

NO: **R111**

COUNCIL DATE: **June 17, 2013**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **June 10, 2013**

FROM: **Chair, Surrey Libraries Board
Chief Librarian**

FILE: **Strategic Plan**

SUBJECT: **Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan, 2013 – 2015**

RECOMMENDATION

The Surrey Library Board recommends that Council receive as information the Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan for 2013 – 2015, a copy of which is attached to this report as Appendix “A”.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the Strategic Plan that has been developed for Surrey Libraries that will assist in guiding the activities of staff and the decisions of the Board during the years 2013 through 2015.

BACKGROUND

The world of libraries is changing dramatically. The rapidly changing environment of technology that has brought with it such things as ebooks, electronic journals, etc. and the overwhelming increase in the electronic delivery of information has transformed and continues to transform how libraries operate in the delivery of services. Online access to resources and services through the Surrey Libraries website at www.surreylibraries.ca is expanding, as is public use of computer workstations and the four Computer Learning Centres that are housed in Surrey’s libraries. The popularity of ebooks, emagazines and other online resources is climbing. While 96% of library materials circulated are print and A/V materials, the trend towards using electronic resources is accelerating.

Surrey Libraries are also experiencing challenges due to the on-going rapid growth of our city. The new flagship library in City Centre has changed the nature of service delivery and has greatly improved the profile of the Library in the community.

Recognizing the rapidly changing environment of libraries generally and the opportunities and challenges that Surrey Libraries are experiencing, the Library Board endorsed the development of a 3-year Strategic Plan. Based on direction from the Board, in late 2012 Library staff retained a consultant, Susan Papadionissou, to assist in developing a 3-year Strategic Plan for approval by the Board.

With the assistance of the consultant interviews were conducted with people in the community, local thought leaders, Library Board members, other stakeholders, City staff in a variety of

Departments and Libraries staff. These interviews were directed toward better understanding the future of the Library as envisioned by each of those that were interviewed.

Based on these interviews and a scan of best practices and trends, a draft 3-year Strategic Plan was developed for Surrey Libraries, covering the years 2013 through 2015. The Plan is intended to be used to guide the activities of Libraries staff and the decisions of the Board.

The draft Strategic Plan was presented to the Surrey Libraries Board at its Regular meeting on May 23, 2013, at which time the Board adopted the Plan and requested that it be presented to City Council.

DISCUSSION

The Strategic Plan provides as background the results of the interviews and research that was conducted. The Plan is structured around a Vision, Mission and Objectives that are articulated at the outset of the document. These are then translated into a series of Strategic Outcome Areas each which is supported by a list of actions and/or outcomes that are intended to be completed over the 3-year period that the Plan covers.

The Strategic Outcome Areas are:

1. Expand opportunities for social engagement;
2. Literacy supports will be strengthened, as a tool to access learning;
3. Equitable access to learning opportunities and experiences will be enhanced by way of partnerships; and
4. Libraries capacity to support learning and creative experiences will be improved.

There are a total of 43 intended actions collectively under these Focus Areas. The Board and the staff of Surrey Libraries will use the Strategy as the basis for developing annual work plans and to assist in decision-making. The Board will be provided with regular updates by staff on progress that is being made in relation to the various actions that are referenced in the Plan.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The Strategic Plan supports the City's vision for an engaged citizenry and the delivery of cost effective, relevant, customer-focused services. The Plan considers the goals outlined in the *Learning for Life Strategy* and the *Surrey Sustainability Charter*, focusing on early learning initiatives for children, adult literacy, including computer literacy skills, services for new Canadians, opportunities for social engagement and lifelong learning. The Plan also assists in addressing the objectives of the City's Social Well-Being Plan and the Poverty Reduction Plan with specific actions focused on reaching out to the community and participating in community development initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan that is attached to this report as Appendix A will act to guide the actions and decisions of the Libraries Board and Library staff over the course of the years from 2013 through 2015.



