INTRODUCTION

The Nelson Public Library (NPL) is located in the Central Kootenay and serves the City of Nelson, as well as three adjacent Regional District Areas (RDCK Area E), one of which does not contribute to library service through taxation. Residents of this area who wish to use the library pay a yearly membership fee. The total population of this region is just over 18,000 and is comprised of a vibrant mix of people ranging from seniors and families, to youth and the marginalized. Nelson has a national and international reputation as a cultural artistic community which creates a thriving tourist industry. Many tourists and young transients visit our community, and they are heavy users of the Library.

Nelson does not have a major industry and the economy relies on tourism, a post-secondary College, provincial government offices, and thriving art and music schools. Recently Nelson had the honour to be the smallest community in the world to make the short-list as a Smart 21 community under the Intelligent Communities Forum. The designation recognizes Nelson’s economic and social transformation as a leading technology center with best practices in broadband deployment and use, workforce development, innovation, digital inclusion and advocacy. This technology infrastructure will continue to attract professionals who work remotely, which is an increasingly important economic driver for Nelson and Area.

The biggest ongoing challenge that NPL faces is providing service to the RDCK Area E that does not pay into the library tax base. This is a significant barrier for many people who cannot afford the membership fee. It creates problems with being able to provide school programming as the principals and teachers are reluctant to bring students to a program where everyone cannot participate fully. The Library addressed this to some extent through a grant from the RDCK Area Director that allowed us to issue a library card to every student in the region, however this remains an ongoing long-term challenge. There have been four referenda in the last 20 years but there is an active anti-tax group that has mobilized each time to prevent a positive outcome. Every week there are people who come into the Library to get a card and cannot afford the fee, and who are dismayed and disappointed that they cannot access free library service in BC.

2017 was the launch of the NPL’s recent strategic plan. The plan aligns with the Provincial Strategic Plan Inspiring Libraries Connecting Communities and spans the years 2017-2022. It was completed with extensive community consultation of teens, youth and community partners. The consultation results underline a tension between people’s expectations for not only sustaining or increasing existing services, but also evolving to new services. For example, people want the Library to grow the digital offerings, but not at the expense of the physical collections, and to continue to build as a community hub, though not at the expense of quiet individual areas and space given to collections.

In 2017 there was a significant change-over of Library Trustees and in 2018 the Library Board focused on Board development through workshops, establishment of new committees and governance reviews.

The Mission of the Nelson Public Library is to inspire a culture of discovery, creativity and connection.

The Library’s key priorities are

1. The Library integrates Strategic and responsive approaches to support discovery, creativity and connections at both the individual and community levels.
2. The Library provides engaging, welcoming spaces to support discovery, creativity and connections.
3. The Library is responsive and accountable to community, ensuring sustainability of facilities and services.
1. **FOSTERING CONNECTED COMMUNITIES; advancing access to information and resources.**

Library Goals that supports the priority:
1. Support literacy and lifelong learning through collections and programs
2. Empower discovery of emerging technologies and provide training on digital resources
3. Facilitate community connections to inspire creativity and knowledge creation.

