Surrey Libraries Provincial Library Grants Report 2018

INTRODUCTION

Surrey is a geographically large municipality that is characterized by rapid growth. Population estimates for 2018 show Surrey with over 567,960 residents, representing the second largest municipal population in BC. Surrey has had an average annual growth rate of 2% over the last 10 years. Its population is projected to increase by over 260,000 in the next three decades. Estimates are based on a combination of Surrey's building permit data and BC Assessment Information. (Source: City of Surrey Planning & Development)

Surrey is comprised of 6 communities: City Centre, Cloverdale, Fleetwood, Newton, Guildford, South Surrey and Whalley. There is a library in each community, with 2 libraries in South Surrey and Newton. City Centre, is the region's "Second Downtown" after Vancouver. As the second metropolitan centre for the region, Surrey City Centre is transforming into the economic, social and cultural hub of the city. What was once a suburban town centre is developing into a walkable, transit-oriented downtown core. City Centre is already home to such landmarks as City Hall, City Centre Library, Simon Fraser University, Kwantlen Polytechnic University and Holland Park. Over the next decade careful planning will establish a downtown core where people want to live, work and play.

Affordable housing is driving more newcomers and young families to the City. Similarly, businesses are taking advantage of rapid growth, lower land costs and the ability to be closer to their workforce and clients. Attracting more business to Surrey has been a focus of the City. Surrey currently has eight business parks. Growth in other areas of the city continues to escalate, notably Clayton. The City of Surrey is building a new Clayton Community Centre and Library that integrates arts, library, recreation, and outdoor spaces in a single facility. It will be a place where the community can connect with their neighbours to play, read and make. Ground breaking occurred in August and construction of the new facility is currently underway with a completion date set for summer of 2020.

City of Surrey Quick Facts:

- Surrey has had an average annual growth rate of 2% over the last 10 years.

- Newton accounts for over one-quarter of Surrey's total population.

- City Centre has had the highest annual growth rate averaging 2.73% over the last 10 years.

- 2,642 new businesses opened in Surrey.

- In the last five years, Surrey has become a home to the largest number of refugees in British Columbia. In this period, over 25% of all Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) in BC have settled in Surrey and since November 2015, over 44% of all Syrian GARs who came to BC have found a home in Surrey.

- In Surrey, homelessness increased 49% between 2014- 2017. The City in collaboration with the Province commissioned temporary housing to help house homeless individuals on 135A Street. In June 2018, the City moved over 210 homeless individuals living on 135A Street into 160 transitional accommodation units and additional shelter spots where they will receive 24/7 support. This interim solution will be augmented by 250 more long-term supportive housing.

- 15,933 low-income children and families were supported through the City's Leisure Access Program for recreation activities.

Surrey Libraries is a key partner in many City initiatives including the City of Surrey Public Safety Strategy. Surrey Libraries collaborates with more than seventy community partners each year to provide programming and services that make a difference to the lives and learning opportunities of residents. In 2018, Surrey Libraries delivered 6262 programs throughout our communities to enrich learning and literary. We are proud to have connected with the 210,680 children, youth and adults that participated in our programs. Over 2.7 million people visited our branches and nearly 4 million books and materials were borrowed.

Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan 2016-2018

VISION: Where the power of knowledge inspires people to build a better future.

MISSION: We connect people to lifelong learning, information and ideas

VALUES:
- Create welcoming spaces shared by all
- Connect people and ideas
- Engage the community
- Inspire creativity and innovation
- Take leadership in promoting the value of literacy and a love of learning
- Advocate for intellectual freedom

SUCCESS: Every resident recognizes Surrey Libraries as a community leader in supporting creativity, connectivity, literacy and lifelong learning.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:
- Strive for excellence in member services
- Engage with the community
- Inspire the community

A major accomplishment for Surrey Libraries in 2018 was the development of a new five-year Strategic Plan for 2019-2023 that involved wide-scale staff, community and stakeholder engagement.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES, GOALS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, PARTNERSHIPS

The strategies referenced in this document are the four strategies identified by the Provincial Strategic Plan in *Inspiring Libraries, CONNECTING Communities*. These strategies collectively support the vision for public library services in British Columbia.

PROVINCIAL LIBRARY PRIORITY/STRATEGY #1: **FOSTERING CONNECTED COMMUNITIES**: *ADVANCING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND RESOURCES*

> ✓ Supporting libraries in identifying under-served communities and develop strategies to address service gaps.

