



Vancouver Public Library

## MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: January 18, 2018  
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Meeting Date: January 24, 2018  
TO: Library Board  
FROM: Christina de Castell, Director, Collections & Technology  
**SUBJECT: Update on Trans\*, Gender Variant and Two-Spirit Inclusion Actions**

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### **SUMMARY**

This report provides an update on the trans\*, gender variant and two-spirit inclusion initiative, part of the Patron-Centred Experience goal in the VPL 2020 Strategic Plan.

### **PURPOSE**

This report is for information.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board receive this report for information.

### **POLICY**

The Library Board has three existing statements that apply to trans\*, gender variant and two-spirit inclusion: Diversity and Inclusion, Community Engagement and Customer Service. Also related is the Human Rights and Harassment Policy.

### **STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS**

Vancouver Public Library has a long-standing commitment to inclusive and responsive library services, a commitment that is inherent in the role of the library as a social equalizer in the

community. The trans\*, gender variant and two-spirit initiative is an operating initiative within VPL 2020, aligned under Access & Equity > Patron Centred Experience.

## **BACKGROUND**

In the spring of 2016, the City of Vancouver's Equal Opportunity Office invited the library to participate in a consultation session regarding trans\*, gender variant and two-spirit inclusion, which led to a series of recommendations for the City and VPL. The resulting report "[Trans\\*, Gender Variant and Two-Spirit Inclusion at the City of Vancouver](#)" included a series of general recommendations for the City and recommendations specifically for VPL (pp. 35-36).

City Council received the report at its Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on July 13, 2016 and passed all of the motions. The City report included a referral of the report to the Vancouver Public Library Board and the Vancouver Police Board. Staff provided a summary of the VPL related recommendations to the VPL Board in a [report on July 21, 2016](#), along with examples of recent VPL work related to trans\*, gender variant and two-spirit inclusion. Staff recommended that the Board receive the recommendations and direct staff to develop an action plan.

A staff steering committee, led by Andrea Freeman, Manager, Circulation Services, developed an action plan for VPL that included more than 37 activities planned from 2016 through 2018, described in a [report to the VPL Board on February 16, 2017](#). The activities encompassed four areas:

- Public spaces, facilities, and signage
- Programs and services
- Human resources
- Communications and data
- Community consultation and public partnerships

## **DISCUSSION**

This report provides an update on the activities undertaken in 2017. VPL has completed 28 of the 37 actions for 2016-2018, and staff will continue activities through 2018. The staff steering committee meets quarterly to ensure we are achieving our objectives. Completed activities are indicated below.

## ***Update on Action Items***

### **Pillar 1: Public Spaces, Facilities and Signage**

Recommendation 1.1: Finalize and apply trans\*, gender variant and two-spirit inclusion washroom guidelines to current facilities projects underway or planned with ongoing, iterative input from representatives on community advisory bodies.

- 1.1.1. [COMPLETE] By December 2016, VPL will support the recent implementation of “trans people welcome” bathroom signage by creating speaking points for staff and presenting them at an All Supervisors meeting.

**UPDATE:** The presentation occurred as planned in December 2016, and supervisors shared these talking points in crew talks in 2017. A staff working group created an educational video for staff that launched in December 2017. This video supports staff to have positive and respectful conversations with patrons about trans\* inclusion in the context of VPL washrooms and is available on the staff intranet.

- 1.1.2. [COMPLETE] By February 2017, VPL will confirm that náca?mat ct Strathcona and Levels 8/9 projects are following these guidelines to the degree budget allows for modification.

**UPDATE:** náca?mat ct Strathcona opened in April 2017 with standard multi-stall washroom signage including the message “trans people welcome” and gender neutral signage for single stall washrooms. Levels 8/9 will follow the same approach, with existing multi-stall washrooms signed “trans people welcome” and new single stall gender neutral washrooms.

- 1.1.3. By December 2018 [was December 2017], VPL will assign content ownership to the washroom guidelines, finalize them, and ensure they are made easily accessible in the VanDocs document management system.

**UPDATE:** Washroom guidelines, including signage, were finalized in June 2016 and the new signage has been implemented.

- 1.1.4. [COMPLETE] By March 2017, VPL will implement the Vancouver Police Department Safe Place program by installing decals at all branches and preparing staff.

**UPDATE:** This action was completed with the exception of shared facilities. Staff are receiving feedback and consulting with Parks about shared facilities.

- 1.1.5. [NEW] By December 2018, VPL will update the language used in floor plans to reflect the non-gendered staff washrooms.

