



INTRODUCTION

The Invermere Public Library is located in the Columbia Valley of the East Kootenay region. The Rocky Mountains line the east side of the valley and the Purcell Mountains line the west with Lake Windermere filling in the valley between the two mountain ranges. The area is a four-season destination for tourists and an outdoor hub for area residents.

The Invermere Public Library serves the residents of the District of Invermere (DOI), the Village of Radium Hot Springs, the Village of Canal Flats, and the residents of Areas F and G of the Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) for a total resident population of approximately 9,000. The population of our area is also affected by our close proximity to larger centers in Alberta with many people from out of province purchasing recreational property in our area and using the valley as their part-time residence. This results in significant swells in the population that we serve at various times of the year, particularly in the summer months and during holidays as well as over school breaks throughout the year. The library is located within the municipal boundaries of the District of Invermere which is the commercial centre for the Columbia Valley. It is where most of the residents throughout the area come to access medical and other health services as well as their groceries and retail needs. The children of the area attend elementary school in their own communities but the regional high school is located in Invermere and provides the only public schooling for students in Grades 8 through 12.

The library had another exciting year in 2018. This was our first full year spent in our new facility and it has been such a positive change to the community as a whole. The increase in traffic through the library is one of the most notable benefits of our new space because it is much easier to access our building and it is also in a much more visible location closer to the centre of Invermere. In June 2018, the library increased its weekly operating hours by 25% and is now open six days per week. There is also new foot traffic that comes to the library on their way to attend events in the community centre that is connected to the library which has increased our exposure to community members who have not been regular library users in the past. As anticipated in 2017, the library has certainly defined itself as a community hub over the past year and has begun to provide services to a broader spectrum of the valley's population.



In 2018, the Invermere Public Library Board of Trustees did a full review of the library's strategic plan. There were some goals and objectives in the previous plan that had either been accomplished or were no longer relevant. Resident feedback was collected through a survey as well as an open house and

then the trustees and staff met with a consultant for a full day of discussions and input on developing new targets. The result was a new plan with some areas that remained a priority and the addition of new priorities as well. The new strategic plan is set for the next four years, 2018-2021. There are three overarching goals in the plan: Community Engagement, Regional Collaborations, and Services. These goals continue to recognize that the geographic size of our library's service region remains a key consideration when making decisions for library programs and service delivery. As such, the Invermere Public Library will continue to provide options for easier access to our services including ways that can bring services out to where people are already gathering while still providing a broad range of services at the library itself. A new target in the library's strategic plan is to develop a long-range capital plan as a way to investigate the feasibility of purchasing a vehicle that would give the library the ability to provide mobile services in the future.

The four goals of the current strategic plan are as follows. These were the goals that were used to guide the work of the Invermere Public Library in 2018.

1. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** The Invermere Public Library is a collaborative community resource in the delivery of public library services to the communities of the Columbia Valley.
2. **REGIONAL COLLABORATION:** The Invermere Public Library is recognized as a community hub that provides programming and services to the communities of the Columbia Valley.
3. **SERVICES:** The services provided by the Invermere Public Library will meet the needs of the communities of the Columbia Valley.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES, GOALS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, PARTNERSHIPS

GOVERNMENT PRIORITY:

FOSTERING CONNECTED COMMUNITIES: ADVANCING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND RESOURCES.

LIBRARY GOAL THAT SUPPORTS THIS PRIORITY

From our strategic plan, there are several different objectives where the plan aligns with this priority. The objectives listed under our second goal for regional collaboration state that IPL will work to have "the Library recognized as a community hub that provides programming and services to communities of the Columbia Valley" and "to raise the awareness of the regional scope of library service delivery that currently takes place and seek out ways to enhance it."

PROGRAMS AND/OR SERVICES THAT ARE CONNECTED WITH THIS PRIORITY

1. ***Delivering services people can count on:*** IPL offers a wide range of free programs and services. Most of these services are available to people even if they do not have an IPL or other BC public library card. In June 2018, after securing additional operating funds from both the District of Invermere and the Regional District of East Kootenay, the library added a full day of service on Mondays and an additional evening of service delivery on Thursdays for a total of 10 more hours each week, a 25% increase in opening hours. As a result, residents now have more opportunity to use the library's services including attending programs, accessing public computers, faxing, printing, and scanning, access to free WiFi and use of a community space that is open to the public to spend time in with no purchases needed or fees attached to it. The Invermere Public Library has become a hub of services that people have come to rely on that meets a broad range of needs.

