

NO: R053

COUNCIL

DATE: April 1, 2019

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **March 28, 2019**

FROM: **Surrey Libraries Board of Trustees and  
Chief Librarian**

FILE: **8145-01**

SUBJECT: **Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan, 2019-2023**

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## RECOMMENDATION

Surrey Libraries Board of Trustees and the Chief Librarian recommend that Council receive this report for information.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide information about Surrey Libraries 2019-2023 Strategic Plan (“the Plan”). A copy of the Plan is attached as Appendix “I”.

## BACKGROUND

As directed by the Provincial Library Act, the Surrey Public Library Board (“the Board”) is appointed by Mayor and Council to oversee the successful delivery of library services in the City of Surrey. The Board’s primary responsibility is governance and financial oversight. The Board also helps to set the strategic direction for the library.

The Plan was launched in 2019 to meet the needs of a diverse and growing community. The plan was developed by the Board and staff after a lengthy public consultation process. Library trustees and senior staff conducted interviews with over 50 key stakeholders, including elected officials in all levels of government, community agencies, and partners. Surrey residents and library staff were engaged through online surveys and in-person consultations. More than 1,650 responses were received from residents through online surveys, open houses and focus groups. Key City strategies were reviewed including the Sustainability Charter 2.0, Surrey Excels, and the Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategic Plan. Research of public library trends and an analysis of the Surrey community was also undertaken. The ideas and research gathered were used to develop a plan that prioritizes the greatest needs for our community.

The Plan focuses on service delivery rather than a detailed capital plan. As City owned assets, library facilities are included in the overall capital planning process for the City and reflected in the City’s Financial Plan.

## DISCUSSION

The public engagement process affirmed that the community:

- Greatly values the services of the Library;
- Cherishes the Library's role in promoting and supporting life-long learning;
- Appreciates the Library's role as a community gathering space; and
- Stresses that the Library focus on creating a stronger awareness of its services.

The Library's vision for Surrey has been set to: "a literate, inclusive, and thriving city." Our mission is to "connect people, spark curiosity, and inspire learning."

The following strategic themes emerged as the community's priorities for the Library and will be the foundation of the Plan:

- Literacy and Learning;
- Connections; and
- Welcoming, Inclusive Spaces

The Plan is framed with a balanced scorecard approach, like that adopted by the City for Surrey Excels. Fourteen strategic objectives have been developed through four lenses: our community, funds, processes, and staff. The objectives are:

### Community

1. Promote and nurture literacy and learning;
2. Position the Library as the heart of the community;
3. Strengthen strategic community engagement;
4. Increase satisfaction with our services;
5. Improve access to library services;

### Funds

6. Refine processes to improve services and create capacity;
7. Broaden awareness of Library services;
8. Encourage innovation and collaboration;

### Process

9. Align resources to changing community needs;
10. Explore opportunities to diversify and grow revenue;
11. Enhance responsible spending and accountability;

### Staff

12. Foster a culture of service excellence;
13. Cultivate a safe, engaged, and diverse workplace; and
14. Develop and empower staff.

Several strategic initiatives have been identified to achieve the desired objectives and support the overarching themes. An annual report will be presented to Council each year on the Plan's progress in achieving the strategic objectives. Quantitative measures, such as utilization rates, will be used in addition to qualitative measures assessing the outcome and impact of programs and services.

## SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The work of Surrey Libraries new Strategic Plan supports the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, this work relates to Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Inclusion, Built Environment & Neighbourhoods, Education & Culture, and Infrastructure. Specifically, the Strategic Plan supports the following Desired Outcomes ("DO").

- Diversity & Accessibility - DO1: Surrey welcomes, includes, embraces and values the diversity of people who live here.
- Diversity & Accessibility - DO 3: Residents have opportunities to build social connections with people from different backgrounds.
- Diversity & Accessibility - DO5: New immigrants and refugees are supported to settle, integrate and become thriving members of the community.
- Social Infrastructure & Innovation - DO 25: Surrey has a strong social infrastructure that supports the needs of its diverse and growing population.
- Buildings & Sites - DO 15: All new buildings, public places and outdoor spaces are welcoming, safe and universally accessible.
- Learning - DO1: Surrey has a culture of learning, with a broad range of diverse learning opportunities available and accessible to meet the needs of all residents.
- Learning - DO5: Surrey's educational institutions and libraries are integrated into the community, and have sufficient capacity to accommodate residents as well as attract people from other areas.
- All Infrastructure - DO 1: City facilities and infrastructure systems are well managed, adaptable and long lasting, and are effectively integrated into regional systems.

