportunities for both staff and the public. By working together, we were able to offer sessions that help to meet the public’s demand for knowledge on the Truth and Reconciliation Committee’s Calls to Action, City of Victoria’s Witness Reconciliation program and Bob Joseph’s new book *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act*. Traditional Indigenous Storytime and an Indigenous Genealogy Workshop were among other well-received programs contributing to our journey.

Funds from the Friends of the Library helped purchase more materials for our Indigenous Reads displays, which will highlight the Indigenous materials in our collection and make them visible and accessible. Friends’ funds also contributed to BC Summer Reading Club activities and gave additional support so we can continue our DigiLab programming for teens.

Our French collection was given an extra boost of $15,000 thanks to a generous grant from the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada. GVPL matched the grant with an equal contribution to best meet the needs of the Francophones and Francophiles in Greater Victoria. GVPL officially launched the enhanced collection of 1,000 new titles at a French storytime event held at the Nellie McClung Branch.

Our new e-pass to Victoria Butterfly Gardens (left) is the latest offering in our e-pass partner program launched this fall through our Cloud Library collection app bringing GVPL’s total number of culture and recreation partners to seven.

GVPL was excited to continue to collaborate with the City of Victoria to select and work with Victoria’s 2018 Youth Poet Laureate. Agartu Ali, a 16-year-old spoken word poet, worked with our librarians and DigiLab teen volunteers to present an inspiring session combining poetry with virtual reality using our HTC Vive VR headset. She also performed as part of GVPL’s afternoon of art at the Integrated Arts Festival and was involved in judging the teen writing contest and presenting a poem at the reception.
2018 Key Facts and Figures

- Over 160 people have been helped through the ID Project in partnership with Pro Bono Students Canada (University of Victoria Chapter), the Downtown Service Providers (DSP) Committee of Victoria and the Constituency Office of Carole James, MLA. The DSP brings together sixteen agencies that provide services to marginalized residents in downtown Victoria including Our Place Society, Together Against Poverty Society, Action Committee of People with Disabilities, Dandelion Society, the Committee to End Homelessness and the Community Social Planning Council.

- GVPL’s 2018 BC Summer Reading Club was made a success through the contributions of the British Columbia Library Association and public libraries throughout British Columbia, with generous support from the Province of British Columbia (through Libraries Branch, Ministry of Education) and the RBC Foundation. Additional support is received from IslandLink Library Federation, BC Libraries Co-op and local partners in Greater Victoria including Friends of the Greater Victoria Public Library, Panago, Greater Victoria Active Communities, Boulders Climbing Gym, COBs Bread, Craig X Climbing Centre, Flying Squirrel, Ooh La La Cupcakes, Tally-Ho Carriage Tours, and Western Speedway.

- Books for Breakfast and Literacy for Lunch programming in collaboration with local literacy groups has raised awareness of the importance of early years and fostered early literacy.

- GVPL participated in 22 Pop-up library events at Community Festivals and Markets throughout Greater Victoria, many featuring our outreach van (OLiVe) and GVPL’s activity tent.

- Our digital CloudLibrary platform averages over 4,000 unique users a month.

- Nearly 2,000 patrons have attended our GLAM programing which included the Integrated Arts festival, musical storytimes and a Foodie Booksmack at the Vic Theatre (one of our many Booksmacks, shown on right, throughout the year).

- Launched BC Settlement and Integration Project with the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Center Society.

What is a Booksmack?
Booksmacks bring teams of library staff to community stages to go head to head, fast and furiously reviewing as many books, films, and magazines as they can in time-limited rounds.

Share Your Story Submission, March 22, 2018

“Our family has moved around a fair bit — one of the first places we seek out in a new town/city is the library. No matter how unfamiliar our new surroundings can feel, the library always gives us a safe and familiar starting point after a move.”
Provincial Strategic Priority 4 — Sustaining Our Success: enhancing governance and demonstrating impact

Alignment with GVPL’s Key Priority:

- **Lead** with support of innovative ideas, service models and governance

Since the launch of our Community-Inspired Service model, our portfolio librarians have flourished as service leaders with an agenda of growth, innovation and sustainability. They have become active participants of Early Years Roundtables, Literacy Task Groups, Downtown Service Providers and many more collaborations that help connect community members to our services both within and outside the library. They have offered engaging, inclusive services and spaces for people of all ages that inspire curiosity, support individual growth and build community.