Library Goal that supports the priority: In our Strategic Plan the overarching outcome is both "Engage with the community and "Inspire the community." This is supported by the specific goals in our 2018 Operational Plan to:

- *Increase opportunities for engagement through programs and outreach*
- *Provide connections to ideas or to other people through collections, technology, and experiences*
- *Encourage a love of reading, learning, curiosity and imagination*

Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority: **Mobile Circulation Outreach**

Mobile Circulation is an outreach service that involves Circulation staff accompanying an Outreach librarian to a program or event outside of library walls. It was created primarily to target and welcome people experiencing homelessness, vulnerable populations and newcomers. This service meets these groups where they gather in the community, promotes services, and provides access to valuable resources.

Mobile Circulation Outreach Objectives are:

- Meeting people where they gather in order to reduce barriers that prevent access to library programs and services;
- Reducing financial barriers: Waiving fees, fines, and providing a "Fresh Start" to those in financial need;
- Encouraging our community to actively use the library again;
- Providing library access to newcomers, people experiencing homelessness and vulnerable individuals who may not yet have proper identification by issuing Access cards;
- Promoting library services to members of our community that might not necessarily come to the library;
- Raising awareness and making the library more visible in the community.

Partnerships that support the priority: Mobile Circulation Outreach is led by Surrey Libraries Circulation staff and Information staff. Community partners that regularly welcome our program include: Green Timbers Food Bank, Surrey Food Bank, Surrey Urban Mission, Cynthia's Place, Sources Women's Place, Surrey Women's Centre, Highland House, ELL Welcome Centre, Bill Reid Shelter, FRAFCA Youth Resource Centre, Phoenix Recovery Centre, Gateway Shelter, Guildford Lookout Shelter, and Sources Food Bank.

Outcomes that were identified: In 2018, Surrey Libraries conducted 112 outreach sessions and spent 268 hours reaching out to the vulnerable in the Surrey community. Staff created 1190 new library cards, including 237 Access cards. Access cards are offered to patrons for whom paying library fines would be a significant source of financial hardship. It is also available for those who are unable to provide identification, and/or proof of address necessary for a regular library card. Staff waived $12,733.00 in fines and fees and granted 131 Fresh Starts. A Fresh Start supports the City's poverty reduction strategy and is provided to a patron who has notified the library of their inability to pay fines and fees.

Staff did not formally survey members in the community as needs were diverse and the setting did not support this method. Staff solicited feedback informally and documented anecdotes with permission from participants in order to ascertain impact. Below is a sample of anecdotes collected:

- "I was a nurse but my addiction has cost me everything. My place, my car, my puppy. I need some good influences in my life. I was going to come to the library but my addiction, it was too much chaos. Yeah, I'd like a library card. Thank you!"

- "This is a new beginning for me. This is just what I need. I feel like I can get a new start. I can learn the computer and I can get books out. I don't read novels much. I like to read things on how to learn things. Thank you."

- Fresh Start given to a 15-year teen. When I told her that I could take care of her fines as they were from several years ago while under the care of her mother (who she is no longer in contact with), her reaction was special. Covering her mouth with her hands she was visibly shocked and appreciative. "Really?? Oh, wow that would be lovely. I love to read but I haven't because of all those fines I got with my mom and she told me I had to pay it back but I have no money". After I showed her how to use her online account, she was excited and happy about putting holds on Neil Gaiman books.

- "It's nice that you come and do this (referring to outreach) because some people just can't get motivated to come to the library or can't make it and …. You're here!

- "Hey, thanks for taking care of my fines. It's one less thing for me to worry about. I'm working two jobs and trying to save for a bus ticket to get up North to work in the camps."

The following comments from participants illustrate that Mobile Circulation Outreach has supported the Provincial Library Priority/ Strategy #1 of Fostering connected communities. The strategy focuses on enhancing equitable public access to all types of information and tools. With provincial funding, we were able to identify and reach out to under-served communities with the addition of Mobile Circulation to our outreach services. Anecdotes documented demonstrated that outreach is having a significant positive impact on the lives of those we are connecting with in the community. As there is demonstrated value in continuing this program, the library will continue this service and strive to expand its reach in the community and increase partnerships with interested community agencies.

PROVINCIAL LIBRARY PRIORITY /STRATEGY #2: BUILDING CAPACITY: *ENABLING INSPIRATION AND INNOVATION*

✓ Supporting libraries in improving the digital literacy skills of users and staff so that they can participate in an increasingly digital world.