## CONCLUSION

Surrey Libraries' Strategic Plan presents a 5-year strategy to support the continued development of Surrey into a literate, inclusive, and thriving city. Recommendations were guided by an evaluation of current trends in public libraries and through community and stakeholder consultations. The Plan will guide the decisions and priorities of the Library Board and staff in supporting the City's goals to improve the quality of life for our residents. The Plan is being presented to Mayor and Council for information.

Karen Reid Sidhu  
Surrey Libraries Board Chair  
On behalf of Surrey Libraries Board of Trustees

Surinder Bhogal  
Chief Librarian





## **STRATEGIC PLAN 2019–2023**

## **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Surrey Libraries is grateful to be serving the community on the traditional and unceded territories of the Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen, Qayqayt, and Tsawwassen First Nations.



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## MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR & CHIEF LIBRARIAN

We are proud to present Surrey Libraries' new strategic plan outlining our vision for building an even stronger library over the next five years. This new plan will enable us to continue serving our rapidly growing community with focus and intent.

A public library should be the soul of its community: a safe setting where ideas are explored, facts are discovered, and creativity can flourish. A good public library brings the world's best creative endeavors and most reliable information into a community and enables anyone in the community to easily access these.

Increasingly, a good public library also uncovers its community's unique qualities and endeavours to provide relevant services to meet its community's needs. We will always strive to perform this valuable role and anticipate our community's needs.

Surrey has many unique features. It is one of the fastest growing cities

in Canada as well as one of the most diverse. It supports the largest population of school-aged children in British Columbia. These are some of the realities that influence library priorities and services.

Responsible use of public funds requires that we focus our energy on ways to best improve library services. In developing our strategic plan, we affirmed that there are three key areas, or themes, in which our Library must place an emphasis in order to excel:

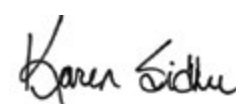
- Literacy and Learning
- Connections
- Welcoming, Inclusive Spaces

While we already support these areas in many ways, the strategic priorities set in this plan will strengthen our role as an institution for learning and literacy, help us build meaningful community partnerships, provide our residents with greater opportunities for connection, and ensure we continue

to invest in creating welcoming and inclusive spaces for all to enjoy.

We extend our thanks to all the people involved in helping shape this plan. This includes our trustees, staff, elected officials, and the many community members who provided input through surveys and interviews. Your contributions have been invaluable.

Our goal is to provide Surrey residents with the best possible library services, recognizing the unique needs and desires of those we serve. This plan is designed to help us meet that goal and we hope you find this plan as inspiring as we do.



Karen Reid Sidhu  
Board Chair



Surinder Bhogal  
Chief Librarian

## VISION

# *A literate, inclusive, thriving city*

The Vision Statement sets out the ideal future that Surrey Libraries aspires to realize and helps drive the Library in its community-facing work as well as in its internal operations.





## MISSION

***We connect people,  
spark curiosity, and  
inspire learning***

The Mission Statement reflects the core purpose of  
Surrey Libraries and how we will work  
toward supporting the Vision.



**Our Values** are the guiding principles that characterize how we conduct ourselves and inform our decision making.

# VALUES

## COMMUNITY-FOCUS

We care about the broader well-being of our community and guide our services based on its changing needs.

## INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

We champion the right for different voices and ideas to be heard and the right for questions to be asked without censorship. We respect and defend individual rights to privacy and choice.

## SERVICE EXCELLENCE

We provide excellent, responsive service.

## EQUITABLE ACCESS

We strive to reduce barriers to service and meet the community where they are. We uphold the principles of social justice.

## CREATIVITY

We continuously explore and pursue new ideas to improve services. We learn from our efforts, remain flexible, adapt, and innovate.

## COLLABORATION

We support, trust, and respect each other. We share stories, ideas, and experiences with each other, our city, community, and patrons.

## STRATEGIC THEMES

Surrey Libraries' Strategic Plan is organized around 3 broad Strategic Themes: Literacy and Learning, Connections, and Welcoming and Inclusive Spaces. These Themes are the overarching “strategic pillars” and represent areas we must excel in to fulfill our mission and realize our vision.