## **Pillar 2: Programs & Services**

VPL aspires to showcase diverse voices and perspectives in all library events.

Recommendation 2.1: Create Trans\*, Gender Variant and Two-Spirit-specific lists of library materials (“LibGuides”).

- 2.1.1. [COMPLETE] By December 2017, Information Services staff will work with the community to identify what information will be useful to include, and will produce and make available Trans\*, Gender Variant and Two-Spirit-specific guides.

**UPDATE:** A guide launched in December 2017 following consultation with community organizations. It is available at:

<http://guides.vpl.ca/c.php?g=698666&p=4959718>.

*Note: VPL continues to include trans\*, gender variant and two-spirit authors in our recommended book lists and readers advisory.*

Recommendation 2.2: Develop programming that involves trans\*, gender variant, and two-spirit Vancouver residents as presenters, participants and attendees, and that advances our programming approach to be more inclusive of the Trans, Gender Variant and Two-Spirit community.

- 2.2.1. [COMPLETE] By December 2017, VPL will create two public Trans, Gender Variant and Two-Spirit -focused events that will provide Trans, Gender Variant and Two-Spirit writers and performers an opportunity to share their work with a library audience and provide members of the public an opportunity to broaden their understanding of gender identities and experience.

**UPDATE:** A number of public events took place in 2017 including:

### **VPL Aboriginal Storyteller in Residence: Two-Spirit Identity and the Written Word**

April 11, 2017. VPL Aboriginal Storyteller in Residence Jules Koostachin hosted two-spirit writers Michelle Sylliboy and Cease Wyss, who shared their unique perspectives on gender, sexuality and writing and discussed how their two-spirit identities shape their artistry and everyday life.

**Photovoice Project: Trans, Two-Spirit and Gender Nonconforming Community Stories.** May 25, 2017. Attendees heard from a participatory research group of trans, two-spirit and gender nonconforming people who shared photos and

stories about safety, well-being and belonging. Using an approach known as Photovoice, these community co-researchers addressed community health concerns and strategies for action. VPL invited the participants to work with the Community Digital Initiatives team in Digital Services to include their stories in This Vancouver, our digital repository. This work is underway.

**Welcome To Stonewall: A Night of Storytelling.** July 28, 2017. This event was planned with Qmunity and the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity. The evening featured Martin Boyce (a witness at the 1969 Stonewall Riots), Kelendria Nation (a black trans female Qmunity volunteer who organizes a weekly trans group), Husayn Abdallah (offering a youth perspective on how Stonewall has influenced LGBT communities), and was moderated by Vicki Haynes, a two-spirit Gitxsan woman who works in education and justice in the not-for-profit sector.

**Film screening and discussion of MAJOR!** August 1, 2017. Major! explores the life of Miss Major Griffin-Gracy, a formerly incarcerated black transgender elder and activist who has been fighting for the rights of trans women of colour for over 40 years. A discussion with Sandy-Leo LaFramboise, a two-spirit trans identified woman and elder, followed the screening.

- 2.2.2. [COMPLETE] By January 2018, VPL will explore a Trans, Gender Variant and Two-Spirit book club or reading series in partnership with a community organisation. **UPDATE:** Staff have met with Qmunity and plan to hold a book club in Q3 2018 co-led by VPL staff and Qmunity, followed by a reading event at Central Library.

*Note: VPL will continue to include trans\*, gender variant and two-spirit presenters, participants and attendees in our general programming.*

Recommendation 2.3: Define and implement best practices in LGBTQ2 collections, displays, and promotion.

- 2.3.1. [COMPLETE] By September 2017, a VPL working group will research best practices and create a draft LGBTQ2 collection profile document.

**UPDATE:** The working group has completed the draft and is preparing for consultation.

- 2.3.2. By September 2018 [was December 2017], VPL will consult with the community about the LGBTQ2 collection guidelines document, and will incorporate the feedback into the final version.

- 2.3.3. By September 2018 [was December 2017], VPL will purchase refreshed collections as appropriate, using the guidelines.

**UPDATE:** Staff have purchased additional copies of recently published material to enhance our collections. Additional purchasing will occur in 2018 following community consultation.

- 2.3.4. [NEW] By December 2018, VPL will promote LGBTQ2 collections in Central Library and Branches through displays.

Recommendation 2.4: Review library subject headings specific to LGBTQ2 collections.

- 2.4.1. [COMPLETE] By June 2017, VPL Bibliographic Services will review existing relevant headings.

**UPDATE:** Staff determined that we regularly update our headings and classifications due to changes at the national and international level.