Library Goal that supports the priority: This program primarily supports two of the Strategic Priorities as outlined in the Surrey Libraries' Strategic Plan, under "Inspire the Community":

- *Support the digital literacy needs of our members through training and access to learning tools*
- *Provide connections to ideas or to other people through collections, technology and experiences*

Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority: After School Code Club

The Surrey Libraries After School Code Club program responded to a demand by Surrey teachers and parents for coding instruction support. The program was designed to provide both an awareness and skill set of basic programming concepts through use of the web-based, graphical programming language, Scratch. The program's target audience was children ages 8-12, who were either already familiar with Scratch or those who had no prior coding experience. In 2018, Surrey Libraries held 16 rounds of the After School Code Club with a total of 96 sessions and 192 child participants.

The goal of this program was to expand children's classroom learnings, and create a meeting place for new ideas to be shared and explored in an ever-growing, digitally-connected society. The program also set out to empower children and educators in our city with the skills necessary to thrive in a technology driven society.

Partnerships that support the priority: The program was offered in partnership with Kids Code Jeunesse. Kids Code Jeunesse provided the curricular content and volunteers that came from a variety of backgrounds, ranging from self-taught young adults to retired industry professionals.

Outcomes that were identified: At the end of the series, participants were asked to complete evaluation forms from a desktop link on the computer classroom computers. As they were children, parents were encouraged to sit with children and assist in answering the questions. For this report, data was analyzed for the April -June 2018 sessions. In total, 51 evaluations were received, and after taking the classes:

- 72% agreed or strongly agreed that they know more about coding
- 72% felt more confident about using computers
- 72% said they plan to do more coding
- 64% said they are more aware of programs for kids at my library

The library also asked two open ended questions. Sample responses are below.

1. *What did you like most about the program?*

- I learned how to make shapes and how to make them spin
- This was a very fun and amazing program!

- I really like the coding club and I wish we had more coding throughout the summer
- Connecting all the stuff together
- Doing the games and the blocks
- How it makes you use logic

2. *Please list any ideas for making this program better.*

- This was a very fun and amazing program
- Nothing the program is perfect
- Advanced steps
- HAVE MORE CLASSES!!!
- Do more games sessions

Based on the survey results we can conclude that After School Code Club has supported the Provincial Library Priority/Strategy #2 of Building capacity. This strategy focuses on fostering excellence and best practice: building capacity across all libraries to be inspirational, be leaders in practice and be responsive to their community's needs. With provincial funding, we were able to improve the digital literacy skills of children and support the BC school curriculum, that added coding to the curriculum in 2017. Surrey Libraries will continue to offer this program as there continues to be a demonstrated demand for additional beginner classes and advanced coding classes. The library will pilot a robotic coding program and explore ways to expand coding opportunities in 2019.

PROVINCIAL LIBRARY PRIORITY /STRATEGY #3: WORKING TOGETHER: *CREATING LASTING AND SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS*

✔ Creating opportunities for libraries to work together with the provincial government to identify and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, through the understanding that libraries provide British Columbians with diverse information, programs and services in their communities.

Library Goal that supports the priority: In our Strategic Plan the overarching outcome is "Engage with the community." This is supported by the specific goal in our 2018 Operational Plan to "Collaborate with partners to improve the social well-being of our community, with special emphasis on improving outcomes for children 0-12 and their caregivers".

Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority: **Grade 1 School Tour Strategy**

The Grade 1 School Tour Strategy was created to strengthen the relationship between Surrey Libraries and the Surrey School District. Discussions between Youth Services Librarians, Teachers and Teacher Librarians revealed there were barriers to the school tour process that the library had some control over. They included:

- Some schools were not aware that Surrey Libraries offered grade specific tours
- Teachers finding the Library Tour Card Application Forms a lot of work

- Teachers reluctant to allow students to borrow materials from the library during a tour because of the language/communication barrier with parents and caregivers
- Library books being returned to the school instead of the public library, or not being returned at all
- Teachers were not aware that library tours support curriculum goals

Grade 1 School Tour Program Objectives:
- Support teachers in fulfilling Grade 1 curricular competencies
- Reduce barriers to school tours
- Provide a school tour to all Grade 1 classes in the Surrey School district
- Increase library card memberships for Grade 1 students
- Encourage a love of reading

Partnerships that support the priority: Surrey Library staff in partnership with the Surrey School District (SD36).

Outcomes that were identified*:*

Surrey Libraries worked to reduce the above barriers by revising the Library School Tour Application form, and the school tour handout, which included a new rack card for teachers. In addition, Surrey Libraries streamlined the school tour booking process by adding the Request a Tour form to the Surrey Libraries website. Between September 2017- June 2018, 1259 new child cards were made as a result of this initiative.

Youth Services staff distributed a survey to all Gr. 1 Teachers visiting the library with their class to gather their feedback on school tours and the revised process.

