



Minds Grow Here!

CASTLEGAR & DISTRICT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Strategic Plan 2016-2018





Mission Statement



*Your place in the community to explore, create,
and share information and ideas*



Values

**The Board and Staff of the Castlegar & District Public Library
strive to provide services based on:**

Understanding and Empathy

Creativity and Vision

Patron Fulfillment

Respect for Individual Privacy

Staff Professionalism & Expertise

The Needs of Individuals & Families

Respect for Others

Respect for the Environment

Lifelong Learning

Universal Access

Honesty and Integrity

Service to Community

Commitment to Intellectual Freedom



Vision



Minds Grow Here!
Your Gateway to Lifelong Learning



Introduction

The Castlegar and District Public Library is located in the city of Castlegar in the West Kootenay region of British Columbia. From its humble beginnings in the 1940s to its current state of over 8750 registered users, the library has been supported and appreciated by the community it serves. It is known as an open, welcoming place where friendly staff and volunteers are ready to assist patrons with their requests, and where citizens and visitors can meet to socialize and learn.

The library serves a wide geographic area including not only the city of Castlegar but also the surrounding communities of Robson, Brilliant, Ootischenia, Pass Creek, Shoreacres, Tarrys, Thrums and the Slocan Valley. The library is one of the busiest in the Kootenays, and regularly attracts new membership. The current facility was constructed in 1987, with a much needed addition completed in 2000. The collection now exceeds 65,000 physical items and 28,000 electronic items and a wide range of programs and services are available.

In 2013 the board and staff of the library developed a three year strategic plan to help guide the library in its work. With the mandate of that plan coming to an end in 2015, the decision was made to renew and update the plan for the period of 2016 to 2018. A consultant was hired and the updating process took place from November 2015 to March of 2016. This document is the result of that process.



Accomplishments 2013-2015



- ◆ Tablets are available in the Library thanks to the City, Areas I and J, Friends of the Library and CBT
- ◆ One-on-one technology assistance provided by funding from the federal Community Access Program
- ◆ Online collection expanded to include genealogy and language learning

- ◆ Increased outreach and programming
- ◆ Book drop installed at the Recreation Complex
- ◆ Participation in Kootenay Connect resulted in huge increase in access to resources for members.



- ◆ Staff room reconfigured thanks to the City of Castlegar
- ◆ Architectural plans for renovation to the lower level have been completed.
- ◆ Email newsletter is sent monthly to interested library members.

And much more!



Listening to our Community...

In preparing to update the plan, a consultation process was undertaken which included a public survey, interviews with key government partners, interviews with selected staff and board members, and input from volunteers and partner organizations. In addition, members of the board of trustees and the library director participated in an in-person planning day on January 30, 2016.

A survey was conducted (November/December 2015) to gather feedback from both library members and non-users. Electronic invitations to participate and reminders were sent out to all members with an email address in the system. Paper copies were made available at numerous locations and the survey was advertised in local publications. Over 1000 surveys were completed, up 300 from 2012, with the majority through the online survey tool. This represented a very impressive return rate. As well, many patrons took time to include detailed comments in their feedback, indicating a high level of engagement with the process and the facility.

An extra effort was made for this plan to contact individuals who were described as library “non-users” to determine if there were identifiable barriers to participation which could be addressed. The results were inconclusive, partly because it was difficult to find households without library users who were willing to participate. Transportation and lack of time were two reasons cited for not using the library.



Setting the Context

In assessing the outcome of the previous Strategic Plan (2013-2015), board members and staff were able to state that most of the goals from the previous plan were being met, and that overall the library was operating in a well-supported and successful manner. The core business of the library, providing the community with a broad range of resources, programs and services, is well-established and functioning smoothly. For the purposes of the next plan, 2016-2018, the focus will be on improvement or expansion, with the assumption that the core business would continue as a matter of course and does not need to be described in the plan.

On the planning day, board members and the library director were asked to identify what may have changed in the last three years that might have an impact on how the library plans for the next three years. Overall, most of the same issues are still present, including the need to keep up with ongoing changes in technology and the ever-present need to seek out multiple sources of funding.

One area from the previous plan which will continue to need attention is a plan for renovations to the lower level. Significant work was done during the last two years, working in partnership with the City of Castlegar, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) and the Columbia Basin Trust, to put together a grant proposal for a major upgrade. Though the grant application was not successful, architect drawings and phasing options were developed.

On a positive note, the Friends of the Library has been revitalized and has new members and energy. There has been a dramatic increase in participation in children's programs, resulting in waiting lists, and patrons have benefitted from easier access to materials in the region.



What We Heard – Success Stories

The Castlegar and District Public Library has many positive aspects to celebrate:

- a solid reputation in the community
- highly rated staff
- dedicated volunteers and supporters
- an impressive collection
- an involved and committed Board of Trustees
- good relationships with funders
- strong partnerships with community groups

Library staff and volunteers are very friendly and always willing to help with any questions.

Thank you for your fantastic pre-school programming. The library is one of my kids favourite places to be!



What We Heard – Success Stories

Survey respondents were enthusiastic in their support of the many features they enjoy, such as children’s programs, the library’s excellent electronic newsletter, extended hours of operation, helpfulness of staff and more.

