



building communities together

2021 Business Plan Library (1660)

Wanda Davis, Manager of Library Services

Working in partnership with communities, large and small, to offer local, sub-regional, and regional services to ensure that the Cariboo Chilcotin is a socially, economically and environmentally desirable region.

Department/Function Services

The Cariboo Regional District Library (CRDL) was established in 1994 after the agreement between the Thompson Nicola Regional District and the Cariboo Regional District for the provision of public library service to the residents of both regions came to an end.

As defined by the Library Act, the Cariboo Regional District Library is an integrated public library system that provides library services, via its fifteen branches, to residents of the Cariboo Regional District. With their library card residents may, in addition to borrowing materials from any Cariboo branch, visit and borrow materials from any public library in BC through the BC OneCard agreement. As well, cardholders from other BC public libraries may visit and borrow material from any CRD Library Branch.

The CRDL's primary public services include: region-wide lending of print, audio, and video materials; online lending of e-books and e-audiobooks; free access to a variety of digital resources available via the library's website; resource sharing with other libraries; provision of free internet access via public internet stations and wireless local area networks; free meeting space for nonprofit groups; free story time programs for children and special interest programs for adults, some of which involve collaborating with other organizations. Centralized technical services for library branches include ordering, cataloguing, processing and distributing materials, and interlibrary loan support.

The library was established by the Cariboo Regional District Library – Local Service Establishment Bylaw No. 2466. Bylaw No. 2466 stipulates that the requisition for the service cannot exceed the greater of \$1,574,604 or a tax rate of \$0.81508/\$1,000 of assessment. Property owners in rural areas pay on the basis of improvement assessment only, whereas those in municipalities pay on land and improvements.

All directors on the Cariboo Regional District Board are responsible for the governance of the library function. Library services are provided throughout the district, in all electoral areas.

Significant capital projects:

- 2009 completion of the Quesnel Library building
- 2010 completion of the new 100 Mile House Library building
- 2017 replacement of the McLeese Lake Library building
- 2018 re-location of the Bridge Lake Library from rented space in Bridge Lake to a new CRD-owned building located in Interlakes. The branch was re-named Interlakes Library.

Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

2021 Goals

Over the next four years, library staff will implement specific goals identified in the CRD Library Strategic Plan, particularly as they coincide with strategic initiatives contained in the Cariboo Regional District Strategic Plan. The overarching goal of the CRD Library Strategic Plan is to ensure that library users enjoy excellent customer service and an enjoyable and useful customer experience whether using library services in the Library's 15 branches or through the Library's website.

- 1. Goal:** Improve access to the Library's digital collections and other online services by developing an improved library website.

Rationale: The CRD Library website is the portal to its digital resources and services and is the 'face of the Library' to the digital world. The existing website, while still functional on a basic level, is outdated and no longer offers the best access to the Library's digital services, which are growing.

Strategy: Invite a group of interested library staff members to conduct a scan of public library websites to determine how other libraries serve their users through their websites, to consult library staff about how they think the library website should serve library users, and to use the results of the 2018 public consultation surveys to determine what users expect of the Library's website. Use the results of these investigations to create a 'scope of work' to be used in an RFP for an improved CRD Library website. Work with the Manager of Procurement to develop an RFP and hire a website consultant to develop the new website.

Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: #5 Increase public awareness and use of services and resources the Library has to offer.

Related CRD Strategic Planning Goal/Objective: #2 Planning. Intentionally plan services and activities for future needs of residents and community stakeholders.

- 2. Goal:** Adjust hours of operation to meet customer needs.

Rationale: Residents told us in the 2018 customer engagement survey (Reimagine Your Library) that, while they appreciate having a public library in their local community, they are not always satisfied with the hours of opening. People in rural communities want their library branches to be open on different days, more days and for longer hours. People in the urban areas want their libraries to be open on Mondays, earlier in the morning, and later on Friday evenings. There was some interest in Sunday openings.

Strategy: Using the results of the 2018 public engagement survey, additional small local surveys, and in consultation with local staff, determine public demand for changes to hours of operation in specific library branches. Explore ways to adjust hours of operation that will have limited impact on the Library budget. Make any changes to hours of operation that are feasible.

Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: #2 Provide a comfortable, welcoming, and useful environment for library users in branches throughout the Cariboo Region.

Related CRD Strategic Goal/Objective: #3.2.2 Continue to offer Library Services that meet the needs of rural communities.
- 3. Goal:** Introduce Outcome-Based Evaluation (OBE) of programs and services to all library branches.

Rationale: Library funders increasingly require grant reports that include how funds they provided impacted the community where they were spent, in addition to how the funds were spent. Outcome-Based Evaluation requires staff to consider the probable impact their proposed programs will have on the local community while still in the planning stages. This will help to determine the viability of a proposed program before it is launched and will help to gauge whether the program met expectations after it ends. Information gathered in this way will help staff provide more meaningful reports to library funders.

Strategy: Using results from the 100 Mile House OBE pilot project, develop reporting forms for use by each Branch. Test the forms in one or several Branches and make adjustments, as required. Launch OBE in all CRD Library Branches.

Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: #4 Update the way library staff collect statistics and report on library activities so results better reflect the impact Library Services has on the communities it serves.

Related CRD Strategic Goal/Objective: #2 Planning. Intentionally plan services and activities for future needs of residents and community stakeholders.
- 4. Goal:** Identify maintenance projects that can be completed within the timeframe of the Library's current strategic plan.

Rationale: The 2018 public engagement survey revealed that people would like larger buildings with dedicated quiet spaces, comfortable chairs for reading and relaxing, and nicer outdoor spaces. People who visit the larger urban branches

would like to feel more secure about approaching the front door and complain about the number of street people hanging out close to the library entrances.

Strategy: Visit each library branch to identify maintenance or renovation projects that can be undertaken within the time period of the Library Strategic Plan or which may need to be placed in the next Library Strategic Plan (2025+). Prioritize projects over the span of this Library Strategic Plan and the one following.

Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: #2 Provide a comfortable, welcoming, and useful environment for library users in branches throughout the Cariboo Region.

Related CRD Strategic Goal/Objective: #3.2.2 Continue to offer Library Services that meet the needs of rural communities.

2022 Goals

1. **Goal:** Improve access to the library's digital collections and other online services by developing an improved library website.
Rationale: The CRD Library website is the portal to its digital resources and services and is the 'face of the library' to the digital world. The existing website, while still functional on a basic level, is outdated and no longer offers the best access to the library's digital services, which are growing.
Strategy: Hold staff training sessions to introduce the newly developed website to library staff. Once staff are familiar with the site and how to use it, launch the site to the public.
Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: #5 Increase public awareness and use of services and resources the library has to offer.
Related CRD Strategic Planning Goal/Objective: #2 Planning. Intentionally plan services and activities for future needs of residents and community stakeholders.
2. **Goal:** Standardize library procedures to provide fair, equal, predictable services to residents throughout the Cariboo Region.
Rationale: Library customers who visit multiple Branches on a regular basis have noted a difference in how library policies are followed in different branches, which they find confusing and sometimes upsetting. The Cariboo Regional District Library is committed to providing equitable service in Branches across the Region.
Strategy: Identify library procedures that are being followed differently in different Branches, causing confusion for patrons who visit multiple Branches. Develop standardized procedures for all Library Branches. This is expected to be a large, time-consuming project with a significant staff training component.
Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: #1 Meet the diverse needs of the community through relevant library services and collections.
Related CRD Strategic Goal/Objective: #3.2.2 Continue to offer Library Services that meet the needs of rural communities.
3. **Goal:** Implement regular training days at each Area Branch that include staff from local Community Branches.

Rationale: In staff engagement sessions staff indicated that they would like more training. Some staff admitted they were not comfortable discussing some library services with customers because they, themselves, were not exactly sure how they worked. One of the suggestions for staff training that was made by library staff was to have regular group training days to cover topics specific to library work.

Strategy: Investigate the cost of hosting a training day in each of the three urban Branches that would include local library staff and rural library staff from that geographic area to determine how many training days would be feasible per year. If cost and time effective, host at least one training day in each Area Branch per year going forward.

Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: #3 Create opportunities for staff development.

Related CRD Strategic Goal/Objective: None.

4. **Goal:** Expand programming to include a broad range of age groups.