## LITERACY AND LEARNING

Every public library stresses literacy and learning. These two simple concepts define the optimistic reasons why public libraries were created. Literacy and learning allows individuals to explore their curiosities, to learn new skills, and to make the best decisions possible in life.

In Surrey, the emphasis on literacy and learning is especially important. Many of our residents came to Canada as adults with distinct literacy demands and with diverse learning needs. Others face language, cultural, and technological barriers that can prevent them from taking full advantage of opportunities for social and financial success. With the largest school-aged population in BC, the community requires considerable early literacy support.

Literacy is the key to fully participating in society – applying for a job, reading to a child, or logging onto a computer all require a level of literacy. Digital literacy, critical thinking, and evaluation have gained importance as essential literacy skills. The Library will place an emphasis on both traditional and new ways of learning. The technologies we provide will improve our ability to support literacy for the entire community from children to youth, and adults to seniors.

# CONNECTIONS

The Library connects Surrey residents with resources and services that help enrich lives. This will continue to be our most important role and we will strengthen it by building our collections and improving ways that people discover resources, technology, and information.

The Library also helps in connecting people to others with similar interests and connecting people to community resources and services. It enables people to connect with friends and family, near and far. New Canadians are connected to their adopted community, and the community is connected to its cultural diversity. Library space, both physical and virtual, helps to support residents' creative efforts. Connections also means supporting efforts of reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

We want all who reside and work in Surrey to have greater awareness of the services the Library provides and of the ways that the Library can help to improve their lives. Outreach, beyond library walls to expand the scope of services, is critical to our success.

The Library will enhance strategic community partnerships, collaborating with other organizations, agencies, and partners to advance shared priorities and leverage resources for greater community benefit.

## STRATEGIC THEMES



## STRATEGIC THEMES



## WELCOMING & INCLUSIVE SPACES

The Library will maximize the impact of our physical spaces, however limited or expansive, and support the thriving community hubs that they are. Our physical space must look inviting and provide residents with places to meet, learn, play, and be inspired.

Our facilities and our staff will make individuals and families feel welcomed, safe, and comfortable. They must support families, those studying as groups, and those seeking a more contemplative environment.

We also recognize the importance of creating welcoming and accessible virtual spaces – those library services that are accessed online.

We plan to expand services in underserved areas and improve access using both traditional and innovative avenues. We will strive to provide equitable access to our resources to all segments of the community, including vulnerable and marginalized populations.





*Raven and the First Sunrise* window mural at Guildford Library by Kwelexwelsten-Brandon Gabriel

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The plan includes 14 Strategic Objectives arrayed within four perspectives:

### **Our Community, Our Funds, Our Processes, and Our Staff.**

The Strategic Objectives are the specific things we must excel in to achieve our mission and vision. They provide a clear purpose to help organize and prioritize our work. Included are sample initiatives to support our Strategic Objectives.

## OUR COMMUNITY

### Promote and nurture literacy and learning

Enhancing literacy and learning in the community is at the core of the Library's vision and mission. We will enhance literacy supports for learners of all types. We will do this by:

- Expanding programming to improve all types of learning, such as storytimes and technology help classes at all locations
- Building strong print and digital collections, and promoting online learning tools



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### Position the Library as the heart of the community

The Library is a “community living room” and welcomes everyone from newborns to seniors. The Library celebrates the diversity in the community and is a crucial lifeline for newcomers to Canada, providing a sense of community and belonging as well as information and access to services. The Library promotes and supports the creation and sharing of local content, such as stories honouring our Indigenous peoples’ history and culture. We will do this by:

- Enhancing efforts to support reconciliation with Indigenous communities
- Increasing support for community content creation



# OUR COMMUNITY

## Strengthen strategic community engagement

The Library will engage with our community to better understand its needs. We will enhance our collaborations and partnerships, recognizing that joining with others gives us opportunities to leverage strengths for greater community benefit.

We will do this by:

- Creating and implementing a community engagement and partnership methodology
- Strengthening our role as a venue for community dialogue and connections

## Increase satisfaction with our services

Libraries are evolving to meet changing community needs and expectations. We will embrace and support this evolution to serve our residents better.

