INTRODUCTION

Incorporated in September of 1975, the Resort Municipality of Whistler was the first resort municipality in Canada. With a population of just over 12,000 permanent residents, 15,000 employees and 3 million average annual visitors, Whistler is one of the more unique communities in BC. As one of the top ski resorts in the world Whistler’s economy, built on adventure and hospitality contributes over 23% to BC’s tourism export revenue.

The Whistler Public Library celebrates the unique opportunities and challenges presented by supporting a vibrant and resilient tourism economy. In our 2018-21 strategic plan we honor our core local and temporary service population by acknowledging that the library is an integral part of our healthy community. We recognize that the library becomes a different place depending on the needs and identities of the people who use it and that the library can impact people’s sense of belonging in our community.

In a community experiencing growth and increasing cost of living the library is an essential piece of social infrastructure that makes life more affordable through shared resources and inclusivity. We deliver services people count on by connecting people with one another, information, and technology. In addition, the library and its services contribute to building a strong, sustainable economy by connecting people with employment, promoting cultural awareness, supporting informal learning and personal growth and providing employment, contracting vendors and creating a vibrancy for local business in proximity to our facility.

The following report presents an overview of the Whistler Public Library’s 2018 initiatives and their value to our community and stakeholders. These include raising expectations for the library experience, creating a space that is inspiring, functional and adaptable to community needs, making inclusiveness visible and building a framework for strong partnerships. These initiatives align with our 2018 goals all of which align with the goals set forth in our 2018-2021 strategic plan, and the Resort Municipality of Whistler’s Community Priorities:

- Play well with others: Partnering for success
- Make life better: Enrich community life
- Be an inspiration: Enhance the resort experience
- Make an impact: Ensure economic viability
- Be green: Protecting the environment
GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES, GOALS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, PARTNERSHIPS

STRATEGY 1: FOSTERING CONNECTED COMMUNITIES: ADVANCING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Library Goal that supports the priority:

The provincial strategy of advancing access to information and resources is supported by our strategic goals to create a space that is inspiring, functional and adaptable to community needs and raise expectations for the library experience.

Programs and/or Services that align with the priority: The Deweyless Project

The library’s mission states that we are at our best when we create opportunities for discovery and connection. This is why in 2018 we decided to replace the Dewey Decimal System with a word-based classification scheme – to make it easier for our patrons to find what they are looking for and to discover new interests along the way.

The Dewey Decimal System is like a “secret code” that patrons have to learn in order to use the library. An item cannot be found unless the catalogue is searched and the call number is noted down before heading out to the stacks. It can be intimidating, frustrating and perplexing, particularly when similar or complementary items are not shelved together such as travel and language learning or pregnancy and parenting. We do not want our patrons to have to overcome these barriers to use the library. Replacing the Dewey Decimal System allows new users to go straight to the shelf without having to look anything up and creates a more welcoming space.

A word-based classification scheme, unlike the Dewey Decimal System, is flexible and allows for our collection to be broken down into whatever categories, organized in whatever order, best serves the information needs of our local community. It is also adjustable, allowing for different the categories and shelving order to evolve over time.

Outcomes that were identified:

The outcome of implementing an intuitive and easy to use system is an increase in access to information and the creation of a more welcoming and inclusive space for our community. Compared to the Dewey Decimal System, less staff time will be required to explain and retrieve an item and it will also take less time to sort and reshelved returns. This will allow library staff to concentrate on other interactions and projects that create more value for our patrons, such as reader’s advisory and technology support. Both activities that further increase access to information in our community.

STRATEGY 2: BUILDING CAPACITY: ENABLING INSPIRATION AND INNOVATION

Library Goal that supports the priority: The provincial strategy of building capacity: enabling inspiration and innovation is supported by the library’s goals to create a space that is inspiring, functional and adaptable to community needs, raise expectations for the library experience and build community, technology, capacity and literacy through collaborative spaces and technology.

Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority: Space Needs Changes Phase 1

With the much loved and well-used library building turning 10 in 2018 and the years of unprecedented popularity, it was time to turn a critical eye to the evolving community needs since 2008 and how people are using the library today. In 2017 the library embarked on a significant engagement process that captured the community’s
aspirations for our two greatest assets: Space and Technology. The results of the library’s Vision Survey, as it was
called, were intended to support the library’s 2018-21 Strategic Plan as well as a space needs assessment. The firm
HCMA, the library’s original architects, were retained to assess the feedback, engage stakeholders and lead the
library team and board through an ideation session that resulted in a final proposal in early 2018. In 2018 the
library began implementing the first of three years of space changes intended to address needs reflected under
five key themes:

- Seating and comfort
- Teen area optimal location
- Quiet study space
- Space for work and collaboration
- Changing technology needs

To meet the need for more comfortable seating, the library expand on some of its most prime real estate. The
fireplace area or “Whistler’s Living Room” was expanded to capitalize on the desirable areas around the central
fireplace, stunning views of the mountains, and the Florence Petersen Park. As part of the expansion, the teen
collection was moved to a location in closer proximity to the Youth Services area and the future location of a
dedicated teen alcove. Along with increased comfortable seating phase one of the space changes also included
dedicated spaces for quiet and loud activities. With this in mind HCMA has designed privacy booths to
accommodate short phone or video chat interactions with a bit of privacy and noise canceling inside of a more
active zone in the library. In contrast, long quiet study tables are to be installed in the quietest zone of the library
nearest the fireplace area. These three projects are the first of nine space changes taking place from 2018-21.

Partnerships that support the priority:

The recommendations outlined in the HCMA proposal have been well received by the public and local government
due in part to the contributions of key community stakeholders who shared their experiences and observations on
the library space as part of the planning process. This group included small business owners, tutors, students and
remote workers who rely on the library for work space and technology. In addition, phases of the project could not
be completed without the assistance and support of the Resort Municipality’s Building Services and IT
Departments.

Outcomes that were identified:

While the community is currently enjoying the expanded comfort and quiet of the library’s fireplace area one of
the most positive outcomes has emerged through the socialization of the phased space changes. Sharing the
thoughtful and prudent recommendations outlined by the architects has created the perfect opportunity for dialog
about the role of the library in the community, how people are using the facility and the anticipated future uses of
the library. In addition, the commitment to funding by a local foundation as well as mayor and council has
reassured the staff and board of the strength of the library’s reputation and brand. The board is actively partnering
with the Friends of the Library and local community organizations and businesses to increase community
awareness of, and funding for, the multi-year capital redevelopment which is key to achieving results aligned with
our strategic plan. The board is also formalizing our plan for enhancing relationships in our community to create
opportunities for mutual benefit to serve our vibrant community.
**STRATEGY 3: WORKING TOGETHER: CREATING LASTING AND SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS**

**Library Goal that supports the priority:**

The provincial strategy of creating lasting and sustaining partnerships is supported by our library goal to partner for success, extending our reach and maximizing our impact through building and nurturing mutually beneficial relationships. The following partnership is also significant because it serves to fulfill the additional goals of making inclusiveness visible and expanding adult outreach. This program also takes steps to support the government’s key commitment to true, lasting reconciliation with First Nations in British Columbia.

**Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority:** Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre Partnership

One of our programming team’s top priorities in 2018 was to reach out to the Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre (SLCC) and hopefully form an ongoing partnership between our organizations. We had reached out in previous years with little success, but this time around our proposal resonated with the administrative team at the SLCC; they were celebrating their 10th anniversary of operation and had identified an increase in community programming as a goal for the coming years. We learned that the SLCC team was hesitant to offer community programming on their own, since their occasional attempts to do so generated very little interest from a local audience; focusing their resources on visitors proved to be more practical and lucrative for the organization. We proposed a series of free, community-focused, Indigenous-themed events that would be planned and executed by our Program Coordinator but delivered at the SLCC, with their marketing team providing support with promotion. By sharing our resources in this way, both organizations could benefit: WPL could achieve our goals of diversifying our program offerings, making inclusiveness visible, and expanding adult outreach (by offering off-site programming), while the SLCC could offer community programming to an existing audience (ie those locals who already attend library programs) who may have never visited the Cultural Centre otherwise.

