



Vancouver Public Library

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: October 16, 2019
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TO: Library Board
FROM: Kurt Heinrich, Chair, Community Relations, Planning and Development
SUBJECT: 2020 to 2023 Strategic Plan – Update

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the development of the 2020-2023 VPL Strategic Plan. Specifically, it includes a draft revised strategic framework for review and discussion.

PURPOSE

This report is for discussion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board receive the report for information.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Committee reviewed the preliminary first draft of the strategic framework. They agreed on the use of guiding statements for each pillar, discussed the importance of including the priorities in the final framework, and identified goals that could be removed or modified prior to presentation to the Board. The changes discussed by the Committee have been incorporated into the attached draft.

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 project.

In early discussions related to the development of the strategic plan, the VPL Board provided direction that the 2020-2023 plan build upon the existing plan, rather than create an entirely new framework.

The project to develop VPL's strategic plan consists of three overlapping phases:

Phase One: Strategic Assessment (June to August 2019)

This phase consisted of an assessment of VPL's current state - a comprehensive review of the library's external and internal environments. Key deliverables included:

- External Landscape Scan – a research document highlighting key external trends affecting public libraries and the people we serve
- Library-Wide Performance Assessment – a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of VPL's performance in relation to the goals and outcomes outlined in the current strategic plan
- Service Area Assessment – an operational assessment focused on key metrics and providing analysis and implications for each service area of the library.

Findings from the research and input sessions informed a comprehensive assessment of VPL's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis) as well as an assessment of the current strategic framework – evaluating the validity of the current strategic framework as a basis for the new plan. The Strategic Framework Evaluation, including a summary of the research papers, the input session findings and the SWOT Analysis, provided a critical foundation document for strategic planning sessions with the Board on September 25 and October 2, 2019.

Phase Two: Stakeholder Engagement (July to September 2019)

This phase began with the development of an engagement strategy and plan, outlining objectives, target audiences and outreach, engagement, and communications methods for each audience type. The engagement plan included:

- engagement session(s) for external stakeholders and VPL senior management
- key informant interviews, including select Board members and library partners

- VPL-led engagement activities with the public and staff, to be delivered across VPL locations and at community events
- A public survey to be deployed through Talk Vancouver, a City of Vancouver public engagement research tool

A summary of Preliminary Engagement Findings was provided as input for the Board in advance of the September 25 strategic planning session. A summary of the final findings has been provided to the Board as well, with complete final reports on each engagement stream available on request.

Phase Three: Strategic Planning and Reporting (September through December 2019)

This phase includes the following components:

- Strategic Planning Sessions with the Board on September 25 and October 2 at which the project team reported on findings to date and facilitated conversations about the future direction for VPL.
- Development of a revised strategic framework – outlining the draft priorities and goals. **This is the topic for review and discussion today and at the Board meeting on October 23.**
- Validation of the revised strategic framework will occur with the VPL Board on November 27, with further external validation led by VPL with key stakeholders and staff. The validation session with the Board will also be used to review the types of indicators most appropriate for ongoing progress reporting on the final strategic plan.
- Development of the Strategic Plan – The plan will expand upon and refine components of the draft strategic framework (goals, outcomes, supporting rationale) and identify key initiatives and actions for VPL to pursue in accordance with each goal.
- Development of the VPL Operational Plan – VPL staff will lead the operational plan development, identifying key strategic initiatives and actions that the library will undertake to achieve the strategic goals, with a report to the Board in Q1 2020.

DISCUSSION

The draft revised strategic framework was provided for discussion and feedback. It proposes refinements to the current strategic framework, reflecting the direction to evolve the current plan rather than create an entirely new framework from the ground up. Refinements recommended are based on the research and findings from phases one and two, in which the public, stakeholders, and the Board provided insights and thoughts on priorities for VPL.

Key Questions for Discussion

1. Does the framework capture the input, opportunities and feedback provided by the Board, public, and stakeholders? Do you support the pillars and goal areas as presented (noting specific wording is still draft)?
2. Are there any external stakeholders (organizations or individuals) that a final draft framework be validated by? If so – which/whom?