Community-inspired librarianship works in support of democracy, equitable access, inclusivity, and evolving library practices. It aims to be responsive to community needs and interests, while providing a framework that is aligned with GVPL’s strategic and business plans. Our goal is to balance established services with new priorities, make the best use of resources and expertise and ensure the future relevancy of GVPL. It gives strong support for librarians to help them develop their skills and role while providing a framework of clear parameters, processes and resources. It also gives librarians opportunities to have a voice and platform for bringing forward and developing fresh ideas.

Through 2018, GVPL’s Human Resources Department has been evolving our Leadership Training Program into a unique and innovative curriculum that allows staff to succeed in their current jobs and future employment opportunities. The goal for the training program is to build a foundational supervisory skillset by providing clarity specific to the soft and technical skills and competencies essential to leadership positions.
In late 2018, GVPL realigned the organizational structure for the directors’ team to increase its scope and collaboration. The Growing Stronger Together initiative enables GVPL to build ongoing capacity to effectively respond to the changing needs of our community. It will ensure robust and consistent management of operations across the system and provide more opportunities for staff development and succession planning throughout the organization.

2018 Key Facts and Figures

- Staff presented locally (Vancouver Island Library Staff Conference), provincially (British Columbia Library Association) and nationally (Canadian Urban Libraries Council and Ontario Library Association) on topics including GLAM programming, Truth and Reconciliation, participatory culture and current issues in librarianship.
- Staff contribute to local, provincial and national committees such as Your Literacy Connection Westshore, Young Adults and Children’s Services (YAACS) and Canadian Urban Libraries Council e-Content Working Group
- Phase two of our marketing campaign — Change Your Mind — was launched in partnership with Serious Coffee and reached Vancouver Island as well as the Powell River Public Library
- Pop-up library events at outdoor community markets and festivals reached over 6,000 people
- Eighth Staff Development Day held in June engaged all GVPL staff in learning and team building
- A public perception survey conducted by a third party organization indicates residents in our service area highly value GVPL
- GVPL Board Retreat planned for future opportunities in 2019

Share your Story, January 19, 2019

“Where would I be today without the GVPL? My entire life has been hugely enriched by the library and the dedicated librarians. The library has been the greatest influence in my life, and I am so grateful. Thank you!”
GVPL’s involvement in the Community ID Project

What is it?
The ID Project is supported by Pro Bono Students Canada (University of Victoria Chapter), the Downtown Service Providers Committee of Victoria and the Constituency Office of Carole James, MLA. Through the clinics, law students seek to help low income people replace their lost or stolen identification.

Where are they held?
Clinics are held twice a month from October to March, alternating between GVPL’s Central Branch and Our Place. Monthly sessions were held from May to August 2018 — these summer sessions are dependent on funding and availability of the student lawyer volunteers.

Who else participates and how?
- Pro Bono Students Canada (University of Victoria Chapter)
- Downtown Service Providers Committee of Victoria which brings together sixteen agencies that provide services to marginalized residents in downtown Victoria including Our Place Society, Together Against Poverty Society, Action Committee of People with Disabilities, Dandelion Society, the Committee to End Homelessness and the Community Social Planning Council.
- Constituency Office of Carole James, MLA
- Together Against Poverty Society (TAPS)
The ID Clinics are partially supported by grants from the Victoria Foundation and the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group (VIPIRG).

What is GVPL’s role?
GVPL and Our Place alternate hosting the clinics, with staff handling program logistics and registration. UVIC law students, overseen by an articling lawyer, run the clinic, assisting patrons with their ID applications. On average 22 people attend each clinic.

What is GVPL hoping to achieve?
In December 2018, CHEK’s Vital People segment featured the ID Clinic at the Central Branch: https://victoriafoundation.bc.ca/vital-people/vital-people-id-clinic/
- This program contributes to GVPL’s role in providing resources for vulnerable community members, breaking down a significant barrier for many low-income community members so that they can access basic services.
- This program builds on GVPL’s values of collaboration and engagement in partnerships that meet community needs.
- This program is foundational to supporting the provincial government’s key commitments:
  - Making life more affordable
  - Delivering services people can count on
  - Building a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone