

NO: R202

COUNCIL DATE: September 17, 2018

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **September 17, 2018**

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

FILE: **8145-01**

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

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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 the Surrey Libraries 2019-2023 Strategic Plan (the “Plan”) and to provide Council with an opportunity to comment on the Draft Plan prior to final approval by the Library Board. A copy of the Draft Plan is attached to this report as Appendix “I”.

## BACKGROUND

As directed by the Provincial Library Act, the Surrey Public Library 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.

To meet the needs of a diverse and growing community, the Library has developed a new strategic plan. Over the past year, with the guidance of a consultant, the Board and staff worked with key stakeholders, residents, and community agencies to gather input on themes and priorities. Research of public library trends and an analysis of the Surrey community was also undertaken. The ideas and research gathered have been used to develop the 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.

Mayor and Council were consulted in the development of themes and priorities. The attached Plan is being presented for information and final comment. The Plan is scheduled to be approved and adopted at the regular meeting of the Surrey Public Library Board on September 27, 2018.

## **DISCUSSION**

The planning process began in early 2018 with a comprehensive review of trends affecting today's public libraries and an analysis of the Surrey community. Key City strategies were reviewed including the Sustainability Charter, Surrey Excels, and the new Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategic Plan 2018-2027.

### **Listening to our Community**

The community consultation process was launched in March 2018 to establish priorities and generate ideas. Library trustees and senior staff conducted one-on-one interviews with 50 key stakeholders, including elected officials in all levels of government, community agencies, and partners. Surrey residents and Library staff were engaged through surveys and in-person consultations. More than 1,650 responses were received through an online survey and over 50 residents participated in open houses and focus groups.

In summary, 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.

As a result of the consultation process, 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."

### **Strategic Themes and Objectives**

The following strategic themes emerged as the community's priorities for the Library:

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

These themes are the foundation of the Plan and will be where the Library prioritizes its efforts to fulfil its mission and realise its vision. A balanced scorecard approach, similar to that adopted by the City for Surrey Excels, has been used to organize the Plan. Fourteen strategic objectives have been developed through four lenses: our community, funds, processes, and staff. The objectives are:

- Promote and nurture literacy and learning;
- Position the Library as the heart of the community;
- Strengthen strategic community engagement;
- Increase satisfaction with our services;
- Improve access to library services;
- Refine processes to improve services and create capacity;
- Broaden awareness of Library services;
- Encourage innovation and collaboration;

- Align resources to changing community needs;
- Explore opportunities to diversify and grow revenue;
- Enhance responsible spending and accountability;
- Foster a culture of service excellence;
- Cultivate a safe, engaged, and diverse workplace; and
- Develop and empower staff.

A number of strategic initiatives have been identified to achieve the desired objectives and support the overarching themes.

### **Evaluation**

A series of measures have been developed to track 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**

Surrey Libraries new Strategic Plan supports the City to deliver on many desired objectives in the Sustainability Charter 2.0, most significantly in the following Desired Outcomes (DO):

### **Inclusion**

- DO1: Surrey welcomes, includes, embraces and values the diversity of people who live here.
- DO2; Surrey is a caring and compassionate city that supports its residents of all backgrounds, demographics and life experiences.
- DO 3: Residents have opportunities to build social connections with people from different backgrounds.
- DO5: New immigrants and refugees are supported to settle, integrate and become thriving members of the community.
- DO 21: All residents have opportunities to be meaningfully engaged in civic issues and to contribute to community life.
- DO 25: Surrey has a strong social infrastructure that supports the needs of its diverse and growing population.

### **Built Environment and Neighbourhoods**

- DO8: The built environment enhances quality of life, happiness and well-being.
- DO 15: All new buildings, public places and outdoor spaces are welcoming, safe and universally accessible.

### **Economic Prosperity and Livelihoods**

- DO2: Quality education, training and skills development programs are available in the city, which help to create a highly skilled workforce.

### **Education and Culture**

- 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.
- DO 3: Meaningful and accessible early childhood learning opportunities are in place for children and families.
- DO4: Residents of all ages have strong reading, numeracy, and digital literacy skills and strong knowledge of their rights and responsibilities.
- 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.

