




MARCH 1, 2019

PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT

POWELL RIVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

POWELL RIVER PUBLIC LIBRARY
100-6975 Alberni St.



Introduction

Powell River is located on the Upper Sunshine Coast, between the mountains and the Salish Sea. The Powell River Public Library serves the City of Powell River, the Regional District and the Tla'amin Nation-- approximately twenty thousand people. Powell River is statistically an older community, the average age is over 50. Powell River is located in the Traditional territory of the Tla'amin Nation, this area of the coast has been the home of the Coast Salish peoples for thousands of years. The City of Powell River was established in the early 1900s around the pulp mill and logging industry. With the reduction in the number of jobs at the mill, Powell River and the region have been focused on economic revitalization. Encouraging tourism and new industries in the community is a priority.



2018 was the first full year located at the new library on Alberni St. This meant that it was the first year of data for us to use as a tool in budgeting, planning programs and staffing. In an effort to more accurately understand the use of our Library, a space use survey was conducted in October of 2018. These numbers combined with the numbers from our programs and collection use, paint the full picture of a space that is well used and thriving for a variety of people and tasks.

Being located in the centre of the community and providing an inviting space that is designed for many types of use, the library has seen consistently high numbers since opening its doors in 2017. This has been both an indicator of success and a challenge. It has been rewarding for staff to know how appreciated the service that they deliver is, and to know that library services are reaching more people in our community. That being said, increased use has led to increased wear on the collection, higher demand on programming and an increase in the frequency of difficult interactions with the public.

Strategic plan

Our strategic plan is valid until 2019, a revision is planned for the third quarter of 2019. Largely the current plan is focused on the transitional period around the move to the new library and the changes expected in that time period. Taking time for the planning process will refocus the energies of staff and the Board now that the Library is settled in its new location.

2018 Initiatives

Safety and staff training in response to our new use patterns, have been at the forefront of staff training in 2018. The new library has been a wonderful haven for a larger segment of the Powell River population, this increased use has put pressure on library staff in a variety of ways. In addition to increasing the number of materials circulated, visitors to the Library and attendants in library programs, library staff navigated an increased number of challenging interactions with patrons.

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A tremendous amount of staff time was devoted to the important work of developing safety procedure and training in 2018. The goal of this work was ensuring safety of staff and the public, improved confidence of staff and excellent service. This work will be an ongoing focus in the landscape of public service work.

Discussion

Fostering Equitable Access

Powell River strategic goals:

- Improve the literacy skills that are a key to success; PRPL facilities, programs and services will be developed with the aim of improving basic and technological literacy skills across our community.
- An assessment of how to best directly market programs and services to the schools will be developed by the end of 2017.
- Prior to the move to the new library, all staff will have a policy and procedure training to refresh skills.

PROGRAM / SERVICE	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	PARTNERS
Improved public Wi-Fi services	In 2018 PRPL increased the public Wi-Fi connection to 150	Patrons accessed the internet more quickly. Improved access to Wi-Fi during closed hours. Fewer complaints about speed. Improved streaming for programs using video.	

Developing Skills and Knowledge

Powell River strategic goals:

- Prior to the move to the new library, all staff will have a policy and procedure training to refresh skills.
- Development of staff and board are an ongoing priority; an annual development plan framework will be developed in 2017 and launched in 2018.
- A repository for locally created, digital works will be established and uploads will begin six months after the new library opens.
- PRPL will support the development of community connections by being a free and open environment.

PROGRAM / SERVICE	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	PARTNERS
Improved staff training on safety and violence prevention in public service.	Procedures and policies that promote a safe workplace and environment for the public. Staff participated in two days of safety training .	Improved reporting of incidents and responsive procedural development has given our staff a clearer picture of how to deliver service to the public safely.	
Computer Help	Scheduled digital literacy support with library staff that covers basic digital questions.	Learners become more comfortable with the digital world and are better prepared to learn independently.	
Tech Tips	Digital literacy support twice per week from the Literacy office. Learners are able to drop-in and bring their own device to work through questions or challenges one on one with Literacy Office staff.	A larger number of learners become more comfortable with devices and digital scenarios.	Dr. Elsie Paul Literacy Office provided staff for four hours per week

Working Together

Powell River strategic goals:

- A formalized outreach plan (for library staff and the board) will be finalized by the start of 2018.
- PRPL will continue to partner with organizations and individuals to grow the quality of our resources and services.
- Relevant programs as well as services will continue to be directly marketed to the schools and families; an assessment of how to effectively deliver this information will be completed by the end of 2017.
- Development of staff and board are an ongoing priority; an annual development plan framework will be developed in 2017 and implemented in 2018.

Programs and Services

PROGRAM	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	PARTNERS
Co-locating with the Nook and Dr. Elsie Paul Literacy Office	Sharing space with partners enables both to benefit from the work of the other and to learn from the other organization. The Nook is a café within out library, it is a social enterprise that provides skills training to new and young workers as well as creating a more inviting space for patrons. The Literacy Office is an adult literacy program, library staff refer patrons with ongoing support need to their volunteers.	More is available under the umbrella of the library. By sharing a space we deliver services that the public expects to see together and offer a more complete experience. The Library offers the Literacy Office a neutral place to provide basic adult literacy services. Patrons are able to receive literacy services that range from basic to complex under one roof without being sent across town.	Powell River Employment Program is the parent organization of both the Nook and the Dr. Elsie Paul Literacy Office. They provide staff and services that complement the Library.
Read to Dogs	A pilot program has become a regular monthly feature, where children are invited to develop their literacy skills and confidence by reading to dogs. The eight dogs are child-certified therapy dogs	Increased engagement among families in our community, and a safe, fun environment for hesitant young readers	St. John Ambulance Therapy Dogs provided dogs and handlers

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Enhancing Governance

Powell River strategic goals:

- Development of staff and board are an ongoing priority; an annual development framework will be developed in 2017 and launched in 2018.

PROGRAM	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	PARTNERS
Space Use Survey	Reliable information regarding the use of our new library space. 20% of visitors reported being in the space for work or study.	Space use data guides development of our services and programs as well as our understanding of what the community needs from our space when it is seen as a resource. We know more accurately the number of people using the library without library cards.	

Summary

In response to the many changes that came with the move to a larger space, 2018 saw a large focus on looking within the organization to strengthen and improve the procedures and training that staff rely on in their work.

Opportunities

The larger library location continues to offer the opportunity to partner with organizations and deliver services that were not possible in the old location. By providing space to co-locate with the Literacy Office we improve our ability to deliver comprehensive literacy services under one roof. We have been able to support authors and local organizations with low cost or free room rentals to facilitate their events and build ties in our community.

We have also cultivated unique opportunities for artists, as our new site has resulted in commissions for a large wall mural, a wood carving, and metal sculpture, which helps beautify our city, combined with a garden that focuses on native plants.

The Library is a space that attracts groups and individuals to work, study and enjoy. The number of new people and organizations that the Library has supported in 2018 shows that the use may continue to grow.

Challenges

Local funding for the library was limited in 2018 despite an increased need to cover the basic facilities costs of a larger space. Working within these bounds, library staff avoided cutting services to the public.

Procedural changes have been required to respond to challenges. Largely the procedure that has been added in 2018 revolves around giving staff the tools that they need to be safe and prevent violence in the library.

Future Challenges

The continued financial constraints of the City of Powell River is a challenge that is not expected to be over. The budget for 2018 was reduced and the prospect for the 2019 financial year is uncertain.