Rationale: CRD Libraries have developed good and consistent programming for young children but have neglected other age groups. The public engagement survey conducted to generate ideas for the future direction of Library Services revealed a desire for library programming aimed at more diverse range of ages, specifically adults.

Strategy: Use the results of the 2018 staff and public engagement surveys to identify adult workshop ideas. Develop and deliver an adult workshop series in each Area Branch in 2022 and encourage staff to make this a regular part of the annual programming schedule.

Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: #1 Meet the diverse needs of the community through relevant services and collections.

Related CRD Strategic Goal/Objective: #3.2.2 Continue to offer Library Services that meet the needs of rural communities.

2023 Goals

1. **Goal:** Investigate the feasibility of instituting self-directed learning sessions for all staff that includes one paid hour per week or month dedicated to a subject of the employee's or employer's choosing that is related to library work.

Rationale: Library staff mentioned in the staff engagement survey that they would like to expand their knowledge but need a more flexible working schedule in order to make that happen. This is particularly true for staff whose positions require them to work directly with customers for their entire shift, leaving no time during their shift to focus fully on learning activities.

Strategy: Investigate the financial and other implications of instituting self-directed learning sessions for FT, PT, and Casual staff in all Library Branches. Present the results at a Library Manager's meeting for comments and

adjustments. Deliver a presentation on the topic to library staff that outlines the options available to them at scheduled meetings held at the three urban Branches. If feasible, begin to offer paid, self-directed staff learning to all levels of library staff.

Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: #3 Create opportunities for staff development.

Related CRD Strategic Goal/Objective: None.

2. **Goal:** Develop a marketing plan for Library Services that will keep the public informed about services the Library has to offer.

Rationale: Many people who answered the public engagement survey were surprised at the variety of services offered by the library and indicated that they would use more of them if only they had known about them.

Strategy: Establish a marketing plan committee of library staff from various sized Branches to develop a marketing plan for Library Services with help from Communications.

Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: #5 Increase public awareness and use of services and resources the library has to offer.

Related CRD Strategic Goal/Objective: #3.2.2 Continue to offer Library Services that meet the needs of rural communities.

3. **Goal:** Complete maintenance projects that were identified in 2021 that can be completed within the timeframe of the Library's current strategic plan.

Rationale: In the public engagement survey, people told us they would like larger buildings with dedicated quiet spaces, comfortable chairs for reading and relaxing, and nice outdoor spaces.

Strategy: Focus on maintenance projects that were identified in 2021 that can be completed within the timeframe of the Library's current strategic plan.

Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: #2 Provide a comfortable, welcoming, and useful environment for library users in branches throughout the Cariboo Region.

Related CRD Strategic Goal/Objective: #3.2.2 Continue to offer Library Services that meet the needs of rural communities.

2024 Goals

1. **Goal:** Introduce 'objects' (aka 'Library of Things') to the collections of Area Branches.

Rationale: There has been a growing trend in public libraries to add physical objects to their lending collections, such as musical instruments, electricity monitors for home appliances, technology kits, computer tablets, and even such mundane objects as specialized cake pans. Lending objects can support different types of literacy or simply provide a locally needed public service.

Strategy: Identify other public libraries that lend objects and what they lend. Prepare a list of objects that are feasible for CRD Branches to add to their

collections and that would be successful. Compile policies and procedures used by other libraries that lend physical objects and use them as a basis to create a set of policies and procedures for lending 'things' in CRD Branches.

Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: #1 Meet the diverse needs of the community through relevant library services and collections.

Related CRD Strategic Planning Goal/Objective: None.

2. **Goal:** Introduce a digital-services-only library card.

Rationale: Digital-services-only library cards are a growing trend in public libraries. The card accommodates people who only want to use the Library's digital resources, who prefer to read books only in e-book format, and those who are not eligible for a full-services library card.

Strategy: Identify other public libraries that offer digital-services-only library cards and compile policies and procedures related to the service. Create a set of policies and procedures for CRD libraries for a digital-services-only library card. Introduce staff to the service and provide training in the policies and procedures prior to launching the service.

Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: #1 Meet the diverse needs of the community through relevant library services and collections.

Related CRD Strategic Goal/Objective: None.

3. **Goal:** Begin the process to gradually eliminate overdue fines on all library materials.