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2020 to 2023 Strategic Plan will be funded from the operating budget or a transfer from reserves.

FINAL REMARKS

The 2020 to 2023 Strategic Plan will build on the success of the current strategic plan, aspiring to further the existing vision, mission and values, and providing direction for VPL's continued and extended impact in Vancouver communities. The Board has agreed that the strategic planning process will be guided by research, analysis and meaningful engagement with staff, patrons, key external stakeholders and the general public.

VPL Strategic Plan

Draft Revised Strategic Framework reflecting CRPD input Oct 15

This document presents a revised strategic framework for the VPL 2020-2023 Strategic Plan. It reflects refinements to the current strategic framework as informed by public engagement, stakeholder and board input. **Note the specific wording remains a work in progress. The main objective is to reflect the priorities identified in the goal areas, which will be refined to ensure consistency of language.**

Consider adding an overarching intro – referencing that VPL will look for opportunities to advance reconciliation throughout our work

1. Pillar One: Learning and Creativity (*informed*)

Guiding Statement:

Vancouver residents have free access to collections, resources, programming and expertise to support lifelong learning and creativity.

Priorities highlighted through consultation:

The public told us that enabling early literacy for children and lifelong learning, particularly to help bridge the digital divide, is a critical role for VPL. Assisting seniors, newcomers, and people with disabilities is seen as an important priority in Vancouver.

Goal areas

- 1.1 Champion **early literacy and lifelong learning**
- 1.2 Bridge the **digital divide** and support creativity through technology
- 1.3 Provide diverse and relevant **collections** in multiple (physical and digital) formats and languages

2. Pillar Two: Shared Spaces and Experiences (*engaged*)

Guiding statement:

We provide welcoming and accessible physical and digital spaces and relevant technologies that enable residents to engage with ideas, information, and each other.

Priorities highlighted through consultation

VPL's physical locations continue to be important to Vancouver residents, acting as centres for learning, work and socializing in neighbourhoods across the city. The public expressed the importance of our physical spaces being welcoming and accessible for all, especially seniors, people with disabilities, and marginalized groups. Keeping pace with patron expectations of user friendly services and digital technologies was also highlighted.

Goal areas

- 2.1 Develop welcoming, accessible, and sustainable **facilities** that meet the future needs and expectations of our patrons

- 2.3 Reflect **Indigenous** history and culture in our spaces.
- 2.4 Provide patron centered **experiences** that enable our patrons to seamlessly interact with VPL through the channel of their choice (remove barriers to use)

3. Pillar Three: Equity & Inclusion (*connected*)

Guiding statement:

We foster belonging and understanding by facilitating social connections and informed dialogue

Priorities highlighted through consultation

From our stakeholders, we heard about growing social isolation experienced by all walks of life, especially newcomers, seniors and marginalized populations, and that VPL can contribute to addressing poverty and affordability. Increasing polarization and misinformation is also creating a need for greater civic dialogue and a place to come together and tackle difficult issues.

Goal areas

- 3.1 Support education about, and understanding of, Indigenous history
- 3.2 Reduce social isolation /address poverty and affordability
- 3.3 Establish the library as a space for civic conversation and understanding
- 3.4 Engage and support Vancouver's diverse cultures and communities

4. Pillar Four: Organizational Strength

Guiding statement:

VPL is seen as vital by stakeholders and the public; our services and spaces are well used; our staff feel valued, and have the training and tools to deliver services they are proud of.

Priorities highlighted through consultation

While Vancouver residents are extremely satisfied with VPL offerings, many are unaware of the full breadth of programs and services. Internally, we heard that staff want to be prepared to help people, desire the expertise and tools to deliver excellent service with confidence and pride, and look to reflect the diversity of our community.

Goal areas

- 4.1 VPL's staff has the confidence and capabilities to excel in all aspects of their work
- 4.2 VPL provides an inclusive workplace which strives to reflect the diversity of our community
- 4.3 The public is aware of, supports, and uses VPL offerings (spaces, services)