Linda Stromberg
Chair,
Surrey Libraries Board



Melanie Houlden
Chief Librarian

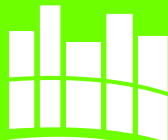
Appendix A: Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan for 2013 - 2015



APPENDIX A

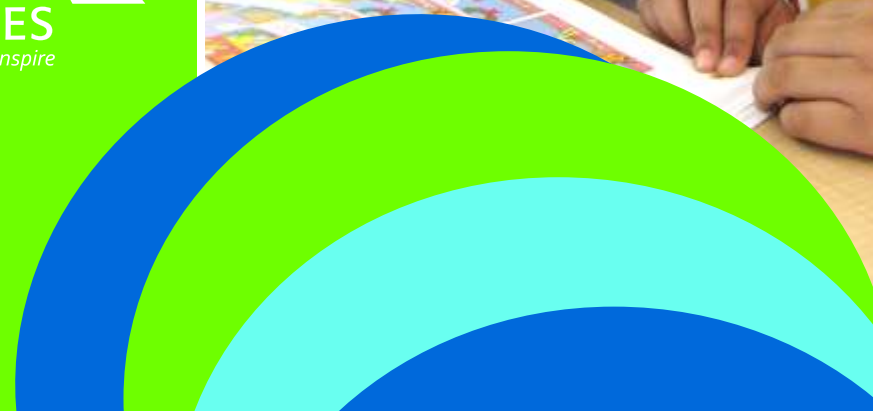
STRATEGIC PLAN

2013-2015



**SURREY
LIBRARIES**

discover·connect·inspire





Grand Opening Celebration
of City Centre Library
September 2011

Message from the Library Board Chair



In today's knowledge and information economy, libraries are more important than ever. The Surrey Libraries are a part of our community, helping people upgrade their skills, assisting immigrants adjust to a new life, and fostering excellent reading skills in children, helping them become strong contributors to society, supporting families in so many ways.

Libraries are changing. While maintaining traditional services, we see a new role for the Library in better supporting the creative economy, assisting the artists, writers, inventors and the simply curious who live in our City. The Library is also ready to offer enhanced services as the workplace becomes more mobile and dependent on technology.

Our Strategic Plan describes where the Library can take leadership on issues in our City. The Library acts as a literacy champion for the community, creates more opportunities for dialogue, promotes partnerships and continues to advocate for equal access to the world of information and ideas.

Looking back, we can see that library services have improved greatly over the past decade. In the future, we will see even more improvements as technology continues to level the playing field, providing our community with better access to an ever expanding world of knowledge and information.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Stromberg". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Linda Stromberg
Library Board Chair

Library Board



Rakesh Arora



James Bennett



Marina Haddad



John Shepherd
(Vice Chair)



Karen Reid Sidhu



Mirela Skrijelj



Upkar Tatlay



Anne van Rhyn



Marvin Hunt
(Council Representative)





Message from the Chief Librarian



Libraries have supported people for centuries as they strive for a better life for themselves and their families through learning.

Our focus is expanding, and is shifting from the traditional means of storing and providing information by means of books to other methods of delivering information, in audio, video or electronic format, eBooks and other online services and through experiential learning.

In the future, the Library will continue its mandate to offer learning opportunities for people. Staff will continue to act as guides through the sometimes overwhelming world of information. We will continue to connect people of all ages to great books, music and movies – the cultural tapestry that adds meaning and pleasure to our lives. We will continue to work closely with our partners to deliver the programs and services the community needs and expects.

The future is? A discussion. This strategy will evolve as we continue to experience the on-going evolution of technology, monitor innovations and best practices of other library systems, and interact with the citizens of Surrey regarding the future of the Library.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Melanie Houlden".

Melanie Houlden
Chief Librarian

Vision

Where the power of knowledge inspires people to build a better future

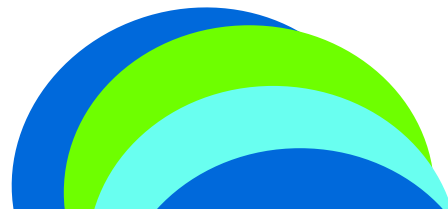
Mission

We open doors to lifelong learning, information and ideas

Values

We

- create welcoming spaces that are shared by all
- connect people and ideas
- engage the community
- inspire creativity and innovation
- take leadership in promoting the value of literacy and a love of learning
- advocate for intellectual freedom



STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

The strategic outcomes describe what the Library will strive to achieve in the next three years. We will adapt to change by creating new learning opportunities and taking leadership to promote literacy. The following pages outline 4 areas of focus for the Library.

