

MANAGEMENT REPORT

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TO: Library Board
FROM: Kurt Heinrich, Chair, Community Relations, Planning & Development Committee
SUBJECT: **VPL Strategic Plan 2020-2023 Operating Plan**

SUMMARY

The VPL 2020-2023 Operating Plan provides an overview of the strategies, initiatives and activities to be implemented in order to achieve the 13 goals outlined in the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan and approved by the VPL Board. Staff will review and update the plan annually.

PURPOSE

This report is for information.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive the report for information.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Committee members commented on the clarity of the plan and appreciated the new approach and format, and discussed the value of the Operating Report for supporting trustee conversations with elected officials and for the additional detail that it provides for understanding each goal. They clarified with staff that the operating plan is an internal facing document, not intended for active public distribution. The committees provided editorial suggestions on the draft, inquired about reporting, evaluation, and areas of challenge or risk; and suggested that Reconciliation be noted as an overarching theme within this document in addition to in the Strategic Plan itself.

POLICY

VPL's strategic plans are guided by the Library's vision: "An informed, engaged and connected city" and mission: "A free place for everyone to discover, create and share ideas and information."

INDIGENOUS CONSIDERATIONS

VPL's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan commits to seeking opportunities to act on the Calls to Action of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission across all goals and includes two specific goals: Reflect and celebrate Indigenous cultures and history (Shared Spaces & Experiences priority) and Enhance understanding and appreciation of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing (Belonging & Connection priority). During the strategic plan engagement, conversations with the public and key stakeholders highlighted the need to bring Indigenous history, languages and cultures into library spaces and to continue sharing Indigenous voices through our collections and programming. VPL is committed to being a place to learn about the history and cultures of Indigenous Peoples, referring to First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

BACKGROUND

In February 2019, the VPL Board appointed the Community Relations, Planning and Development Committee as the Steering Committee for the 2020 to 2023 Strategic Plan.

Development of VPL's strategic plan took place throughout 2019, informed by stakeholder engagement and a strategic assessment of the library's external landscape. In December 2019, the Board approved the VPL 2020 to 2023 Strategic Plan priorities and goals.

The Plan was pending public release in March 2020 when the global COVID-19 pandemic struck. From March to September 2020, VPL underwent a series of significant changes driven by the pandemic - closing locations, laying off staff, enhancing and developing new service models, and then gradually reopening and recalling staff. During this time, the final work of publishing and communicating the Strategic Plan and finalizing VPL's Operating Plan was temporarily set aside. Upon resumption of service, staff and the Board undertook an assessment of VPL's 2020 to 2023 Strategic Plan goals to confirm the validity and identify any new priorities in light of the profound changes in the library's environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other significant events of 2020. The Library Board subsequently confirmed and approved the Plan, with revision to one Strategic Plan goal.

The VPL 2020-2023 Strategic Plan outlines the four priority areas and 13 goals approved by the VPL Board. Each goal is sponsored by a VPL Director or VPL's Chief Librarian/CEO.

DISCUSSION

In early 2021, staff developed comprehensive plans for each strategic goal, which outline the objectives, strategies, tactics, timeline and linkages to other goals, and assign a manager as lead for each initiative. The Operating Plan provides a summary of these detailed plans, including the objectives, priority audiences, and strategies from each of the goal plans. It also identifies the key initiatives that VPL will undertake to advance each of the goals, and how the goal will influence VPL's daily operations. The primary objectives of the Operating Plan are to provide the Board with an overview of the ways VPL aims to achieve its goals and to focus staff resources and efforts. Staff who are interested in, or involved in, work related to specific goals will be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the more detailed goal plans.

The next steps for VPL's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan will be to determine how VPL will measure success, and to develop a proposed approach to progress reporting for the Board, including formats and frequency. In addition to regular reporting, staff will provide more detailed updates to the Board on actions for certain goals, such as those related to Reconciliation and to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. This type of detailed reporting has been provided to the Board previously for Truth & Reconciliation activities, and the 2019-2020 summary is part of the March CRPD materials.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A number of strategic initiatives will require reallocation or incremental financial resources. These will be assessed as part of annual business and budget planning. Some activities will be identified as priorities to be supported by fundraising, which will be brought forward to the Board for decision in April 2021.



OPERATING PLAN
2020–2023



DRAFT

INTERNAL REFERENCE

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

1.1	Virtual Children's Programming	Q2 2020 to Q4 2021	M. Ashdown
1.2.1	Technology Lending	Q1 2022 to Q3 2022	J. Lee
1.2.2	Technology Sandboxes	Q1 2023 to Q4 2023	L. Palmer
1.3	Lending Kits	Q1 2022 to Q1 2023	I. Campbell
2.1	Marpole Branch Library	Q1 2021 to Q4 2023	A. Green
2.2.1	Children's Library Revitalization	Q3 2020 to Q4 2023	M. Ashdown
2.2.2	Branch Revitalizations	Q3 2020 to Q4 2023	A. Mitchell
2.3	Alternative Service Delivery	Q4 2021 to Q4 2023	L. Palmer (digital) I. Campbell (physical)
3.1	Fine Free Service	Q1 2020 to Q4 2022	J. Lee
3.2	Reconciliation Capacity Building	Q1 2021 to Q4 2023	M. Langley
3.3	Multicultural Strategy	Q2 2021 to Q4 2023	S. Middleton
3.4	Equity and Inclusion Framework	Q1 2020 to Q4 2022	E. Watkins
4.1	Healthy Workplace Program	Q1 2021 to Q1 2022	K. Payne
4.2	Increase VPL's Equity and Diversity	Q4 2020 to Q4 2022	HR lead to be determined
4.3	Targeted Communications	Q1 2021 to Q4 2023	S. Fraser

This Operating Plan is designed as a quick reference for the VPL Board and staff. It provides a summary of objectives, strategies, priority audiences, and strategic initiatives for each goal. While two goals have an explicit Indigenous focus, VPL's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation is a lens through which all goal plans will be implemented. Staff who are interested in, or working on, specific goals can familiarize themselves with the individual goal plans, available from any manager or goal sponsors.

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LEARNING & CREATIVITY

GOAL
1.1

CHAMPION EARLY LITERACY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Sponsor: J. Iannacone

OBJECTIVES

Support early literacy of children and youth and foster a love of reading at all ages by connecting people with free, high-quality opportunities to explore their interests and advance their creative aspirations.

PRIORITY AUDIENCES:

- Children and youth
- Adults seeking support for learning and interests

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

We will continue to develop capacity among caregivers using a train the trainer approach that builds on evidence based learning programs for children and youth, with attention to children in Out of School Care environments. To support our continued focus on lifelong learning, we will offer a combination of in-person and digital programming, and undertake research to identify the varying needs of seniors.

INFLUENCE ON EXISTING ACTIVITIES:

- Apply evidence-based learning to delivery of storytimes and babytimes
- Seek creative ways to apply learning priorities for middle years programs
- Respond to community interests for self-guided lifelong learning, like Lynda.com and Great Courses, or partner programs on reuse and repair

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

- Virtual Children's Programming: launch regular digital programming to expand access to early literacy programs, and develop organizational capacity to sustain core virtual programs as part of regular operations.

Q2 2020 to Q1 2021 (complete)

Lead: M. Ashdown

LEARNING & CREATIVITY

GOAL
1.2

BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE & SUPPORT CREATIVITY THROUGH ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY

Sponsor: K. Cahill

OBJECTIVES

Provide technology access to people struggling with affordability, connecting them with critical services and supporting their search for employment; help those with low digital literacy skills learn to conduct everyday activities online; support people to manage the impact of technology on their lives.