At the end of each tour, teachers were asked to complete a brief paper survey. Surrey Libraries surveyed the teachers using the Project Outcome Education and Lifelong Learning Survey. For this report, data was collected and analyzed from October 2017 -June 2018. A total of 107 surveys were collected.

Of the percentage of teachers surveyed who either agreed or strongly agreed that they benefited from the program:

- 95% learned something that was helpful
- 92% intended to apply what they learned
- 93% felt more confident about what they learned
- 94% were more aware of resources and services provided by the library

The library also asked four open ended questions. Sample responses are below.

1. *Is today's tour booking a result of Surrey Libraries NEW Grade 1 Tour initiative?*

- 10 responded with the word Yes
- 94 responded with the word No
- This is a great reminder, but I try to do a library trip every year with my young learners
- I have made a Library tour part of my Kindergarten experience for 14 years

2. *Tell us how this library visit supports curricular competencies?*

- Motivates and encourages children to read, which is one of the core competencies
- First Nations authentic materials. Maybe have a book list available for grade level that link to curricular competencies.
- Help children read fluently at grade level.
- The visit provided a lot of information regarding the library & book. This would encourage reading among the students which ultimately will help them to build connections and develop critical thinking skills.

3. *What could the library do to better assist you in learning more?*

- Regular visits to neighbouring schools
- Emails for teachers about programs going on at the library for age groups
- Maybe Librarians visit the schools
- Continue reaching out to the community
- Send emails about library programs and events that I could pass along to parents

4. *What did you like most about this program?*

- Everything was explained step by step at a level the students found engaging, as well as introducing the various materials students can sign out
- That the kids get to sign out a book
- Students all received their own cards – they were so proud of this 😊 inspires the love of reading and books – reiterates proper care of books – the children's connection to neighborhood services like the public library is invaluable

Although one of the goals of this strategy was to increase awareness of our library tours, from the survey responses we can see that Grade 1 teachers in the Surrey School District are well informed of this service. The Grade 1 School Tour Strategy did support the Provincial Priority/ Strategy #3 of Working together. This strategy calls for the nurturing of these partnerships, harnessing libraries' ability to innovate and deliver services collaboratively. As a result of the Grade 1 School Tour initiative, teachers felt supported, marketing materials were created to assist teachers, and children were inspired. Most importantly, the relationship was strengthened between Surrey Libraries and the School District. The outcome of this relationship has yielded positive benefits for both parties. Surrey Libraries has increased Argus deliveries that return Surrey School books to the District Office from once to twice a month. This supports families who have returned their school books in error to the Surrey Public Library. It also helps the teachers, who cannot issue a report card until school library books are located and returned. Adding a school tour and library card membership onto an author reading was also a successful recommendation by Surrey School teachers. This has increased our attendance to author readings by elementary school children.

PROVINCIAL LIBRARY PRIORITY /STRATEGY #4: SUSTAINING OUR SUCCESS: *ENHANCING GOVERNANCE AND DEMONSTRATING IMPACT*

✓ Supporting the creation of a common measurement framework that may identify new data sources, and the means and mechanisms to regularly collect and analyze related data.

Library Goal that supports the priority: In our Strategic Plan the overarching outcome is "Engage with the community." This is supported by the specific goal in our 2018 Operational Plan to "Implement strong data collection, analysis and evaluation methods".

Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority: Measuring Outcomes of Baby Storytime using Project Outcome Early Childhood Literacy *Follow up Survey*

Surrey Libraries as part of an InterLINK directed outcomes-based evaluation project piloted 'Project Outcome' in the Fall of 2017. Project Outcome is a **FREE** online toolkit designed to help public libraries understand and share the impact of essential library programs and services by providing simple surveys and an easy-to-use process for measuring and analyzing outcomes. The committee chose to evaluate baby storytime programs in the Fall of 2017. Results were submitted in the 2017 Provincial Literacy Grant Report. The InterLINK committee decided to test the follow up surveys in March 2018, in order to submit finding in the 2018 Provincial Literacy Grant Report.

Follow up surveys were distributed in March 2018 via email to the same parent participants that had provided staff with their contact information in Fall 2017. These parents and caregivers attended baby storytimes at the Semiahmoo, Cloverdale (includes Clayton Hall outreach) and Guildford Library locations.

Partnerships that support the priority: Baby Storytime programs were created and delivered by skilled library staff in the Surrey Libraries Youth Services Department. Community partners that helped to promote this program and continue to do so are; the Public Health Unit, the Children's Partnership of Surrey White Rock and Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture. Public Library InterLINK members (Surrey Libraries, Vancouver Public Library, North Vancouver District and Whistler Public Library) worked together on the evaluation committee.