### **Health and Wellness**

- DO 6: Residents participate in a wide range of recreation and leisure opportunities.
- DO 8: Residents feel a sense of belonging and connectedness, and have opportunities for social interaction in their neighbourhoods and community.

### **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. A draft of the Plan is being presented to Mayor and Council for comments before final approval by the Library Board.

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

Surinder Bhogal  
Chief Librarian



# DRAFT Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

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

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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 and 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 and Surinder Bhogal*

## Vision, Mission, and Values

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### 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.

### Values

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

#### ***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

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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 families, 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.

## 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.

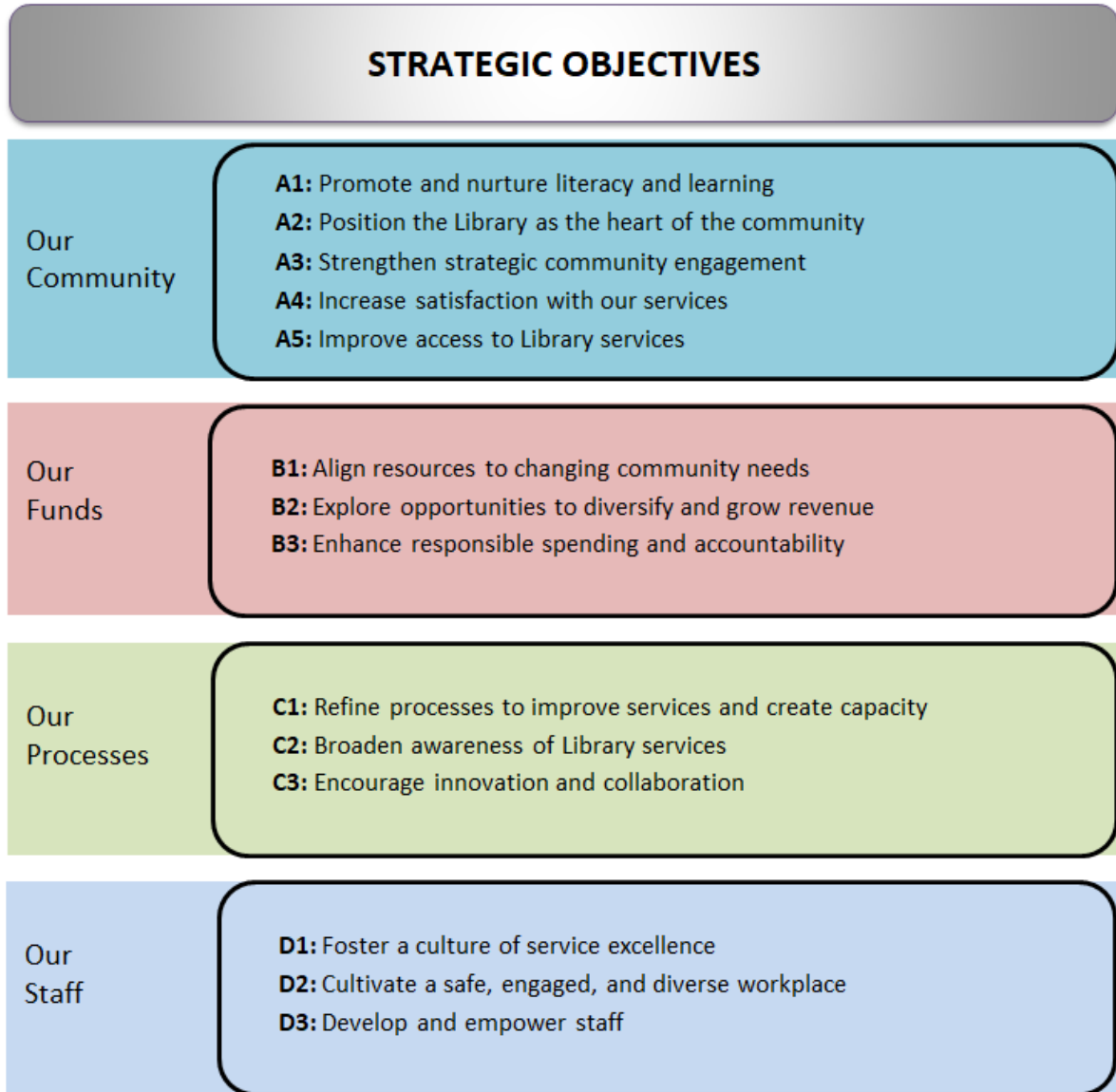
We also recognize the importance of creating welcoming and accessible virtual spaces – those library services that are accessed through electronic devices.