PRIORITY AUDIENCES:

- Those who face barriers to accessing or using technology; particularly seniors and individuals with low incomes.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

We will continue to offer foundational services, including free wireless, internet workstations, and digital literacy programming. We will also develop more flexible approaches to technology and increase emphasis on basic digital literacy and use of technology to support day to day activities. In addition, we will support staff so that they feel confident and comfortable working with both emerging and established technologies.

INFLUENCE ON EXISTING ACTIVITIES:

- Focus digital literacy programs on supporting basic tools for connecting, hosting online meetings, and editing audio and video to respond to digital shift
- Provide easy to access support for individuals who use library technology ranging from computers and printers to recording in the Inspiration Lab
- Continually renew and evolve technology offerings as needs and opportunities change

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

- Technology Lending: Launch hardware lending collections such as laptop computers and wifi hotspots

Timing: Q1 2022 to Q3 2022

Lead: J. Lee

- Technology Sandboxes: Enable users to explore and test new and emerging technologies, by setting up a “sandbox” on a designated topic, for example virtual reality or artificial intelligence.

Timing: Q1 2023 to Q4 2023

Lead: L. Palmer

LEARNING & CREATIVITY

GOAL
1.3

PROVIDE RELEVANT PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL COLLECTIONS IN DIVERSE FORMATS AND LANGUAGES

Sponsor: K. Cahill

OBJECTIVES

Provide access to physical and digital content that meets the educational and recreational needs of our users; maintain physical collection use and increase digital use.

PRIORITY AUDIENCE(S)

- Adults (20+), children and families, speakers of English as an additional language, and Indigenous peoples.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

VPL will continue to invest in new and popular formats to meet user demand, to be a leading voice for digital content advocacy and to explore new methods of content delivery such as controlled digital lending. Over the timeframe of this plan, we will expand the breadth and depth of digital content by investing a greater share of collections expenditures toward digital collections.

INFLUENCE ON EXISTING ACTIVITIES:

- Analyze use of collections and community need to identify areas for growth and investment
- Expand high interest opportunities for loan, including streaming video, multilingual digital content, and musical instruments
- Seek opportunities to expand exposure to local heritage materials through digitization

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE:

- Lending Kits: development of lending kits to support learning related to topics of current local interest

Timing: Q1 2022 to Q1 2023

Lead: I. Campbell

SHARED SPACES & EXPERIENCES

GOAL
2.1

REFLECT AND CELEBRATE INDIGENOUS CULTURES AND HISTORY

Sponsor: C. de Castell

OBJECTIVES

VPL will reflect Indigenous cultures, languages and history in our spaces through design, signage, art and branch naming in a way that strengthens and respects Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. We will have Indigenous naming in place or planned for at least three new library spaces.

PRIORITY AUDIENCES

- Primary: Urban Indigenous people living in Vancouver, as well as the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh (MST) Nations.
- Secondary: non-Indigenous people who use the library

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

VPL will work with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations to explore priorities for reflecting these Nations' history, culture and languages in our spaces, including guiding our work on a naming policy that includes hə́ŋdəmíhə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh languages.

INFLUENCE ON EXISTING ACTIVITIES:

- Applying and sharing learning from Indigenous engagement in branch redevelopments
- Prioritizing local Indigenous artists when planning for public art in library spaces
- Incorporating learning from Indigenous engagement into future library strategy and policy

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE:

- Marpole Branch Library: collaborate with Musqueam Nation, in partnership with the City of Vancouver, to plan and design the new Marpole Library and Civic Centre

Timing: Q1 2021 to Q4 2023

Lead: A. Green

SHARED SPACES & EXPERIENCES

GOAL
2.2

DEVELOP WELCOMING, ACCESSIBLE, AND SUSTAINABLE FACILITIES THAT MEET CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Sponsor: **J. Morrison**

OBJECTIVES

Maintain high user satisfaction with VPL facilities, and return visitation across VPL locations to 2019 levels by mid-2022.