Coming from another country speaking another language it has helped a lot to perfect my English.

The wonderful audio-book collection got me hooked on listening to books while driving, cleaning, cooking and canning.

Community partners also expressed their appreciation for the library and its role.

The board is doing an excellent job and communication from the library is good.

They are involved in the community, good partners and good collaborators.



What We Heard – Challenges

Despite all its advantages, the library continues to have room for improvement.

As with all publicly funded libraries, funding insecurity is an ongoing concern. Continuing positive relationships with core funders and partners is essential.

A strong theme emerged in the survey results regarding the facility itself. Library users indicated that they felt it was time for updates and upgrades throughout the building. There were many suggestions for how existing space and facilities could be improved including:

- Re-configuration of the basement including quiet study areas and improved meeting space.
- Improving access for individuals with disabilities
- Improving outdoor amphitheatre area
- Updating worn carpeting and furnishings
- Modernizing washrooms and adding a water fountain

I think the library is a beautiful facility that is showing its age.

Needs an update... would make it more inviting to the general public

Some of the infrastructure is beginning to look a bit "tired", needs a facelift



What We Heard – Challenges

Despite the size and scope of the collection, users are looking for more variety and more copies of materials, especially magazines and e-books. This is an ongoing challenge with a limited budget.

The online book and magazine service is not user friendly. If it is an 8 month wait for a popular book, why bother?

Incompatible technology (Kindle)

Some users experience frustration using online services, finding the services slow and/or confusing.

There were also suggestions to do more advertising and promotion.

Brag more and louder about the services and programs you already provide. I was not aware of some of your services until I did this survey.



Where We're Going...

1. Funding:

Continue to pursue a variety of sources to ensure that funding is sufficient to meet needs and expectations.

- Continue to work closely with core funders (City of Castlegar, RDCK) with a goal to access additional funds to
- improve and expand the facility, collection and services.
- Explore the use of sponsors (private or corporate) to fund specific initiatives.
- Prioritize grant applications, creating a plan for applying strategically.
- Consider developing a fundraising plan in order to encourage and formalize donations and bequests.

2. Human Resource Management:

Continue to support a well-trained and satisfied staff and volunteer team.

A. Staff

- Strive to create a positive work environment for all staff.
- Recognize staff for their contribution to the success of the library.
- Provide ongoing staff training.
- Conduct regular staff performance reviews.

B. Volunteers

- Implement a revised and updated Volunteer Manual.
- Continue to recruit and encourage teen volunteers.



C. Board of Trustees

- Endeavour to have all new trustees participate in the Trustee Orientation Program within their first year.
- Endeavour to have any new Chair participate in the Chairing the Board workshop.
- Clarify length of board terms.
- Clarify and formalize the roles and selection process of the Area Reps on the Board.

3. Technology:

Take advantage of the benefits of advances in technology

- Create a Technology Lab plan.
- Update operating system to Windows 10.
- Investigate wireless and 3D printing, possibly becoming a community hub for access.
- Investigate options to ensure that Internet bandwidth is adequate for need.

4. Facilities and Space Management

Review current use of space and develop plans

- Revisit the basement renovation plan, seeking additional funding and working through phases.
- Assess improvement options for the main floor, looking for short-term affordable fixes and longer term actions.
- Install new carpeting.
- Research water fountain options.
- Evaluate exterior space, including outdoor amphitheatre, garden and signage.
- Consider environmental impact of any renovations.



5. Collections & Services

Provide a wide range of up-to-date materials, services and programs based on identified needs

- Promote home-bound delivery service more actively.
- Increase support to local book clubs, possibly starting a kids book club and hosting a book club night.
- Pilot a speakers series, suggested topics to include travel, gardening, cooking.
- Develop a system to identify books in a series.
- Investigate option for accepting online payments.

6. Community Partnerships

Continue to build and nurture strong relationships with key community partners

- Work with seniors-serving agencies to enhance services for seniors.
- Work with youth-serving organizations to enhance services for younger people.
- Explore options to better connect with new residents in the area.
- Work with local settlement services to connect for services for new Canadians.
- Explore a stronger relationship with the Castlegar Recreation Commission .

7. Communications and Marketing

Use a variety of methods to ensure that patrons, staff, volunteers and community members are well-informed about the library and its services

- Continue to deliver a high quality electronic newsletter, adding the option for targeted newsletters.
- Consider installing an electronic sign for the side of the building facing Columbia Avenue.
- Investigate having more notice boards, signage or brochure racks in the community.



Conclusion

The Castlegar and District Public Library can be justly proud of its accomplishments and its ongoing positive reputation. Many items from the Strategic Plan of 2013-2015 have been incorporated into the ongoing operation of the library, and additional new improvements have been identified for the future. The next steps, based on the 2016-2018 Strategic Plan, should see the library continuing to serve as a place where community members can meet, explore, create and share a wide range of programs, services, information and ideas.



The plan was developed with the support of the 2016 Board of Trustees, Library Director Heather Maisel, staff, volunteers, supporters and patrons of the library and consultant Val Mayes of Building Connections Training and Consulting.

Photos by Chelsea Novak, Laura Zaytsoff, Arlee Venier and Nel Vandergaag



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