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| **1. UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO LIBRARY SERVICES.** NPL is one of very few communities in the province that has a population in the region who do not pay through taxation for universal access to library service. In 2016 the Regional District Director granted the Nelson Public Library funding to underwrite the costs of memberships of students in that area. Due to the large uptake (61% of students) to this service in 2016 & 2017, the Library negotiated similar funding in 2018. | • School District #8  
• Regional District of Central Kootenay | • 252 students received memberships (95% of student’s living in the area).  
• 13 class library visits from 6 different schools: 331 students.  
• 18 NPL staff visits to schools  
• Parents report great appreciation for the fact that their children are now able to access a library card without the barrier of a membership fee.  
• Teachers report more comfort in participating in class visits to the Library knowing that all students have access to library services. |
| **2. PUBLIC COMPUTER LAB** NPL added and upgraded its adult, teen and children’s computer lab.  
• Addition of two adult public computers: total of 8 adult public computers.  
• Upgraded Teen and Children’s public computers with both new hardware and software. | • Nelson City IT Department | • 22,402 public computer sessions; an increase of 8% over 2017 usage.  
• 7,468 unique wifi logins.  
• The public computer lab has up-to-date software with a Windows 10 operating system and 2016 Microsoft Office Suite programs.  
• The Lab also offers mobile printing services to residents and visitors; including wireless printing in the library or remotely.  
• NPL’s computer lab is well utilized with high usage of the wireless services, and is attracting new people to Library services. The increase in usage is suspected to be due to the popularity of smart phones. As smart phones become more powerful, individuals are no longer investing in desktop computers. The trend in software fees moving to subscription based may also be contributing to this trend. |
| **3. ONLINE LEARNING: GALE COURSES** In March 2018 NPL subscribed to Gale Courses the online learning platform that offers Library members access to hundreds of instructor lead, six-week professional and personal development courses. Courses such as:  
• Beginner to advanced computer and technology,  
• management,  
• accounting,  
• finance,  
• manufacturing,  
• business law, | • Kootenay Library Federation  
• BC Libraries Cooperative | • 216 individual course registrations from March to December 2018.  
• NPL has observed first-hand how the online learning platform supports the goals of not only NPL but those of the local WorkBC and Community Future offices. NPL staff introduced Gale Courses to WorkBC & Community Futures staff promoting, informing, and demonstrating the online training tool and the ease in which their clients (and staff) can access it. Positive feedback from WorkBC staff illustrates how Gale Courses provide a number of benefits |
• human resources,
• marketing,
• parenting,
• the arts, and a number of health and wellness courses.

NPL would not be able to afford the subscription without the financial help of the Kootenay Library Federation and the administrative help brokering the license on behalf of many BC public libraries by the BC Libraries Cooperative.

2. **BUILDING CAPACITY: enabling inspiration and innovation.**

Library Goal that supports the priority:

1. Support literacy and lifelong learning through collections and programs.
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| STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math) TRAINING & PROGRAMING | Telus  
Columbia Basin Trust  
Nelson Tech. Club | 6 sessions: 42 participants |
| a. TEEN & TECH | Kootenay Library Federation | 2 class visits  
4 programs: 79 participants |

Digital literacy and access are an increasingly important focus to ensure all British Columbians have equitable access to library services. In support of this goal in 2018, NPL introduced the Teen & Tech program.

- The program consisted of tech. workshops aimed solely at youth (ages 13-18) and taught by local experts who are working in coding video editing, the digital arts and animation fields.
- The aim of the program was to introduce and foster an interest in STEAM activities and skills.
- Grants provided funding to purchase 10 laptops and software and provided an honorarium for workshop leaders.
- The program began in the fall of 2018 and will continue into 2019.

- When surveyed 73% of participants agreed that they developed new skills from the workshop.
- Over half the participants also indicated that they learned about different types of employment available to them using the new skills they developed.
- The Teen Librarian also noted that in addition to gaining the targeted skills the participants also learned some basic computer/file management skills such as how to attach documents to email, how to save their project to the desktop and a jump drive and how to search for files.
- Other impacts included the creation of a hub where youth who have similar interest are able to connect and mentorship could happen.
- An unexpected outcome was the positive impact the project had on the volunteer workshop leaders. One leader, a recent graduate from the Selkirk College Digital Arts program, commented that the experience was invaluable and he is keen to do more teaching in the future. The DJ leader felt inspired by her experience and is planning on taking the lessons she developed for the Library program to other venues in Nelson.

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b. OZOBOTS

With a Kootenay Library Federation grant

- Kootenay Library Federation

- 2 class visits
- 4 programs: 79 participants
the Library purchased Ozobots (programmable robots) to teach children coding skills. Research suggests that coding helps kids visualize abstract concepts, lets them apply math to real-world situations, and makes math fun and creative.

- The Library hosted Ozobot spring-break and summer programs.
- NPL staff brought the Ozobots to the local middle school’s Maker Space. They gave a hands-on lesson with the Ozobots.