Outcomes that were identified: In order to assess whether the program was meeting the stated objectives, staff distributed a follow up survey three months later to parents/caregivers of the babies. Surrey Libraries staff surveyed patrons using the Project Outcome Early Childhood Literacy Follow Up Survey. This survey is intended to measure the impact of services designed to improve early literacy and learning skills that prepare children ages 0-5 for success in school.

A total of 17 completed the online follow up survey. Of the percentage of parents and caregivers surveyed who either agreed or strongly agreed that they benefited from the service or program:

- 88% have a better understanding of the value of doing the activities they learned with their child (ren)
- 63 % used what they learned to do something new or different with their child(ren)
- 81% spend more time doing what they learned with their child(ren)
- 81% used additional library resources

The library also asked four open ended questions:

1. *Did you connect with any other community group (s) for support as a result of this program? For example, Nurses or a Family Resource Program?*

- Yes, the list of local services was very helpful. I wish I had it months ago!
- No, but I did hear a lot about some other good programs which I would check out if I didn't have to go back to work
- Yes, Man in the Moon daddy and baby classes
- Yes, Babytime at the Clayton Hall

2. *Have you maintained the friendship (s) that you made from the Baby Storytime sessions?*

- Only throughout babytime classes at other locations
- Yes, and it's cheaper than meeting for coffee. This is free, which really helps!
- Yes, I see moms at other community events
- 47% responded Yes! but did not elaborate

3. *What could the library do to help you more with your child (ren)'s development?*

- Maybe an afternoon session that would allow more flexibility with home schedules
- I think they are doing great
- Have a variety of songs and things. It would be nice if staff could teach a class on how to do this at home. The Clayton hall babytime is the best I've seen.
- Continuing classes all year long, especially "Man in the Moon". My husband loved going.
- Read more stories during the program!

4. *What did you like most about this program?*

- Connecting with other parents and singing songs with my baby. He's mobile and really like the free play at the end.
- Meeting new mothers with their kids, singing together as mothers, talking and hearing what other mothers do with their kids
- Amazing storytime leader who made us all very comfortable singing and dancing. Because of the friendly environment, I get to meet other moms with children around the same age.
- Staff did an amazing job of welcoming parents and babies and created a wonderful play and learning community. It is so nice to have a free met up for parents & babies. I wish Baby Storytime ran all year!!

Measuring outcomes of Baby Storytime using Project Outcome's Early Childhood Literacy *Follow up Survey* supported the Provincial Priority/Strategy #4 of Sustaining our Success. This strategy focuses on enhancing governance and supporting the library community. Through this we will better communicate our success and demonstrate the value that libraries provide.

Project Outcome's Follow-Up Surveys are designed to be used 4-8 weeks after a program or service is completed and aim to help libraries better understand if patrons have changed their behavior or continued to benefit as a result of a program. The follow-up surveys are ideal for assessing the impact of a program or service after some period of time, informing internal planning, measuring progress toward strategic goals, and providing evidence for advocacy. The 17 responses received were fewer than anticipated, and this was likely due to the evaluation committee delivering the online survey after the 8-week suggested timeframe. Although the number of responses were low, the data collected proved valuable.

Most apparent in the survey responses was the social connectedness piece of this program for parents and caregivers. Many participants had formed friendships and relied on this Baby Storytime program to meet with other mothers. As the program is free and runs throughout the year, it is an affordable and reliable service to build essential early literacy skills in children and increase community connectedness. The follow up survey helped the Youth Services department identify the impact Baby Storytime is having on parents and caregivers in Surrey. As a result of these outcomes, it was recommended that the meeting room be booked an additional 30 minutes each week. This allows time after the Baby Storytime program for parents and caregivers to connect with members of their community and maintain these relationships.

SUMMARY

One challenge facing Surrey Libraries is keeping pace with the rapid growth in the city. 20% of all babies born in BC are born in Surrey, with over 5000 babies born each year. Youth Services programs in 2018 saw a steady rise in the number of participants. There was an increase of over 10,000 participants at in-branch programs, and an increase of over 7,000 in outreach. As many programs are at capacity, increases are generally the result of offering more programs to meet the demands of the community.

With a new strategic plan launched in 2019, Surrey Libraries looks forward to improving the quality of life for our residents by helping advance their social and economic opportunities. We will strive to align our resources to deliver service where it's needed most and work towards our mission to 'connect people, spark curiosity and inspire learning.'

Surrey Libraries would like to thank the Ministry of Education for the generous grants that support the improvement, extension and promotion of our Library services.