We offered three partnered programs in the fall of 2018. The first was the Indigenous Canada MOOC (Massive Open Online Course): for eight weeks, we met with community members and SLCC staff to watch the lectures developed by the University of Alberta’s Faculty of Native Studies and discuss what we learned; this course explores Indigenous histories and contemporary issues in Canada. Our second program was a book club discussion: every fall, we host One Book One Corridor in partnership with the other libraries in the Sea to Sky Corridor; this year, we chose a book by an Indigenous author, and hosted the discussion at the SLCC. Finally, we screened Indian Horse in the theatre at the SLCC. These programs were planned and facilitated by our Program Coordinator with assistance from SLCC staff, and were attended by non-Indigenous locals, members of our neighbouring Indigenous communities, and SLCC staff members.

**Partnerships that support the priority:**

Our Program Coordinator, Jeanette Bruce, worked directly with Kimberly Stanger, the SLCC’s Operations Manager, and Mandy Rousseau, Manager of Marketing & Communications, to make this partnership possible.

**Outcomes that were identified:**

Twenty community members and five SLCC staff participated in the Indigenous Canada MOOC; 15 community members participated in our One Book, One Corridor discussion; and 80 people attended our screening of Indian Horse. Given the success of these events in 2018, we’ve planned even more partnered content for 2019: we’ve just begun our second round of the Indigenous Canada MOOC, with 10 of the SLCC’s Youth Ambassadors participating; we have an encore screening of Indian Horse planned, with members of the Lil’wat Nation to lead a discussion following the film; we’ve scheduled another book discussion for National Indigenous History Month in June; and we’ll also be screening several Indigenous films at the SLCC in June.
STRATEGY 4: SUSTAINING OUR SUCCESS: ENHANCING GOVERNANCE AND DEMONSTRATING IMPACT

Library Goal that supports the priority: The provincial strategy of Sustaining our Success: enhancing governance and demonstrating impact correlates directly with our priority to ensure economic viability and the goal to have staff who are knowledgeable and confident. This priority also supports the government’s key commitment to delivering services that people can count on and building a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone.

Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority: Materials Management Wage Increase

Leadership at the Whistler Public Library created documentation to show the changing and increasingly complex nature of the work performed by our Materials Management department, in order that our Human Resources department were able to re-evaluate and successfully re-classify this role. This small step has big payouts for staff morale, because it shows the important nature of the work they do, and also for our community, because a living wage is crucial for maintaining a local workforce.

Partnerships that support the priority:

The Human Resources department and Senior Management at the Resort Municipality of Whistler were instrumental in reviewing documentation and supporting this improvement for staff. As well, Materials Management was driven to make changes to their workflow (which necessitated the wage increase) as a direct result of the training they received through the Whistler Experience program, which is facilitated by the Whistler Chamber of Commerce. This training helped us to focus on the customer experience (patrons and internal customers alike) and to eliminate any tasks or processes that weren’t creating value.

Outcomes that were identified:

Materials Management staff received a wage increase retroactive to the date when their job description was updated. This news was welcomed by staff in all departments, but especially by Materials Management Specialists, one of whom said that this news would “make [her] whole year.” When the Materials Management team met most recently, they agreed that a highlight of working in “MM” was a “positive working environment.” Further to this point, staff in other departments and our library patrons enjoy improved service as a result of this change, since MM Specialists are engaged and eager to embrace learning and change.
SUMMARY

In 2018 our team celebrated many successes and worked together through significant amounts of change. Implementing the Deweyless Project incrementally, while staying responsive to community feedback; establishing and fostering a strong partnership with the Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre to present multiple well received events with an indigenous focus; implementing the first phase of our space changes based on our space needs assessment; and raising the wage of our Materials Management Specialists to better reflect the significance and level of their work are some of the major ways WPL has worked towards the *Inspiring Libraries and Connecting Communities* vision for library service in British Columbia. These initiatives are ongoing, and have set Whistler Public Library up with a strong foundation to move forward, continuing to improve and delivering exciting programs, welcoming spaces, and reliable services to our community. We greatly appreciate the support provided by the Provincial Library Grant such that we are able to deliver on our vision and purpose.