- School District 8

- Introduced children and parents to the theory of coding and provided hands-on experience.
- Coding is part of the BC education curriculum; the Ozobots support the curriculum by providing additional resources for children and parents to develop coding skills.
- In 2019 the Ozobots will be available for library members to borrow and take home to use.

**c. UKULELES**

In December 2018, with a Kootenay Library Federation grant, the Library purchased 10 Ukuleles. Learning how to play an instrument is a STEAM skill, it incorporates mathematics, creativity and innovation. The Ukuleles were made available for library members to borrow and take home.

- Kootenay Library Federation

- 10 ukuleles for loan (added to Library collection mid-December)
- Total loans (Dec. 12/18 to Dec. 31/18): 12
- Loaning of Ukuleles introduces library members to STEAM activities and skills; skills that have been identified as essential in today’s economy.
- 2019 Ukulele programming is being developed including intergenerational programming that will bring young and old together to learn and share skills.

### 4. WORKING TOGETHER: creating lasting and sustainable partnership.

Library Goals that supports the priority:

1. Continue to build the Library facility as a community hub.
2. Explore opportunities for expanding Library spaces to respond to community needs, including outreach services.

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| **1. BC INTERLIBRARY CONNECT** The Nelson Library continues to participate in the Provincial resource sharing system InterLibrary Connect. The system that began in 2015 has grown to include in 2018, 44 public libraries. The service supports the informational, educational and recreational needs of British Columbians by expanding the range of materials available beyond the physical and electronic collections of their home library (e.g. Nelson). Because of the convenient, fast and efficient delivery of this service, Nelson Public library members’ usage of the service is growing yearly. | • 44 BC public libraries.  
• BC Libraries Cooperative | • In 2018 Nelson Public Library members’ borrowed 6747 items through InterLibrary Connect; an increase of 71% from 2016.  
• Staff time to process interlibrary loans has drastically been reduced because of the single access point.  
• Staff time normally spent on processing traditional InterLibrary loans is now dedicated to helping members with more multifaceted and value added services.  
• Nelson residents have direct access to the collections 43 BC public libraries. |
Cooperative). The system provides a single access point for library members to search and request items from 43 public libraries.

### 2. PARENTING WORKSHOP SERIES
In collaboration with community partners the Library hosted a Parenting Series lead by experts in the field. The four workshops were:

- Q&A session with three early childhood professionals (behaviorist, therapist & development consultant)
- Raising Good Eaters
- Sensory Issues
- Supporting your child’s emotional development

Childcare was provided, allowing more parents to attend.

- **Nelson Community Services**
- **Nelson Early Childhood Action Committee**
- 4 workshops: 94 participants
- All survey respondents (12) agreed that they now have more tools in their parenting tool box.
- Participant’s comments on what they liked most about the workshop:
  - Information about real life situations
  - Understanding the meaning behind behaviors
  - Tips and tools to productively navigate them
  - I wouldn’t do this on my own
  - clearly outlined steps I need to take as a parent to help my kids and myself
- High attendance and suggestions from participants on future topics confirmed the need in the community for more supports for parents. Considering this the series will be offered again in 2019
- Development and delivery of the series strengthened the partnership between the three organizations. Each organization brought a specific skill, knowledge and community connection that resulted in a successful event.

### 3. CHILDREN & TEEN SERVICES CONFERENCE
The NPL’s Teen and Children’s Librarians coordinated the second Kootenay Library Children & Teen Services Conference: in 2018 held in Fernie. The conference provides an opportunity for knowledge sharing among those with varying levels of experience. Attendees included those who have worked in the field for 30+ years and others only a few months on the job.

The full day session included:

- a Children’s Programming Roundtable and a Group Q & A session with
- Topics covered: storytime tips and tricks, dealing with challenging situations, outreach mother goose programs, and mother-daughter book clubs
- Two presentations: Teen Roundtable, and a Ukulele Workshop.