PRIORITY AUDIENCES

- The broad spectrum of users of VPL facilities, with emphasis on families with children and people with physical disabilities/limited mobility.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

VPL will maintain and develop spaces that create a sense of belonging and inclusion. Branch revitalization plans will be prioritized based on user feedback and inclusion of flexible elements to meet current and future community needs. We will improve the physical accessibility of branches and integrate VPL's brand identity into our spaces. Central Library revitalization planning will continue, beginning with Levels 2 & 3.

INFLUENCE ON EXISTING ACTIVITIES:

- Improve accessibility through incremental branch renovations
- Communicate a feeling of welcome and inclusion through design improvements that apply VPL's refreshed brand guidelines and consider outdoor spaces
- Renew facilities disaster plans and develop business continuity plans, incorporating learning from pandemic response

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

- Children's Library Revitalization: complete feasibility study and detailed design for Children's Library revitalization to support completion of the VPL Foundation Storeys that Transform Capital Campaign
Timing: Q3 2020 to Q4 2023 **Lead: M. Ashdown**
- Branch Revitalizations: prepare for opening of new Oakridge library in 2024; launch Renfrew early literacy space; and activities as required for Britannia, Joe Fortes, Joyce/Collingwood, and other branch capital projects
Timing: Q3 2020 to Q4 2023 **Lead: A. Mitchell**

SHARED SPACES & EXPERIENCES

GOAL
2.3

PROVIDE PATRON CENTRED EXPERIENCES AND MAKE IT EASY TO USE VPL'S SERVICES

Sponsor: K. Cahill

OBJECTIVES

Maintain high levels of user satisfaction with VPL's physical spaces, and increase satisfaction with digital channels.

PRIORITY AUDIENCES

- Adult users (20+); particularly the growing number of users who rely more heavily on the library's digital services and collections.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

VPL will improve the ease of use of its services by embracing user experience and patron-centred design, improving the accessibility of physical and digital touchpoints, and reducing the number of digital platforms.

INFLUENCE ON EXISTING ACTIVITIES:

- Implement improvements such as self-serve checkout replacement, payment modernization, and online discovery enhancements
- Continually seek ways to improve the digital user experience
- Implement accessibility hardware and software in branches

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE:

- Alternative Service Delivery: develop and test alternative service delivery models to expand access to library collections (eg wifi hotspots, beacons, and vending kiosks)

Timing: Q4 2021 to Q4 2023

Lead: L. Palmer (digital) I. Campbell (physical)

BELONGING AND CONNECTION

GOAL
3.1

REDUCE SOCIAL ISOLATION AND PROVIDE AFFORDABLE ACCESS

Sponsor: D. Ibey

OBJECTIVES

Address financial and systemic barriers to accessing library services to increase equity and build social connectedness; expand reach of financial literacy programs, job skills training and employment supports.

PRIORITY AUDIENCES

People who may experience isolation or barriers to library service, in particular:

- People with low incomes and/or unstable housing
- Those who have experienced past discrimination when accessing services, including Indigenous people, racialized populations, and newcomers to Canada
- Seniors with reduced mobility
- People with disabilities

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

VPL will assess and seek to eliminate systemic barriers to library service, while enhancing offerings such as financial literacy education and assistance in navigating government programs to support affordability. To address social isolation, we will offer programs that emphasize wellness, literacy, and community connection, with increased emphasis on connecting isolated seniors, leveraging partnerships to connect patrons with mental health and/or social supports.

INFLUENCE ON EXISTING ACTIVITIES:

- Modify program offerings to support community connection and combat social isolation
- Continue the work of community librarians to engage and welcome people who face barriers to accessing library services
- Seek opportunities to incrementally increase service hours and respond to community needs

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE:

- Fine Free Service: expand fine free service to eliminate late fees for teens and adults

Timing: Q1 2020 to Q4 2022

Lead: J. Lee

BELONGING AND CONNECTION

GOAL
3.2

ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING, BEING, AND DOING

Sponsor: J. Iannacone

OBJECTIVES

Increase opportunities for Vancouver residents to learn about Indigenous history and cultures, support Vancouver as a City of Reconciliation, and encourage engagement and collaboration with Indigenous communities.