- 2. Collaboration with community groups and organizations:** IPL connected with several other community groups and organizations in 2018 in an effort to connect more people in our service area with information and resources. Examples include a partnership with the Columbia Valley Youth Network to host a resume workshop for young people. IPL then kept the youth resumes on file at the library for the youth to access in the future as they looked for jobs and needed to update their resume. The library also printed the resumes for the youth at no cost. The library also provided space for the Columbia Valley Economic Development Committee to hold focus group meetings as well as the Columbia Valley Community Foundation (CVCF) to collect information from valley residents for their community report called Vital Signs.

PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT THE PRIORITY

Partnering with various organizations such as the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, Windermere Valley to provide free community literacy programming to a variety of groups including young families for Baby Goose programming and seniors for an eight week iPad workshop.

OUTCOMES THAT WERE IDENTIFIED

- 1. Delivering services people can count on:** Since the new hours began, there have been numerous people who have shared feedback to the library staff about how much of a difference the increase in service hours makes because it improves their access to our services. One patron who lives outside of Invermere noted that Mondays is always her day that she comes into town to run errands and that she often would go weeks without being able to come to the library because of her schedule. Being open on Mondays now meant that she could now visit the library on her weekly excursion into Invermere.

Being open on Mondays also allowed for the library to partner with the local literacy organization, Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, to co-host a vital program for parents with young babies. Baby Goose is a CBAL program that uses our space on Monday mornings which was the only day of the week that CBAL was able to run the program and prohibited this partnership in the past. Along with a staff person from CBAL, the library also has a staff person working with the families, further improving their experience. This program has been very well attended and the parents have told library staff how much of a difference it has made for them to have the chance to meet with others. They have made new friendships and have been able to develop community support for themselves and their babies.

As well, more evening open hours has added an extra day each week that groups can book the library's mezzanine space to hold evening meetings and presentations. The library does not charge non-profit groups a fee to use this space. There are very few spaces like this one in the Columbia Valley that can be used at no cost. It has also allowed for the library itself to run additional evening programming to run as well which has improved access for people whose schedules didn't allow for them to come on Wednesday evenings for workshops or just to use the library space.

2. **Collaboration with community groups and organizations:** There has been a noticeable increase in requests from community groups to work with the library on a project or to make use of the library services in support of the goals and objectives that they are trying to achieve. For instance, when the CVCF was on site with their community survey, their staff remarked afterwards about what a different flow of people they were able to meet with and speak to while at the library in comparison to the other places around town that they had also been visiting. It was an advantage to their data collection to be able to access this additional cohort of community members and they were very pleased with the connection that was made between IPL and CVCF for this purpose.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITY:

BUILDING CAPACITY: ENABLING INSPIRATION AND INNOVATION.

LIBRARY GOAL THAT SUPPORTS THIS PRIORITY

From our strategic plan, IPL will “encourage the public’s awareness, participation, and perception of the library as an important resource for the communities of the Columbia Valley” and will also “continue to provide the communities of the Columbia Valley with access to current technology.”

PROGRAMS AND/OR SERVICES THAT ALIGNS WITH THIS PRIORITY

- Outreach services that brought library programming and services outside of the library building and into the community. By continuing to bring the library to places where people are gathering, the library has continued to extend its reach of service provision. In 2018, IPL provided a variety of outreach opportunities including outdoor pop-up story times during the summer at playgrounds and beaches throughout the service area. Library staff also provided a monthly visit and book exchange to elementary school children in Canal Flats; this community is at the south end of the library’s service area and it is often not convenient for these students to visit the library in Invermere so staff brings the library to them instead. Additional outreach activities included participation in a variety of community events by setting up a booth and activities that promoted the library and the services we provide.
- In-library programming for a wide variety of target populations, from parents with new babies all the way to retirees and seniors. For example, the library has partnered with the District of Invermere to provide an indoor walking space for people of all ages but it has been particularly attractive for seniors. Twice each week the library staff opens up the community hall on the lower level of the library building and the community at large is welcome to come in and walk laps around the space. It has provided people with a space to keep up with their fitness and activity goals, especially when it is cold and slippery outside.
- In-library programming has also included workshops that provide people with information and instruction about using different technology such as the Ancestry.ca database as well as an 8 week iPad workshop for seniors that was facilitated by the local literacy organization, CBAL, but the library’s meeting area was used for the sessions. This allowed CBAL to include a larger number of participants in their workshop.

