Introduction

The City of Trail is located in the west Kootenay region of the Interior of BC. Home of the Trail and District Public Library (TDPL) since 1924. TDPL moved into the newly built Riverfront Centre in April 2018. Along with the library, this building integrates Trail’s Museum, Archives, and Visitor Information Centre. Now serving as Trail’s reliable knowledge and information hub for the past, present, and future, the library’s presence in the Riverfront Centre has seen an increase in patronage by 31,958 people last year. This supports meeting our 2018 goal of engaging with more people in our community, working together to enhance recreational reading and lifelong learning. It also shows renewed interest in our traditional services and support for our progressive services. People are coming together to share interests, resources, and expand their appetites for knowledge and information.

TDPL’s objectives include providing material to encourage citizens of all ages to educate themselves though lifelong learning, recognizing the library as a prime alternative educational institution. We offer a warm and welcoming space for people of all ages and backgrounds, for meeting and interacting with others, reading quietly, or using spaces for social interaction and networking. Our new location provides a central yet tranquil setting overlooking the Columbia River between the road bridge and walking bridge. It is here in the middle where we bridge the physical and digital worlds, connecting people with each other and with knowledge and information. We support educational, civic, and cultural activities of groups and organizations. Our programs and services are provided to meet the community needs continuously identified through various means, while also cooperating with other organizations, agencies, and institutions to provide specialized programs or services. We provide opportunity for recreation through the use of literature, recorded music, audiobooks, eBooks, and video, as well as alternative forms to print which are offered to those with unique needs. Lastly, TDPL provides equitable access to digital information resources through up-to-date technology.

Not far up river from our current location is Teck Trail Operations. This includes one of the world’s largest fully integrated zinc and lead smelting and refining complexes and the Waneta hydroelectric dam.
and transmission system. As such, our community is largely industrial with a focus on metallurgy and technology, with the resulting service industry to provide for those workers.

As a provider of free services to the public, we continually face financial challenges. Our tight budget makes it difficult to expand programming and embrace innovative ideas to enrich our services in the interest of our patrons. We rely on grants, such as this, to assist in building community in fun, creative, and welcoming ways.

TDPL is currently in the process of hiring a new Library Director. As such, our Strategic Plan development has been put on hold until the new Director is available to contribute to its direction. Regardless, in 2019, the Library Board is committed to facilitating a process engaging representatives of all stakeholder groups to design a renewed strategic direction.

**Fostering Equitable Access to Information and Services**

TDPL is open regular business hours as well as evenings and Saturdays in order to provide services to a range of demographics. Our new building is wheelchair accessible and is now integrated across two floors. It has enabled access to 11 public computers with internet service, up from the previous 8 that were available in our old location. Free Wifi is also available. With the transition to Sitka, which happened in 2017 before our move, and the introduction of Inter Library Connect, we have seen an increase of incoming and outgoing book loans. Sitka has not only provided our patrons with a simpler way to borrow items, it has allowed a smoother transition of membership records for people from neighbouring libraries. Patrons can access the library remotely by website and stay in tuned with upcoming events and programs on our regularly updated Facebook page and Twitter accounts.

TDPL’s collection includes eBooks, eAudiobooks, and eSerials/Magazines. We also offer 29 eProducts for members through our website, ranging from the BC Building & Plumbing Codes, language-learning software and free music downloads. These features enable 24-hour access to our collection and services which suit the tech savvy but also the shift workers and those less mobile. In 2018, we added a new multicultural collection which includes both French and Italian books in support of the local needs and heritage of our community. This collection also exposes our English-speaking patrons to other languages and assists in bridging the social gaps that can sometimes occur from cultural differences.

With continued focus on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) in the workplace, TDPL has shifted three of its children’s programs to focus on STEAM development. We offer ‘All aboard the STEAM Train’ for ages 3-5 years and their adults, STEAM Lab 1.0 for ages 6-8 years, and STEAM Lab 2.0 for ages 9-12 years. TDPL is currently exploring the possibility of working with local Tech Clubs and businesses to streamline a path for the development of youth into the technology sector. Moving through our offered programs, children will progress to the Lower Columbia Tech Club from age 13 years and up, then to membership in the MIDAS Fab Lab from age 16 years and up, and perhaps even on to Selkirk College’s new Digital Fabrication & Design Program. The proposal includes the Lower Columbia Tech Club donating all of their equipment to TDPL for use and loan to the community, as well as offering equipment training to TDPL programming staff. It is an exciting proposition we hope to see come to fruition in 2019.
In support of our STEAM Lab 2.0, we secured a grant from the LeRoi Community Foundation and funding from our Friends of the Library to purchase 15 iPads in 2018. These iPads are primarily for use in children’s programming but are available for use in other programs should our budget permit expansion. We hope to expand our current offerings for seniors and adults as they have been identified as underserved. A number of these iPad will likely be available for loan to any of our patrons outside programming times in 2019.

In 2018, we hosted a Tech Fair by Code Mobile which provided a peek at the fun technology can provide with regard to music making, game playing, and programming robots. Forty-one people attended and we hope to host more events in conjunction with Code Mobile in 2019. The library participated in two new events this year in collaboration with the City of Trail and the Museum. Spooktacular a Halloween themed family event hosted 945 people in the library. Our Christmas open house welcomed 525 patron and 70 lucky children had story time with Santa.