- 2.4.2. [COMPLETE] By September 2017, VPL will identify issues to Library and Archives Canada, if any.

**UPDATE:** Staff did not identify the need for amendments to subject headings or practices in this area.

### **Pillar 3: Human Resources**

The purpose of these recommendations is to support employees in the workplace.

Recommendation 3.1: Identify and designate system-wide Trans, Gender Variant and Two-Spirit Champions/Safe Contacts, who will act as safe and knowledgeable resources for VPL employees.

- 3.1.1. [COMPLETE] By October 2017, VPL will select Trans, Gender Variant and Two-Spirit Champions/Safe Contacts for the system. All contacts will receive training to support the impact of their role.

**UPDATE:** A staff working group renamed this role “LGBTQ2+ Allies” as “ally” is a word that this community understands and already uses. Twenty-six allies came forward and received training in October 2017 to support their role and will be meeting for further discussions, and many others have expressed interest.

Recommendation 3.2: Expand and update policies to include gender identity and expression.

- 3.2.1. By June 2018 [was October 2017], VPL will develop a framework with suggested language to use when reviewing and updating policies.

- 3.2.2. By December 2018, VPL will review all policies and ensure they are consistent with the language recommended in the framework.

Recommendation 3.3: Utilize a phased approach to deliver Trans, Gender Variant and Two-Spirit inclusion in-person competency training for staff.

- 3.3.1. [COMPLETE] By April 2017, VPL will offer training for the Chief Librarian and directors.

**UPDATE:** The Chief Librarian and directors participated in training on June 7, 2017.

- 3.3.2. [COMPLETE] By June 2017, VPL will offer training for managers and supervisors.

**UPDATE:** Managers and supervisors participated in training on June 7, 2017.

- 3.3.3. [COMPLETE] By December 2017, VPL will offer more in-depth training for HR staff and Trans, Gender Variant and Two-Spirit Champions/Safe Contacts.

**UPDATE:** HR staff were trained in June 2017, allies were trained in October 2017, and remaining/new HR staff will receive training by June 2018.

- 3.3.4. By December 2018, VPL will offer training for all staff.

**UPDATE:** To address this action, the City of Vancouver will add a module to existing online training. The VPL steering committee will review this module before taking further action.

Recommendation 3.4: Promote trans\*, gender-variant and two-spirit inclusive employment practices in recruitment, hiring, and workplace relations.

- 3.4.1. [COMPLETE] Effective immediately, VPL will review the diversity language in job postings and will use inclusive, non-gendered language.

- 3.4.2. [COMPLETE] Effective immediately, VPL will liaise with City of Vancouver staff to share best practices and learn from each other.

#### **Pillar 4: Communications + Data**

Recommendation 4.1: Develop and implement consistent policy and protocol for collecting gender data across all departments.

- 4.1.1. [COMPLETE] By June 2017 [was April 2017], VPL will implement procedures to accommodate preferred names on library cards for individuals who use a name that does not match their government issued ID.

**UPDATE:** Changes made to Horizon now support our patrons to choose the name they want to appear on their library account. This is also available to staff and was promoted at the September supervisors' meeting.

- 4.1.2. By June 2018 (October 2017), VPL will identify all current practices around gender data collection and determine and implement best practices for VPL, including for library card sign up.

**UPDATE:** A survey was sent out in October 2017 to gather information on our gender data collection practices across VPL. The City of Vancouver is finalizing the language to use in gender data collection and VPL will follow their language practices.

Recommendation 4.2: Develop and implement consistent practices for internal and external communications.

- 4.2.1. By July 2018 [December 2017], staff who host events and deliver training will receive guidance around using non-gendered language.

**UPDATE:** Staff in Programming & Learning have drafted guidelines for trans\*, gender variant and two-spirit event protocols and are refining following feedback.

- 4.2.2. [COMPLETE] By January 2018 [was August 2017], Marketing and Communications will update VPL style guides to reflect non-gendered language, and will communicate to other teams the updated approach.

**UPDATE:** The style guide is complete and Marketing and Communications is communicating to staff through regular meetings.

- 4.2.3. [COMPLETE] By January 2018 [was November 2017], Marketing and Communications will review their in-house produced materials and publications and ensure compliance with the updated style guide.

**UPDATE:** Existing marketing materials have been reviewed, and new materials are reviewed on an ongoing basis as they are produced.

Recommendation 4.3: Create and implement an ongoing approach to communicate about TGV2S-inclusive initiatives and events at VPL.