- Funding and administrative support from the Kootenay Library Federation (KLF) helped IPL to continue to incorporate the principles of STEAM into our library programs and resources that we have made available to our community. The collaboration that took place in 2018 between the staff of the member libraries of the KLF as well as the KLF Director was inspiring and directly led to the implementation of new and innovative programming that incorporates the concepts of STEAM. The KLF organized a staff in-service on how to use STEAM in library programming. The best thing about this was that the workshop was held within driving distance for the KLF member libraries who are somewhat remote from larger centres where this type of instruction usually has to be accessed. This workshop combined with additional funds to purchase more STEAM resources has provided IPL with the opportunity to provide our community with access to some of the latest technology.

PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT THE PRIORITY

- For the outreach services, IPL's partnerships included connections with local government to host pop-up events on their properties throughout the Columbia Valley as well with a variety of local community organizations who were coordinating events such as the Bear Aware Festival organized by WildSight BC as well as an environmental fair held at our local elementary school that included the participation of students from throughout the SD6 Windermere Zone. The District of Invermere also continues to be a very strong partner in the delivery of many of the library programs with the provision of the community hall space for things such as Indoor Walking.
- The partnership with UBC's iSchool continued with the second year of a grant through them that allows IPL to employ a grad student for a four month rural internship over three years (2017-2019). The UBC grad student arrived in Invermere full of fresh and innovative ideas that she used as she created the new-to-our-library program for young families with a particular focus this summer on programming for youth aged 10-14. Her efforts saw the new partnership form with the Columbia Valley Youth Network for the resume workshop as well as other programming over the summer directed at youth.
- IPL is an active member of the Kootenay Library Federation. It is this partnership that allows our library to purchase library materials as part of a consortium with reduced costs which makes a significant difference for us. It is inspiring to meet with fellow KLF libraries twice per year to share ideas and collectively work together to support projects that are mutually beneficial for all of the member libraries.

OUTCOMES THAT WERE IDENTIFIED

- Throughout 2018, IPL staff noticed that there were more people who mentioned how impressed they were with all of the amenities we have to offer and that they didn't realize that the library had such a wide variety services. The mezzanine space in the library was of particular interest to many community members and the awareness of being able to use this space during library hours increased over the year. This has allowed for many people to use the space either for their personal use such as for studying for online courses or for more organized uses to meet with other community members, either informally and in small groups or more formally by booking the space and meeting as a larger committee. Access to this space has been a way that IPL has made life more affordable for people.

- With the second year of STEAM funding from KLF, along with the professional development workshop for staff from the KLF who are delivering STEAM programs, IPL has continued to provide opportunities for the community, particularly children and youth, access to the latest technology to learn skills such as computer coding and innovative thinking through playing with science and engineering concepts. The spin-off has been the interest that parents have taken in the STEAM resources as well and the knowledge that they, too, have gained while also deepening their connection with their children as they play and learn together. Our collection of robots has a real wow factor for many people.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITY:

WORKING TOGETHER: CREATING LASTING AND SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS.

LIBRARY GOAL THAT SUPPORTS THIS PRIORITY

From the library's strategic plan: "To continue to develop a network of partnerships with other community organizations in order to enhance the delivery of services to the communities of the Columbia Valley" as well as continuing "to connect with our major funding partners on a regular basis to keep them informed of our performance and plans."

PROGRAMS AND/OR SERVICES THAT ALIGNS WITH THIS PRIORITY

IPL makes it a priority to stay connected with a variety of community organizations as a way to ensure that the library is informed of the plans and goals of other groups as well as to ensure these groups are equally informed about the library's plans. By doing so, the library is able to then seek out opportunities for collaborating with groups in a variety of ways. From the local literacy agency to the local government representatives and staff to the schools and day cares, the library values the relationships between each of these entities.

PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT THE PRIORITY

- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, Windermere Valley has been a partner with IPL on several projects and programs in 2018. Some have involved co-facilitating programs and others have involved IPL providing CBAL with a free space.
- District of Invermere has supported several library programs over the past year that have required the use of municipal space. They have provided the library use of the community hall

at no cost to provide special events such as a Harry Potter movie night during Summer Reading Club as well as use of the hall to run the library's Indoor Walking program.

- Both the District of Invermere and the Regional District of East Kootenay agreed to increase annual operating funding in 2018 and beyond to allow the library to extend its service hours to 48 hours each week.
- Columbia Basin Trust is a regional organization that provides community groups with funding for projects. In 2018, CBT provided the library with funds to create lendable family geocaching kits.
- The Friends of the Library continues to be a very supportive group of volunteers who hosts a few fundraisers annually and all proceeds are provided to IPL. These funds are used to enhance programs and services that IPL offers.

OUTCOMES THAT WERE IDENTIFIED

Being actively involved with each of these partners throughout 2018 increased the visibility and awareness of the Invermere Public Library throughout the community. As an organization like ours becomes involved with other community groups, our reach increases as well because we created additional avenues to share information through about the services and programs at IPL. In each of the partnerships listed above and many others that are not listed, the beneficiary of the partnerships are the residents of the Columbia Valley because each connection is an example of another program and/or service we have been able to provide for them free of charge. All of these efforts combine to improve the overall well-being of the people of our service area.



GOVERNMENT PRIORITY:

SUSTAINING OUR SUCCESS: ENHANCING GOVERNANCE AND DEMONSTRATING IMPACT.

LIBRARY GOAL THAT SUPPORTS THIS PRIORITY

From the library's strategic plan, this priority is best supported by IPL's intent to "maintain and enrich a range of relevant library services" and "develop and implement a long-range capital plan."

PROGRAMS AND/OR SERVICES THAT ALIGNS WITH THIS PRIORITY

IPL undertook a full review and rewriting of its strategic plan in 2018. The previous plan had some goals and objectives that were successfully met within the timeframe of the plan such as a move into a larger facility. Moving forward into the next four years, IPL developed a new plan that incorporated some of the previous objectives with a few updates to reflect the current position of the library. The plan also

provides direction to look a little further out than four years with the objective to develop a long-range capital plan that will take the library into the future for many years to come.

PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT THE PRIORITY

The partnership for this priority comes from the board of volunteer trustees working in partnership with the library director and library staff to achieve the goals of the library in a coordinated way. This priority is also supported by the relationships that have been developed with local government for the continuity of annual operating funds as well as with local organizations that provide a variety of granting streams which the library accesses to enhance programs and services.

OUTCOMES THAT WERE IDENTIFIED

The strategic planning process that was held at the beginning of March 2018 had a very positive energy to it because of all of the goals and objectives that had been achieved from the previous plan. It made the process of reviewing the plan and rewriting the areas that needed to be updated an exciting process and both the board trustees and the library staff were very engaged in the process. IPL has also become better at telling our story of success and making sure to emphasize the different events we have been a part of so that not only are we as a library measuring our impact on our community but we are also highlighting this impact to our community so that they, too, are aware of the difference that IPL makes in their daily lives in the Columbia Valley.

SUMMARY

The Invermere Public Library's greatest achievement in 2018 was the ability to increase operating hours by 25%. This allowed for the library to provide more opportunity for residents of the Columbia Valley to connect with our programs and services. When the library first launched its Monday openings in June 2018, it was expected that it would take some time for people to get used to library services on Mondays as had been the case in the past when operating hours had changed. However, by mid-July, library staff observed that Mondays were being used just as much as any other day of the week which, to us, was a signal that the addition of these new hours was a good decision. Families also told us how much they appreciated being able to come to the library for the second evening each week. Many families live out of town and have to bring their children into town for their extracurricular activities. In Invermere, the only places open after 6:00 PM are the grocery stores and restaurants so having the opportunity to spend a couple of hours at the library on both Wednesdays and Thursdays until their children's activities are finished has been a very welcome option. It was very fitting that we were able to launch these additional hours in the same month that the library celebrated its 55th anniversary of providing public library services in this community.

Moving into 2019, the Invermere Public Library is looking forward to continuing to connect with our community in the provision of public library service. The successes that have been achieved over the past few years will certainly provide us with inspiration and motivation to continue achieving our vision of being a welcoming community hub that meets the evolving literacy needs of our valley's diverse population.