PRIORITY AUDIENCES

- Primary: non Indigenous adults and teens living in Vancouver
- Secondary: Indigenous residents of Vancouver

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

VPL will continue to respond to the TRC Calls to Action, increasing awareness of Indigenous stories, cultures, and history through programs and collections, and developing new services using a community-led approach. VPL will build internal capacity for work related to Reconciliation, and strengthen relationships with local First Nations and Urban Indigenous peoples.

INFLUENCE ON EXISTING ACTIVITIES:

- Continue to showcase the work of, and offer programs by, Indigenous authors and storytellers and expand their reach
- Engage information staff in supporting Indigenous genealogy services and programs (e.g. Connection to Kith & Kin)
- Continue to update and expand Indigenous collections at all locations

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE:

- Reconciliation Capacity Building: hiring of Indigenous planner and identifying priorities for internal capacity building

Timing: Q1 2021 to Q4 2023?

Lead: M. Langley

BELONGING AND CONNECTION

GOAL
3.3

ENGAGE AND CELEBRATE THE DIVERSE CULTURES AND LANGUAGES OF VANCOUVER

Sponsor: J. Iannacone

OBJECTIVES

Provide resources and services to support Vancouver's diverse newcomer and multicultural communities, including people who are learning English, so that they see the library as a welcoming space that reflects their experience and interests, supports their reading and learning needs, and builds a sense of belonging.

PRIORITY AUDIENCE(S)

- Newcomers and non-English speakers, including families with children, teens and adults.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

VPL will use research and community consultation to inform a multicultural service delivery strategy that considers both staff-delivered services and opportunities for partnership with existing organizations. We will ensure our collections, services and spaces reflect the valued contribution of different heritages and cultures as a way to foster belonging and combat racism.

INFLUENCE ON EXISTING ACTIVITIES:

- Continue to promote Black History Month and Asian Heritage Month, while being attentive to inclusion of diverse voices in ongoing promotion and programming
- Maintain our commitment to supporting new immigrants through programs such as the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre, New to BC and Library Champions
- Increase multilingual programs for children and families across the city enabled by digital delivery
- Implement recommendations for coordinated ESL services

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE:

- Multicultural Strategy: develop a strategy that identifies neighbourhoods of distinct languages and demographics across the city, recommends ways to reflect diverse languages in our services, and strengthen our approach to English language learning

Timing: Q2 2021 to Q4 2023

Lead: S. Middleton

BELONGING AND CONNECTION

GOAL
3.4

ESTABLISH THE LIBRARY AS A FORUM FOR CIVIC CONVERSATION AND UNDERSTANDING

Sponsor: D. Ibey

OBJECTIVES

Provide a space that supports intellectual freedom, facilitates respectful civic dialogue, and offers credible information to help foster understanding and reduce discrimination, while highlighting the lived experiences of those historically under-represented in our communities.

PRIORITY AUDIENCES

- The general public: adults and teens
- Current and potential allies for under-represented communities

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

VPL will continue to offer programs that increase understanding and reduce discrimination against racialized and LGBTQ2+ communities, and will support and showcase these voices, aiming to address racism, misinformation, and polarization. Staff will develop internal capacity to respond to emerging community interests, and work with local partners to build skills to facilitate dialogue-based programming.