- 4.3.1. [COMPLETE] Effective immediately, expand communications vehicles as they are refreshed (e.g. annual report) to include communication on VPL's TGV2S inclusion initiatives, and highlight TGV2S initiatives, patrons and partnerships where opportunities emerge.



- 4.3.2. [COMPLETE] Effective immediately, ensure VPL programming and initiatives are communicated through key marketing channels that offer the best opportunity to reach communities (broad and targeted).

**UPDATE:** This has been achieved by promoting directly to community partners in addition to our regular VPL channels, including social media. Events have been shared with members of the City's Trans, Gender Diverse and Two-Spirit Inclusion Advisory Committee and LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee and the members have re-shared with their community networks.

- 4.3.3. [COMPLETE] By April 2017, VPL will increase broader staff participation in trans\*, gender variant and two-spirit initiatives through delivering two staff presentations about the action plan.

**UPDATE:** Presentations and discussions took place at meetings on March 7 and 21, 2017, where staff contributed to priorities and how to approach actions. This engagement led to staff participation in the creation of the washroom signage video, renaming of the champions to allies, and the creation of the allies program.

- 4.3.4. [COMPLETE] By July 2017, VPL will collaborate with the City of Vancouver and the Parks Board to raise public awareness about TGV2S initiatives.

**UPDATE:** VPL has received the files for the posters used by the Parks Board at Hillcrest Community Centre to promote trans\* inclusion and will be updating them for a VPL audience and mounting them in multi-stall washrooms at Central Library in multi-stall washrooms. Other collaboration will be ongoing at an operational level.

## **Pillar 5: Community Consultation + Public Partnerships**

Recommendation 5.1: Conduct consultation on the VPL trans\*, gender variant and two-spirit inclusion recommendations with TGV2S communities.

- 5.1.1. [COMPLETE] By December 2017, VPL will have undertaken to seek feedback from TGV2S communities on the VPL recommendations, will integrate the feedback and edit the action plan.

**UPDATE:** Throughout the last year, feedback has been accepted from the public and sought from the City, and incorporated into the actions. This feedback has prompted, for example, the creation of the staff educational video about the washroom signage, and the planned adoption of the Parks posters.

Recommendation 5.2: Continue to initiate and foster partnerships with organizations serving trans\*, gender variant and two-spirit Vancouverites.

- 5.2.1. [COMPLETE] VPL will continue to have a VPL liaison on the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Trans and Gender Variant Inclusion (TGVI) Steering Committee, and will initiate a working relationship with the City of Vancouver LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee in 2017.

**UPDATE:** Manager, Circulation Services Andrea Freeman and Director, Collections & Technology Christina de Castell have attended City of Vancouver staff working group meetings, providing information to share with the LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee and hearing feedback from both the City and Parks committees. Manager, Programming & Learning, Anne O'Shea is VPL's liaison to the Vancouver Park Board's Trans, Gender Diverse and Two-Spirit Inclusion Advisory Committee. This committee last met in May 2017.

- 5.2.2. [COMPLETE] VPL will continue to work with partners such as IDAHAT, Qmunity, etc.

**UPDATE:** In 2017, this included promotion of events and collaboration on the Welcome to Stonewall program described above. In 2018, VPL is planning an event for the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia (IDAHAT) on May 17. Qmunity and VPL are planning a Trans, Gender Diverse and Two-Spirit reading and discussion group, which will run through the summer and will culminate in a public reading with a prominent TGV2S author in the early fall.

- 5.2.3. [COMPLETE] VPL will continue to work with staff to share information in their local networks.

**UPDATE:** Through activities such as the meetings, trainings and ally program, VPL staff have increased awareness of activities and are able to speak about the work of VPL in their community and personal networks.

- 5.2.4. [COMPLETE] VPL will extend invitations to library events to the members of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Trans and Gender Variant Inclusion (TGVI) Steering Committee and the City of Vancouver LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee, and ask them to distribute through their networks.

**UPDATE:** Invitations have been regularly extended by email to these channels, as well as via the online calendar, posters, email newsletter and social media.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Staff will continue to work on the remaining activities in the action plan and will provide a report to the VPL Board at the end of 2018.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Public programming and collections are included in VPL's annual operating budget. Costs of under \$5,000 for staff training and for posters in public washrooms were also funded from the 2017 operating budget.

## **FINAL REMARKS**

A significant amount of progress has been made on the Trans\*, Gender Variant and Two-Spirit Inclusion actions. The actions outlined above and the increased awareness amongst staff is making VPL a more inclusive and safe place for all Vancouverites.