We will do this by:

- Leveraging technology to improve connections to library services and resources
- Exploring opportunities to increase programming that meets growing demands (for example, children's programming, seniors' programming, and programming for newcomers)

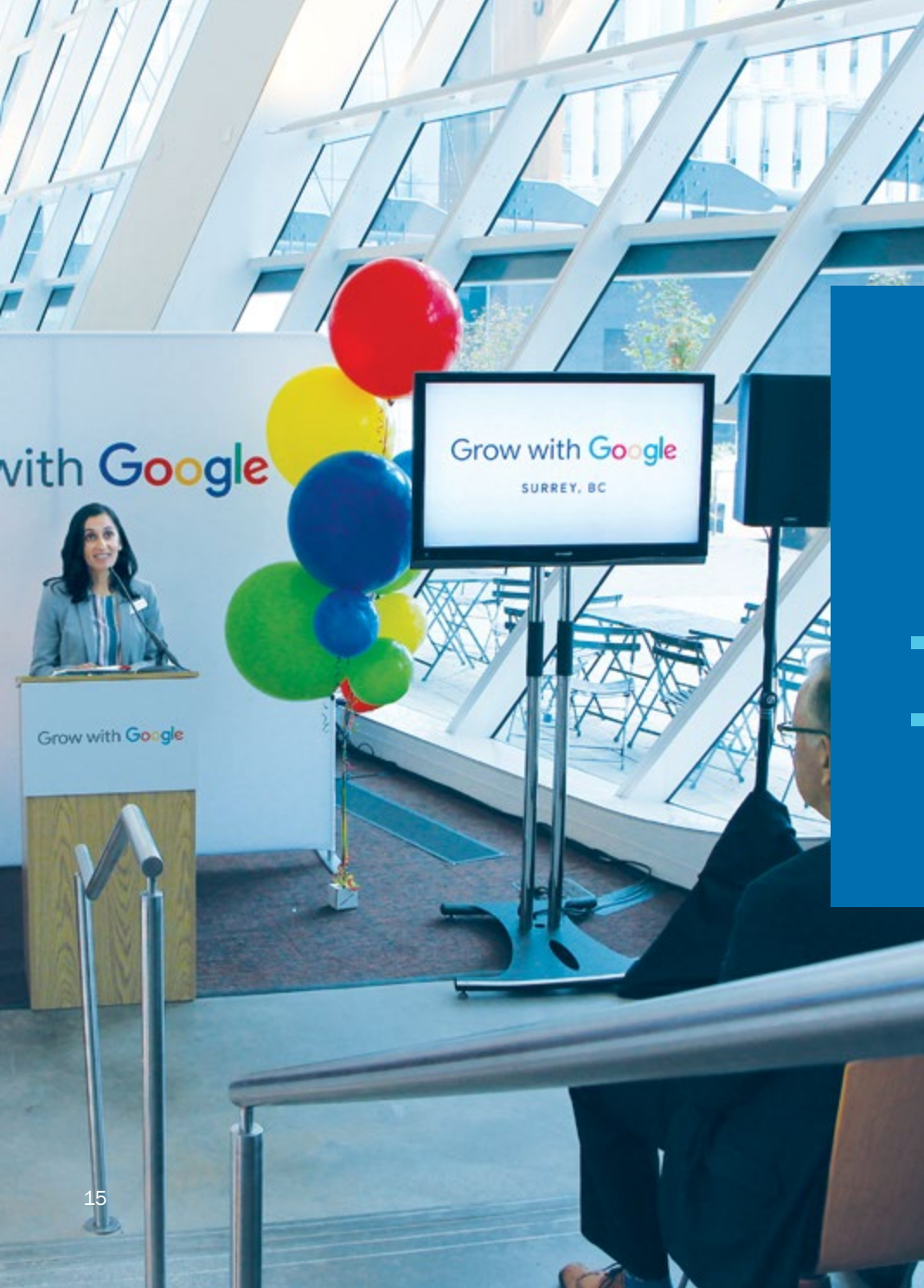
## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### Improve access to Library services

We will better connect people to the services of the Library, reduce barriers to service, and reach the community outside our Library walls  
We will do this by:

- Planning for new Library branches, expansions, and renovations across the City
- Exploring and implementing opportunities for extending Library hours and offering services beyond our branches





## OUR FUNDS

### Align resources to changing community needs

We will reach out to our community, assess its changing needs, and be responsive to meeting those needs. We will anticipate and plan for changes in the community and society. We will do this by:

- Inviting partners to collaborate with us on identifying and addressing community needs
- Helping newcomers integrate into the community

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### Explore opportunities to diversify and grow revenue

We will seek opportunities to diversify and grow the Library's financial resources to support value-added initiatives, distinct from core Library services.