INFLUENCE ON EXISTING ACTIVITIES:

- Provide ongoing representation and celebration of the contributions of IBPOC and LGBTQ2+ artists, authors and creators in programming
- Host author events, book clubs and film screenings that encourage discussion of issues or build social capital
- Partner with aligned organizations to expand delivery of programs that explore multiple sides of an issue and provide subject expertise
- Continue to support civic engagement in partnership with City of Vancouver

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE:

- Equity and Inclusion Framework: develop an equity and inclusion evaluation for programs

Timing: Q1 2020 to Q4 2022

Lead: E. Watkins

ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

GOAL
4.1

ENSURE VPL STAFF HAVE THE SUPPORT AND RESOURCES TO ADAPT TO A TRANSFORMED WORK ENVIRONMENT

Sponsor: B. Rai

OBJECTIVES

VPL staff feel prepared and supported for the variety of interactions they encounter in an era of rapidly changing technology while coping with the impacts of mental health issues and the consequences of the pandemic on our communities.

PRIORITY AUDIENCE

- All VPL staff; particularly those in public facing roles

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Starting with an internal needs assessment, VPL will apply learning from related organizations and professions, e.g. social work, to develop a comprehensive healthy workplace program that considers learning and skill-building with a focus on public service pressure points. VPL will reduce precarious work in favour of regularized models, enabling more access to training and increasing opportunities for engagement.

INFLUENCE ON EXISTING ACTIVITIES:

- Consider how to incorporate wellness content into annual staff conference
- Revitalize staff recognition programs
- Recognize and discuss mental health impacts of work and need for debriefing practices

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

- Healthy Workplace Program: develop and implement a healthy workplace program with a focus on psychological health, drawing on best practices and an internal needs assessment

Timing: Q1 2021 to Q1 2022

Lead: K. Payne

ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

GOAL
4.2

FOSTER AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE THAT REFLECTS THE DIVERSITY OF OUR COMMUNITY

Sponsor: B. Rai

OBJECTIVES

VPL staff feel a sense of belonging in the organization, are proud of their unique contributions to our ability to serve our community, and understand their role in building an inclusive workplace.

PRIORITY AUDIENCES

- Current employees
- Future/potential employees

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

As part of building an equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace, we will assess our organization to understand our current state and identify ways to address racism and barriers to equity. VPL will create an equity, diversity and inclusion plan by building on the City of Vancouver's Equity Framework and learning from our own work related to Reconciliation and gender identity. This will include anti-racism training for staff to gain a deeper understanding of current inequities and the need for action. In order to address the lack of diversity in librarianship, we will seek partnerships with other libraries and educational institutions to tackle barriers and promote library careers for historically marginalized audiences, including exploring practicums and internships.

INFLUENCE ON EXISTING ACTIVITIES:

- Support anti-racism and diversity training opportunities for staff
- Continue core Truth & Reconciliation training for all staff
- Revise and communicate Respectful Workplace/Human Rights & Harassment policies and training and consider need for related policies

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

- Increase VPL's Equity and Diversity: create a workplan for increasing equity and diversity at VPL

Timing: Q4 2020 to Q4 2022

HR lead to be determined

ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

GOAL
4.3

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND USAGE OF VPL SERVICES

Sponsor: C. Nelson

OBJECTIVES

People in Vancouver are aware of VPL's programs and services, and believe that VPL is vital to Vancouver and worth funding. Those with the highest potential to use VPL's programs and services are aware of, and use, offerings that are relevant to them.

PRIORITY AUDIENCES

- City of Vancouver voters who may or may not be library users
- Current and high potential future library users

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

VPL will increase awareness and understanding of VPL programs and services by using social media and media relations to generate unpaid coverage. To increase usage, we will focus on existing cardholders, using data to inform messaging to encourage more frequent use and greater breadth of services used (especially digital). We will work to build a strong brand identity across physical and digital spaces and communication channels.

INFLUENCE ON EXISTING ACTIVITIES:

- Use social media to raise VPL profile and increase awareness of offerings
- Undertake segmentation research to inform messaging
- Continue to apply brand guidelines to spaces and communications

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

- Targeted Communications: Develop targeted communications based on research among VPL users/non users to understand the products, services, and experiences that are most relevant to them

Timing: Q1 2021 to Q4 2023

Lead: S. Fraser