Developing Skills and Knowledge

TDPL provides the typical library resources to its patrons to encourage learning, such as books, magazines, and computer access. In addition, we offer programs that provide learning opportunities and encourage creativity and innovation. We also facilitate a monthly afternoon of Scrabble, drawing in approximately 20 patrons each time. These patrons improve their literacy, exercise their minds, socialize, and build lasting relationships that may not have otherwise been fostered. In 2018, we added a community puzzle table and the loan of board games and Xboxes for in-library use to provide the opportunity for people to come together, share successes, build social skills, and spend focused, quality time with one another. We plan to expand our loaning materials in 2019 to suit the needs and requests of our patrons.

With the availability of online Gale courses, our staff have been able to undertake professional development at a reasonable cost of wages only, such as webinar topics “Getting serious about serials”. We have also supported collaboration and knowledge exchange through attendance in regional workshops and conferences, such as the Ferine Library CATS (Children and Teens) conference. Upon completion and return, staff have shared their lessons learned and new skills with other staff members which, in turn, has enriched the services we provide to our patrons.
The opening of our library in the new facility brought the demand for increased staffing capacity. With new staff, come new skills. Skill sets of all staff have been enhanced thanks to sharing amongst colleagues. In 2018, TDPL updated our Facebook page and started using additional Facebook features, created a Twitter account, began and continues to distribute an eNewsletter, and used and subscribed to additional creative software such as Canva and the Adobe suite.

Our patrons have the benefit of staff knowledge on-hand and are provided support with technological questions whenever possible. Those who participate in STEAM programs have additional exposure through the use of iPads and robots (three Spheros were acquired last year in addition to our existing Dash, Dot, and Ozobots). We also offer Gadget Training, where patrons can book time with our tech specialist on staff to improve their digital literacy and develop digital skills with a device of their choosing. These technology experiences are provided in a safe and friendly environment to help dampen the insecurities some of our patrons may feel. They also provide tech experience to those who would not otherwise be able to access such technology.

**Working Together**

With our new location and integrated services, we came to recognize additional needs of our patrons that are outside of our mandate. Accordingly, we reached out to other community service providers, such as Career Development Services, to better understand what is available to our patrons and how best we could direct them for further assistance.

Our lasting relationship with Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL) continues and together we deliver our ‘Mother Goose’ program for children aged 0-3 years and their adults. We work with the local home school group and provide programming for them once per month. These programs provide a social environment for children and parents alike. It also supports parents by creating a network of people in similar situations or with early childhood and literacy expertise.

Friends of the Library is another of our long-lasting relationships. They raise money, support programs, fund minor asset purchases, and assist in promoting the library within our community.

As described under Library Priority 2, staff have attended professional development opportunities engaging with the wider library sector and other jurisdictions to share best practices. Upon undertaking new developments for our library, such as our eNewsletter and the sale of library totes for fundraising, we looked to other libraries for examples, benchmarks, and best practice. Summer Reading Club (SRC) is another area where we collaborate with other libraries and organization, such as the City of Trail. The costs for special guests hosted for SRC are shared by our regional libraries to make this practice more cost-effective. SRC provides the participants with literacy, social and emotional learning opportunities, as well as physical and creative outlets.

When a neighboring community’s library closed for several months for renovation, we modified our policies to accommodate their patron’s needs. We increased the number of items they could borrow at one time from five to 15, and enabled their inter-library borrowing to be collected at TDPL. Since their library reopening, many of these patrons continue to come to our library as they have developed an affinity with it, our collection and our services.

**Enhancing Governance**

TDPL continues to raise our library’s image and profile within the community. Active memberships remain with Kootenay Library Federation (KLF), British Columbia Library Association (BCLA), and the
Canadian Federation of Library Services (CFLA). Local outreach includes collaboration with Youth Action Network, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Trail Association for Community Living, Trail FAIR Society, local School District 20 Kootenay-Columbia, Trail Chamber of Commerce and the Arts community including the Bailey Theatre and VISAC Gallery. These partnerships not only advocate and create awareness on behalf of our library, they support partnerships with our stakeholders in the public and private sectors. Additional financial outcomes include increased buying power through economies of scale, and shared advertising efforts. This is especially prevalent in our partnership with the City of Trail and the Museum.

As a result of being in a new integrated facility, we had to reevaluate and update our policy and operations manuals. This was a joint effort with TDPL, the City of Trail Parks and Recreation Department Head, and the Riverfront Centre Building Manager. These updates continue as we grow in our new facility. In 2018, the Library Board welcomed two new members and appointment a new Board Chair. TDPL successfully achieved our previous strategic goals in 2018 and the board is presently in the early stages of designing a renewed strategic direction for 2019 and beyond. As of late July 2018, we began collecting and recording library statics and financials in-house, which includes primary quantitative statics and percentages for all aspects of circulation, management of the collection, programming, and database usage. Having this information at our fingertips allows for accurate and timely assessments of the library's current financial information, and to evaluate outcomes and make predictions about the future. This data collection is presented to the City of Trail in quarterly reports. These reports are a new priority for the library that will continue in 2019.

Summary

In 2018, TDPL’s move into the newly opened Riverfront Centre peaked community interest and support evident by increases in membership and attendance. TDPL fostered equitable access to information and were developed by staff with a stronger focus on enhancements to digitally connect our community in order to bring them physically closer together. We continue to work together with numerous agencies providing programs and services for our patrons with collaborative efficiencies. Our governance has been enhanced through many professional relationships that continue to encourage our transparency and accountability. In the forefront for 2019 is the appointment of a new Library Director and the development of TDPL’s future Strategic Plan. We would like to thank the Province of British Columbia for the support in 2018 that helped to make it the success it was, and we look forward to an even brighter 2019.