*"I witnessed the library being a lively meeting/gathering place for the community and place of learning. I imagine it is like that most days, but this event really helped me see the future of libraries and their role in bringing people together to give information beyond the "books".
Way to go!"*



Author Anita Rau Badami



Word Cloud representing ideas gathered from participants on the role of the library.
The cloud gives prominence to ideas that appeared more frequently.

1. EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

The Library will enhance opportunities for social engagement by:

- Increasing programming for all ages, in collaboration with our community partners, within available resources
- Acting as a community hub / community meeting place for discussion and interaction
- Increasing outreach to improve connections with the community
- Creating spaces when the opportunities arise for collaboration and social exchanges
- Investing in social media tools to improve community involvement



All Candidates Meeting



Photo courtesy of
Cloverdale Reporter

A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing glasses and a black headband with a white zig-zag pattern, is reading a book to a young child. The child is wearing a bright green jacket and looking at the book with interest. They are in a library setting with bookshelves in the background.

*“I love attending
kids’ programs with
my little one”*

If You Give a
Kid a Muffin
Storytime

2. LITERACY SUPPORTS WILL BE STRENGTHENED AS A TOOL TO ACCESS LEARNING

The Library will strengthen literacy supports for individuals and communities by:

- Encouraging a culture of reading
- Exploring and implementing more options for technology training
- Focusing on the needs of newcomers, in particular English language acquisition
- Focusing on early literacy programs for children from 0 to 6 years of age and their caregivers, and exploring options to meet the increased demand for service
- Focusing on the literacy and developmental needs of children aged 6 to 12 years of age in collaboration with community partners
- Creating more quiet space and group study rooms as libraries are renovated
- Increasing the promotion of existing literacy and learning resources
- Collaborating with community partners to introduce programs to improve adult literacy

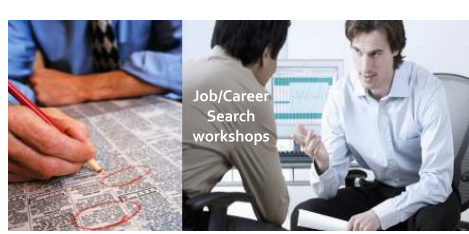


Surrey Kids Read - Guildford Town Centre

3. EQUITABLE ACCESS TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIENCES WILL BE ENHANCED

The Library will improve equitable access to learning opportunities and experiences for underserved and vulnerable groups by:

- Increasing outreach and the development of new programs in collaboration with community partners, for example, mobile services
- Continuing to focus on community involvement and committee work with agencies that align with Library goals, including agencies that serve new Canadians and the Aboriginal community
- Continuing to work with agencies supporting local entrepreneurs, businesses and mobile workers
- Defining parameters and developing guidelines for working with community partners
- Undertaking a needs assessment to identify new programs that could be introduced for low income earners, newcomers, children and families
- Surveying non-users to better understand why they are not Library members
- Updating public computer access policies to ensure the broadest possible access
- Researching and implementing strategies to address the needs of people from smaller language groups
- Improving and promoting Read-Ability services for people with visual impairments, as well as those with physical and developmental disabilities
- Evaluating options to improve opening hours for Library branches
- Improving and expanding our ability to distribute information from partner agencies through Library channels



4. OUR CAPACITY TO SUPPORT LEARNING AND CREATIVE EXPERIENCES WILL BE IMPROVED

Our capacity to support learning and creative experiences will be improved by:

Organizational culture and identity

- Encouraging a culture of innovation throughout the Library
- Evaluating existing programs, services and facilities, including virtual services
- Committing to the concept of a more “creative” Library
- Improving the Library's capacity related to governance and advocacy issues and working with our partners to make these opportunities more broadly available
- Creating a distinct Library identity that differentiates us from community centres and other community agencies

