

VANDERHOOF PUBLIC LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2022

TURNING OUTWARD

TO

MOVE FORWARD

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INTRODUCTION

This document sets out a strategic direction for the Vanderhoof Public Library for the period 2020 – 2022.

Often when organizations engage in strategic planning, they tend to “circle the wagons” and look inward – at their successes, their numbers, their hopes and aspirations for the future. In doing this, we tend to forget the very reason we exist – public libraries are here to help people and the community learn, grow and flourish.

Turning Outward means using the community as our reference point for creating change. It provides the frameworks and tools to make more intentional choices and judgments to produce greater impact and relevance in our community.

To this end, a survey of community interests was conducted in September/October 2019 with a specific goal in mind: to seek advice and guidance from our community and our members about their interests and how the Vanderhoof Public Library can deliver programs and services that align with those interests.

We had an excellent response rate to our survey. This plan builds on the feedback we received and takes a new and fresh look at the library's programming and services.

TRENDS AND CURRENT ISSUES

Part of Turning Outward is being aware of the current social and political environment in which we work. Some of the issues that inform this plan include:

- Increasing interest in public conversations about the nature of our community;
- Social issues are more visible -- poverty, unemployment, mental health, homelessness, petty crime, and a new drug culture with marijuana legalized and ongoing opioid crisis;
- Senior population continues to increase in relation to other age categories;
- Current loss of the CALP program in Vanderhoof and implications for the community and the library;
- More frequent natural disasters and emergencies – weather patterns, fires, floods;
- Evolving technology; and
- As the role of libraries changes to becoming community hubs offering much more than circulation services, questions are being raised about Freedom of Speech as it relates to groups booking library facilities for their events.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Vanderhoof Public Library is to provide access to information, education and recreation in a safe and welcoming environment.

VISION

A vibrant, relevant library organization that is meeting the needs and interests of the community it serves.

VALUES

Equality and inclusion
Accountability
Transparency
Collaboration
Responsiveness

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Connect with the Community:

- Continue our conversation with the community, building on the key findings from the Community Interests Survey;
- Continually strive to meet community interests and needs; and
- Improve our communications with both our financial and community stakeholders.

Governance:

- Enhance board governance and library operations by supporting training for trustees and employees;
- Develop a succession strategy for executive board positions;
- Continue to build and maintain partnerships with local agencies; and
- Seek to negotiate a service agreement with the District of Vanderhoof to foster collaboration, co-operation and certainty.

Inspire Literacy and Learning:

- Create a physical and emotional space that enhances literacy, learning and connection;
- Strive to remain an inclusive, safe space for all community members; and
- Seek ways to reflect Indigenous culture in our physical space.

WORKPLAN:

Year One focus will be to:

- Summarize the feedback received from the community interests survey and develop new programs as appropriate to meet identified interests and needs;
- Develop processes that facilitate an ongoing “conversation” with our community;
- Develop a succession plan for board executive positions;
- Explore opportunities for supporting literacy;
- Enhance governance by negotiating a service agreement with the District of Vanderhoof.

Year Two focus will be to:

- Explore the opportunity to offer the CALP program in 2021, or look at alternatives for promoting literacy;
- Expand collaboration with local agencies and other community partners;
- Actively seek out and support advanced training for board trustees, and work-related training for employees;
- Explore options for utilizing existing library space more creatively and effectively.

Year Three focus will be to:

- Complete the work set out in this plan;
- Re-think how we evaluate success; and
- Prepare business planning for 2023 – 2025.

SUMMARY

The Board of Trustees met on May 4, 2019 in a one-day facilitated strategic planning session. The results are reflected in this strategic plan.

An important aspect of our planning for the next three years, and likely for the future, is a paradigm shift in how we think when we develop library programs and services. Turning Outward facilitates change that truly meets needs and ensures greater relevance to our client base and our community. Turning Outward helps us get off the path of the status quo, of business as usual, and onto a new path of possibility and hope.

We are focused on the next three years with this plan, but we also have hopes and dreams for the future of the Vanderhoof Public Library. Here's some of what we identified:

- To experience continued growth
- To become more of a community hub
- To have a larger facility; more multi-use spaces, space for collections, programs, gaming, interactive activities, café-style refreshment area

The Board of Trustees is excited about this shift in perspective. Our strategic plan for 2020 – 2022 will serve as a blueprint, guiding us as we align our human, physical and digital resources to help our community be better prepared to meet the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow.

In the words of Andrew Carnegie, a lifelong supporter of libraries: “A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people.”