Rationale: Overdue fines are increasingly seen as a barrier to those who can least afford to lose access to library services. Fines often drive away the people who stand to benefit the most from free library services. Adults who owe fines they cannot pay often refuse to allow their children to borrow books or even visit the library out of fear that more fines will be added to their account.

Strategy: As a first step, stop charging overdue fines on children's library material in 2024. If successful, the project will be extended to other areas of the collection in future years.

Related Library Strategic Plan Priority; #1 Meet the diverse needs of the community through relevant library services and collections.

Related CRD Strategic Goal/Objective: #3.2.2 Continue to offer Library Services that meet the needs of rural communities.

2025 Goal

Goal: Develop a new strategic plan for Library Services for 2026-2030.

Rationale: Public libraries use strategic plans to focus on specific actions in order to move forward. Public libraries throughout B.C. have adopted strategic plans as their primary planning tool.

Strategy: Follow established strategic planning guidelines to create a strategic plan for Library Services for the next 2-5 years. Conduct an environmental scan, refresh the SWOT

analysis, identify stakeholders, and engage stakeholders in planning for the future direction of Library Services. Based on research and stakeholder engagement, develop goals, objectives and actions that will move Library Services forward for the next 3-5 years.

Related Library Strategic Plan Priority: Renew the Strategic Plan for a further 3-5 years.

CRD Strategic Planning Goal/Objective: #2 Planning. Intentionally plan services and activities for future needs of residents and community stakeholders.

Overall Financial Impact

The requisition level for 2021 is an increase of 3% above the 2020 requisition.

Prior to 2019, library services remained at the same requisition level for many years. However, general costs have risen during that time and budgeted surpluses are becoming lower every year. Of note are rising costs for staffing, utilities, and building maintenance. The rising cost of digital resources has been mostly offset by a decrease in the number of print resources that are purchased each year. This percentage may remain at 3% or lower depending on actual costs and other funding sources that might be identified in each year of the Library budget.

The website upgrade project will require the help of a website design firm and will result in funds being added to the 2021 budget.

The 100 Mile House Branch, completed in 2010, is a log structure and as such requires specific, regular maintenance including the re-staining of the logs. This will be a major expense of approximately \$40,000 which will be included in the budget on a 5-year rotation that began in 2017. That amount is included in the projected budget for 2022.

No major capital projects are planned for 2021.

Major repairs to the Williams Lake Branch, including dealing with tree roots growing into the sewer lines may soon be required. In addition, the branch is aging and soon will require repairs and updates to the interior. When undertaken, these repairs and updates will draw on capital reserves.

Debt obligations relating to the library's Area Library building projects ended in 2017.

Library services had \$762,384.87 in capital reserves at the beginning of 2020.

Significant Issues & Trends

Access to Services

Remote access to the library's public catalogue, to online circulation services, and to digital resources is growing in popularity as society shows increased interest in self-service from wherever they happen to be. People want to place holds, renew checked-out material, pay fines, download digital content, update their contact information, etc. without needing to visit the library in person. The library needs to recognize and accommodate this trend with a website that is up to date, interactive, and easy to use from a variety of devices with screens of varying sizes. To facilitate as much remote access as possible, some longstanding library policies and procedures will need to be updated and staff trained in their proper application.

Removing access barriers to library services continues to be a strong trend in the library sector. One way to accomplish this is by eliminating the fines that have traditionally been charged when borrowed material is not returned on time. The challenge is to balance the annual funds realized from overdue fines against the value of removing one of the biggest barriers to library access suffered by people in challenging economic circumstances.

Technology

Access to reliable, high-speed internet remains a challenge for rural areas while demand for it continues to grow. In some areas of the Region, internet access in resident's homes is a challenge or, in some areas, an impossibility. This, and the fact that access to many necessary government services are increasingly available only online, makes centralized internet access in remote communities a necessity. The non-commercial nature of the public library makes it the perfect location in a community for this service, which includes access to internet stations and printers within our branches, and wireless connectivity for those with laptops, tablets, and smart phones.