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.

## Strategic Objectives

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The plan includes 14 Strategic Objectives arrayed within 4 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, and support the three overarching themes: literacy and learning, connections, and welcoming and inclusive spaces.



## Our Process

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The strategic planning process began with a one day retreat where Library trustees and senior management were immersed in considering trends affecting today's libraries, the needs of Surrey, and in drafting the broad themes on which Surrey Libraries could focus its energies. Library staff were then consulted through several in-person sessions as well as an online survey. Staff provided invaluable input which helped refine the draft themes to ensure they were focused on improving services to our community.

We also reached out to the wider community with consultations at our branches and an online survey that netted over 1,650 responses. One-on-one interviews were conducted with over 50 key stakeholders including representatives from community partners, other libraries, and City of Surrey management. Local elected officials from all levels of government, including Mayor and Council, were also consulted.

All of the consultation and survey data was shared with Library trustees and staff and used to refine the draft themes to help shape the strategic plan. The refined themes were reviewed by the Library management team to draft strategic objectives intended to help realize the aspirations in the themes. Staff from across the organization also volunteered to form an advisory committee to provide input on the draft strategic objectives.

Input from all these sources was gathered and applied to the plan and the draft was then reviewed by a committee of the Board prior to being presented to the Board for approval.

### Listening to Our Community

Our consultations revealed that the public see the Library as a safe place, they greatly value the services of the Library, and they see us as an important institution to promote literacy and learning. A majority (69%) want us to continue placing an emphasis on our physical and electronic collections, while a large group (41%) also want us to provide more creative programming, for example music, art, or creative writing. 38% of respondents want us to place greater emphasis on online services or technical assistance and education. Just over a quarter of respondents value the Library as a meeting place, a place to celebrate and showcase culture, diversity, and local art, and a venue to facilitate individual and community learning.

Feedback from both staff and the public stressed that the Library needs to place greater emphasis on generating more awareness of the Library's offerings throughout the community.

Detailed summaries from [community](#) and [staff consultations](#) are available on CityNet.

### Trends Shaping Our Community

The City of Surrey is one of the fastest growing communities in BC, welcoming an average of 800 new residents each month, and is growing twice as fast as other communities in BC. Surrey's population is diverse, multicultural, and demographically young compared to other cities in BC. In the last census, 178 different languages were identified as being spoken and 30% of households speak a language other than English at home. The City also has a large and diverse urban Indigenous population.

The Surrey School District has the largest enrollment in BC. The City sees an average of 480 births per month which translate to an additional 16 kindergarten seats every day. Surrey Libraries is the only community agency that provides universal and freely accessible early literacy services across the City.

Use of technology and demand for electronic resources has increased dramatically. Surrey Libraries currently has 240 branch computers with around 500,000 computer sessions being logged annually. Current federal and provincial legislation and regulations present challenges to offering some digital services, and information security is also an ongoing concern.

The full [Environmental Scan](#) is available on CityNet.

## Strategic Objectives Description

### **A1 Promote and nurture literacy and learning**

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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

### **A2 Position the Library as the heart of the community**

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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

### **A3 Strengthen strategic community engagement**

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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

### **A4 Increase satisfaction with our services**

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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)

## **A5 Improve access to Library services**

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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 where people need to access them
- Exploring and implementing opportunities for extending Library hours and offering services beyond our branches

## **B1 Align resources to changing community needs**

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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

## **B2 Explore opportunities to diversify and grow revenue**

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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

## **B3 Enhance responsible spending and accountability**

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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

## **C1 Refine processes to improve services and create capacity**

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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

## **C2 Broaden awareness of Library services**

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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

## **C3 Encourage innovation and collaboration**

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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

## **D1 Foster a culture of service excellence**

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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

## **D2 Cultivate a safe, engaged, and diverse workplace**

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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

## **D3 Develop and empower staff**

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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

## Strategic Initiatives

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The Strategic Initiatives listed below represent new projects or renewed emphasis on areas that the Library will prioritize to directly influence our Strategic Objectives. The initiatives will periodically change as projects are completed and as new initiatives are undertaken to support the community's evolving needs.