Marketing and profile

- Increasing the visibility and profile of the Library in the community
- Developing a more effective marketing strategy

Physical spaces/facilities

- Updating the Facilities Master Plan to reflect the needs of newly developing neighbourhoods
- Continuing to renovate and update facilities to be inviting and to accommodate new uses
- Exploring alternative venues for Library service, e.g. kiosks, vending machines, 'express' or storefront libraries and implementing such alternative venues where reasonable within available resources



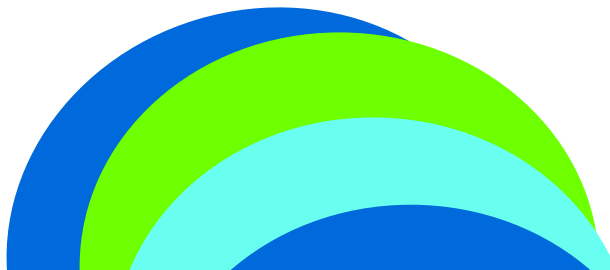
Our capacity to support learning and creative experiences will be improved by:

Human resources

- Improving staff capacity in relation to marketing, outreach, programming and volunteer coordination
- Increasing staffing where practical so that the Library can participate more fully in community-led activities
- Improving staff capacity in relation to the creative use of technology
- Continuing to hire staff that are adaptable and focused on service to the community
- Investing in staff training

Other resources

- Increasing resources to respond to rising demand for e-collections
- Enhancing our fundraising efforts through increased staff, Board and community involvement
- Increasing opportunities for volunteers to fundraise and advocate for the Library
- Working with the City to improve IT support of Library infrastructure, while mindful of the needs and priorities of customers
- Developing an assessment tool to evaluate progress on the outcomes outlined in the Strategic Plan





Measuring Progress

- Developing an assessment tool to evaluate progress on the outcomes documented in this Strategic Plan
- Providing regular update reports to the Library Board and the community



Purpose

The key purpose of the Library's Strategic Plan is to provide direction as to where the Board and staff of Surrey Libraries will focus attention for the next 3 years, mindful of the need to wisely invest taxpayers' dollars. The Strategy addresses the following questions:

- What do our customers want from the Library?
- Where can the Library make the greatest difference in improving the quality of life for people living in Surrey?
- What barriers prevent effective library use?
- How can we work more collaboratively with our partners to improve access to learning opportunities?



"I want to save money and have no space for a book collection at home - the library allows me to save money and space!"



Planning Process

Thank you to the many individuals who shared their thoughts and ideas with us in the development of this strategy.

We talked with key stakeholders and partners, community agencies and other public libraries, and more importantly with the children, teens and adults in whose lives and communities the Library makes a difference.



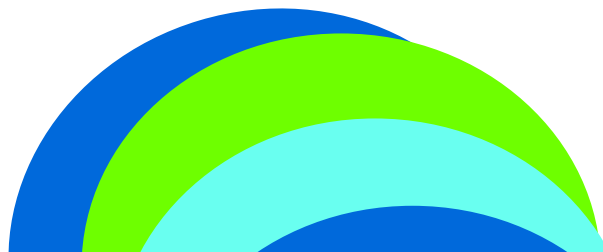
Forces you told us that will shape the future of the Library

Demographic shifts

- With over 1,000 people moving into the City every month, many of them young families, services for children and teens will be increasingly important
- An aging population and increasing numbers of retirees will mean that demand for services for seniors will grow
- Surrey is the destination of choice for many new Canadians and continues to receive an increasing number of refugees

Growth and Development

- Densification and urbanization of the City can result in an increased sense of social isolation
- Some residential areas in Surrey are developing before full range of services and infrastructure are in place
- The Surrey School District is the largest in the province and continuing to grow
- The increasing number of families with young children poses opportunities and challenges