We will do this by:

- Developing and implementing new fund development initiatives
- Exploring revenue generation ideas aside from fundraising

### Enhance responsible spending and accountability

To build our stakeholders' trust in the Library's processes and decisions, we will demonstrate strong stewardship and transparency in our use of public resources. We will do this by:

- Assessing and balancing how resources are allocated
- Improving data-driven decision-making



## OUR PROCESSES

### Refine processes to improve services and create capacity

We will analyze and seek opportunities to improve, streamline, or automate operational models, processes, and policies to create more time for programming, outreach, and special projects. We will do this by:

- Reviewing and revising our service delivery model for optimum service experience
- Streamlining materials selection processes to create more efficiencies



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### Broaden awareness of Library services

We will take every opportunity to promote the services of the Library and increase the Library's visibility and profile in the community.

We will do this by:

- Developing and implementing a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy
- Expanding services beyond our physical locations and serving people where they are

### Encourage innovation and collaboration

We will encourage and support new ideas and teamwork opportunities to help our staff become more innovative and collaborative in the way they work. We will do this by:

- Supporting staff in developing and sharing new ideas and approaches
- Sharing expertise across teams

# OUR STAFF

## Foster a culture of service excellence

We will provide great service by listening to our customers and aligning our processes and service delivery models to better serve them.

We will do this by:

- Enhancing customer service training for all staff
- Consulting with our community on a regular basis

## Cultivate a safe, engaged, and diverse workplace

To build the best teams and develop our skill base, we will foster our employees' sense of purpose and engagement, leverage their talents and capabilities, and support their well-being.

We will do this by:

- Prioritising the physical and emotional well-being of our staff
- Creating a fun work environment where everyone is respected and heard
- Finding ways to promote the unique skills and talents of our staff

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### Develop and empower staff

We will create and maintain a work environment that attracts people to work for Surrey Libraries and that keeps our staff motivated and committed to service excellence. We will do this by:

- Identifying core competencies for roles and training staff with required skills and knowledge
- Providing staff with the technology and tools they need to serve our community well



# EVALUATION

One of the key elements of our strategic plan is the commitment to measuring progress on the plan, the impact of our work, and adjusting approaches to improve efforts. Acknowledging that the City of Surrey is the Library's greatest supporter, our plan and outcome measurement is aligned with that of the City.

A balanced scorecard has been adopted to organize and evaluate our work. The balanced scorecard guides us to do well in each of our four key perspectives:

## OUR COMMUNITY

Our community lens is on the people we serve, deepening our relationship with them, and ensuring we deliver services to enhance the community and achieve our vision.

## OUR FUNDS

The funds lens considers how we optimize our financial resources to wisely utilize funds entrusted to us by the public, funders, and donors.

## OUR PROCESSES

This lens considers our operational processes and activities that we can enhance to provide greater service in order to achieve our vision.

## OUR STAFF

Our staff lens considers how we support our staff to enable them to excel in their roles, foster our employees' sense of purpose and engagement, and support their well-being.

## KEY MEASURES & TARGETS

The measures and targets set will be tracked on a regular basis to provide information on how the plan is progressing, where improvements and changes in approach may be required, and when to recognize and celebrate milestones of accomplishment.

The measures will be key to demonstrating the impact of implementing our strategic plan. Measures will be reviewed and adjusted over the life of the plan to ensure the correct measures are being tracked to monitor the success of the plan.



A woman with dark hair, wearing a dark grey sweater and blue jeans, is sitting on a grey carpeted floor in a library. She is holding a young girl with long dark hair, wearing a pink shirt and light blue leggings, on her lap. They are both looking at an open book together. The book has colorful illustrations and the text "Para va a la escuela" is visible. The background consists of several white shelves filled with colorful children's books. The lighting is warm and focused on the woman and child.

We connect people,  
spark curiosity,  
and inspire learning.



[surreylibraries.ca](http://surreylibraries.ca)