- **Kootenay Library Federation**
- **Elkford, Sparwood, Radium, Cranbrook, Creston, Penticton, Kaslo, Greenwood, Salmo, Rossland, Nelson and Castlegar public libraries.**
- 14 attendees from 12 libraries
- The 2018 conference built upon the success of the 2017 conference; new connections were made between attendees, more ideas were shared, and further plans were made to work together through the coming year.
- The conference helps strengthen the Kootenay Library Federation as a peer group.
- The conference is affordable and accessible professional development. Similar opportunities are normally only offered in the Lower Mainland with a focus on services for large urban libraries.
- Comments from participants:
  - Came away with great ideas.
  - I really liked the networking opportunity.
  - I like that there was time to share ideas and not just listen.”
  - How wonderful to get together and share ideas with all these other people who do library programs
- Due to the success of this conference NPL
Children's Librarian is collaborating with Okanagan libraries to move the conference to Kelowna in 2019 to reach a larger audience.

### 4. SUSTAINING SUCCESS: enhancing governance and demonstrating impact.

Library Goals that supports the priority:
1. Ensure library services are delivered efficiently and effectively.
2. Communicate about library services and their value to ensure they are widely understood.
3. Ensure governance and management practices support the Library’s goals and objectives.

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| **1. NPL BOARD DEVELOPMENT**     |              | • As a result of the Governance workshop the Board now has:  
• A better understanding of their roles and responsibilities.  
• A better understanding of the Board’s role within the Strategic Plan.  
• Clear committee Terms of Reference  
• Strengthened relationships between trustees.  
• As a result of the Annual Workplan workshop the Board now has:  
• Clear path on how to advance the Strategic Plan  
• Attainable goals  
• A template to create annual workplans. |
| A number of new trustees joined the board and a new chair was appointed in the fall of 2017. In 2018 the board took this opportunity to focus on board development. They participated in two workshops:  
• Governance: the role and responsibilities of the Board and individual trustees.  
• Annual workplan: development of a Board annual work plan. |           | • BC Library Association (BCLA)  
• BC Libraries Trustee Association (BCLTA)  
• Kootenay Library Federation | |
| **2. NPL TRUSTEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** | • Two NPL trustees attended the BCLA and BCLTA 2018 conference.  
• The conference allowed the trustees to:  
  o network with other trustees  
  o develop their understanding of trustees’ roles and responsibilities  
  o strengthened their advocacy skills.  
  o created connections  
  o gain a better understanding of provincial resources available to them.  
• NPL’s Kootenay Library Federation representative attends the two annual in-person meetings. 2018 meetings included professional development on strategic planning and community consultation. | • BC Library Association (BCLA)  
• BC Libraries Trustee Association (BCLTA)  
• Kootenay Library Federation | |
| NPL trustees participated in professional development offered by regional and provincial library associations. These opportunities provided support on governance, advocacy and library trends | • The Program Management Templates were developed in 2017 and implemented in 2018.  
• The templates created an efficient way to help develop and evaluate library programs and services.  
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SUMMARY

After a year of transition in 2017 (new Chief Librarian, new Board Chair and a number of new board members) 2018 was a year to develop and strengthen relationships with staff, local government and community. NPL Board and staff achieved this while simultaneously accomplishing a number goals set-out in the library’s strategic plan; some of which are outlined in this report. Library staff and the Board are excited to build upon these accomplishments to advance the priorities further in 2019.

Nelson Public Library’s greatest challenge continues to be trying to find resources for new initiatives while maintaining the trusted and respected programs and services people expect. Static funding from the province, along with increased demand from our members and new provincial initiatives is not a sustainable situation. The Library finds it increasingly difficult to manage these conflicting priorities with funds that have lost inflationary value over the past decade. Fortunately local government continues to recognize the value of the public library in our community and has provided inflationary increases to the Library’s operational budget over the years. Nelson Public Library continues to provide innovative programs and services in response to evolving community needs. The Library is viewed as a trusted community partner at the many community tables in which Library staff participates. Nelson Public Library is indeed a creative and responsive public service organization inspiring a culture of discovery, creativity and connection in our community.