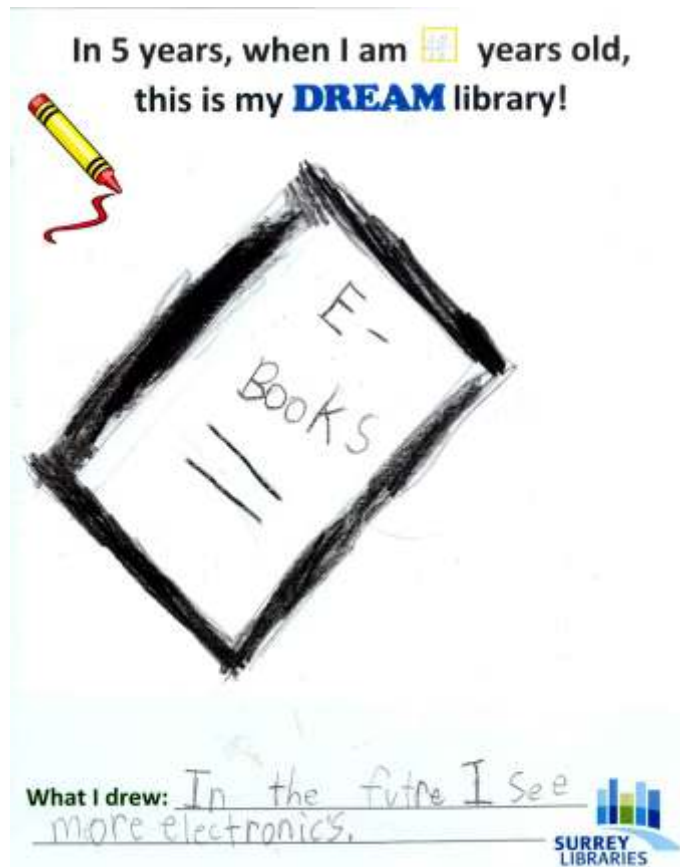


Help Learn
English
Storytime



Technology Trends

- Technological change will continue to occur at a rapid pace
- The widespread adoption of mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets is changing delivery models
- Social media such as Facebook and Twitter have changed how people communicate with each other
- Increased demand for ebooks and electronic access to collections stretches library resources and increases demand for technology training
- Ebooks and online information have led to fewer in person library visits



Social Issues

- Changes in the education system have expanded the role of the Library for a new generation of learners for whom technology is the norm
- Social issues such as poverty, isolation, homelessness and mental illness have direct effects on Library service
- The Library will need to continue to partner with other agencies to engage with marginalized communities
- Staff need to be trained to deal effectively with the needs of these groups
- Barriers should be reduced that discourage some people from using the Library. The Library will retain its role as a living room and place of community for everyone




The role you want for the Library in the Community

The Library

- Provides opportunities for learning, in person and online
- Acts as an “equalizer”, providing resources to help to mitigate vulnerabilities and remove barriers
- Is a champion for literacy and the value of lifelong learning
- Acts as a catalyst for change and collaboration with community partners
- Is a cultural mediator: a neutral ground where people can learn about different cultures and explore new ideas



Seniors Day

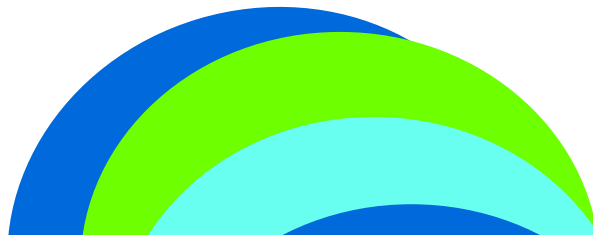
A sign for "Read-Ability Audio" is displayed in a library setting. The sign is white with black text and is mounted on a wall. The background shows bookshelves filled with books.

Read-Ability Audio



Changes you told us that need to occur for the Library to be truly great

- Reach out to the community; listen and respond to people's needs
- Promote reading and literacy as core skills needed to participate fully and effectively in society
- Expand partnerships beyond the Library walls to reach out to those who are not aware of what the Library has to offer
- Work with the community to access expertise the Library does not have
- Focus on the Library as a social gathering place where ideas are discussed and exchanged; a place to connect with like-minded people
- Offer innovative and creative programs and services for a wide spectrum of library users
- Keep on top of technology and training for staff and the public
- Market services more effectively







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www.surreylibraries.ca