1. Expand early years literacy services in all branches
2. Support digital skills development at all branches
3. Enhance efforts to support reconciliation with Indigenous communities
4. Create and promote comprehensive community engagement/partnership methodology
5. Expand programs delivered through partnerships
6. Explore opportunities to increase after-school programming for middle-years
7. Craft a customer satisfaction and awareness survey
8. Plan for new library branches: Clayton and Grandview
9. Plan and support library renovations and expansions: Cloverdale and Fleetwood
10. Develop a plan for helping to integrate newcomers
11. Develop and implement fund development initiatives
12. Create a strong and standardized framework for assessing cost, impact, and value of programming, services, collections, and resources
13. Update library's long range capital plan
14. Review service delivery model to create more time for programming and outreach
15. Streamline materials selection processes
16. Develop a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy
17. Develop a process for staff ideas generation
18. Increase support for community content creation
19. Develop and deliver a customer service training module for all staff
20. Develop an approach to measuring and enhancing staff engagement
21. Identify core competencies for roles and train staff with required skills and knowledge

## Evaluation

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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

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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 outlined below are not the only ones the Library will track; however, these are identified as key to demonstrating the impact of implementing our strategic plan. These 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.

Measure	Aligning Strategic Objective(s)	Notes
Community Satisfaction & Awareness Survey	A1–A5; C2, D1	<p>Questions to assess the public’s overall perceptions on the Library. Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of respondents who believe that Surrey Libraries is important</li> <li>• % of respondents who are satisfied with the services provided by Surrey Libraries</li> <li>• % of respondents who are satisfied with the customer service they receive from staff</li> <li>• % of respondents who agree that Surrey Libraries is welcoming and inclusive</li> <li>• % of respondents who agree that Surrey Libraries is a go to place for literacy and learning</li> <li>• % of respondents who think Surrey Libraries is doing a good job of promoting its services</li> <li>• % of respondents who are satisfied with access and opening hours</li> </ul>
Number of participants in programs	A1, A2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program and event attendance numbers</li> <li>• Summer Reading Club enrollment</li> </ul>
Total new items added to physical and digital collections	A1	
Number of sessions on online learning resources	A1	Examples include Lynda.com and Rosetta Stone
Number of visits – physical and digital	A2	This will include visits to the 9 branches and website visits
Number of community partners	A3	
Number of cardholders active in the last 3 years	A4	
Annual hours open	A5	Physical access to our facilities and services improves with additional opening hours.
% of population living within 1 km of a library branch	A5	Studies show that the closer the library branch, the more likely that household will visit the library
Number of programs for newcomers, seniors, early years	B1	

% of budget allocated to digital resources	B1	
Net annual growth in active donors	B2	For any fundraising to be successful, organizations need to build their donor base.
Operational spending and capital spending on budget	B3	
% of transactions using self-service	C1	
Earned media statistics	C2	Number of media releases picked up against sent; social media engagement stats
Number of new innovations or ideas from staff	C3	We will create a process for staff to submit ideas and to then track the number of ideas submitted as well as the ratio implemented
% of staff completing customer service training	D1	
Staff Engagement Survey	D2, C3, D3	Annual survey - % of employees providing a favourable rating on employee engagement question set. Examples may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have the tools I need to do my job well</li> <li>• I have the necessary authority to do my job well</li> <li>• I have opportunities to collaborate with others</li> <li>• I have opportunities to develop and implement new ideas</li> </ul>
% staff absent	D2	Staff engagement often translates to improved rates of absenteeism
% staff completing at least 1 course in the past year	D3	