Training opportunities are needed for staff and Library customers who are less familiar with the technology the Library uses. The Library, with its free services and training opportunities, can help people learn what they need to know to make the best use of technology. In order to do this, library staff must continuously update their own knowledge of digital technology.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Working in collaboration with other libraries and with local community groups and agencies continues to be an ongoing trend. Cost savings can be significant when libraries that consume similar products and offer similar services band together to negotiate better prices. This has been proven time and again as the Library works with other public libraries at the national, provincial and regional level to negotiate prices for such things

as Canada Post shipping, digital content, author visits, and technology programming. Similarly, it is more efficient and benefits the community when local agencies offering similar programs and services to the public work together. Library staff attend planning meetings of local community agencies and offer the library as a venue for community-based programs. Professional staff regularly attend meetings of regional and provincial library partners where members collaborate on projects of interest to the library sector and larger libraries provide guidance and help to their smaller counterparts.

The Library Partners Group, consisting of BC public library directors, library trustees, the BC Library Association, and the BC Libraries Cooperative, regularly advocates on behalf of all BC public libraries for more sustainable provincial funding.

Evolving Library Collections

The Library, like all libraries, is experiencing a gradual decline in use of its physical collections. For the most part, this can be attributed to the increasing popularity of digital media across all demographic sectors. School students who once flocked to the public library to consult print resources to complete assignments now consult online resources. Funds once spent on these print resources are now re-directed to online resources.

DVD collections continue to be highly used in all CRDL branches, even as their popularity decreases in most urban areas. This is due, primarily, to the inability of many Cariboo residents to access video streaming services via high-speed internet. In areas where library users are able to make use of streaming services through their local library, DVD use has fallen off significantly. Because of this, DVDs may soon become an outdated technology. A subscription-based streaming service would be a viable service for CRD Branches only if the majority of library users have the ability to access it. That would require an expansion of affordable, high-speed internet to homes throughout the Region.

While the library's print newspaper and magazine collections are still well used, e-journals and e-magazines also have become an appealing option for active users of smart phones and tablets.

Many libraries have added 'objects' to their lending collections as an addition to reading, listening and viewing material. These additions have been very popular and fill a community need when multiple people want to borrow and use a 'thing' for only a short period of time. Objects have included such things as musical instruments, computer tablets, science kits, recreational equipment, etc. In a small way, the CRD Library has already joined this international trend by lending free passes to northern BC museums and heritage sites such as Barkerville.

Resource Sharing

For decades, sharing collections between libraries has been an important way to provide access to books that a library might not own locally. No library can possibly own all the books that their customers want to read.

There have been significant changes to resource sharing on a province-wide basis. As predicted, the Interlibrary Connect service that was launched in 2015 has become the resource sharing method of choice for most people due to its simplicity of use and the quick turnaround of requested material. People can now place holds on books held in any of the more than 50 libraries currently offering Interlibrary Connect without going through the more cumbersome provincial interlibrary loan system. It was predicted that as this kind of resource sharing grew in popularity throughout the province, use of the traditional interlibrary loan system would wane. This has indeed come to pass. Traditional interlibrary loans now represent only a small fraction of the total number of items shared between BC libraries, while ILC loans between libraries have increased exponentially.

The way the new service works has significantly impacted how staff tasks related to this service are distributed. Work that was once centralized at the Network Office is now being done in each branch. Funds for increased postage and other materials have been directed to branches to accommodate the increased number of packages being mailed. Changes in staffing allocation including an increase in the number of hours allocated to rural Branches may be required if this trend continues.

Library Facilities

Over time, the library's branches will transition to meet the changing needs of the communities they serve. Public libraries will require less space for storage of physical collections and will require more "people" space for community meetings, for independent/small group meetings between friends and peers, for programs presented by the library or in partnership with other groups and institutions, or for training sessions held by the library or other agencies. In addition, curated spaces (spaces dedicated to a particular purpose) that encourage the exercise of creativity and imagination (Maker Spaces) are a growing trend in public libraries.

A trend in European libraries that is slowly moving to North America is the practice of providing access to public library facilities 24/7, even when staff are not present. A few Canadian libraries are currently experimenting with this new service model.

Staffing

Maintaining a staff that is trained to a level where they can continue to offer optimal service during a time of rapid change in the library sector is a challenge. Staff need to

continually update their knowledge in order to deliver up-to-date library services. For this reason, the CRD Library Strategic Plan (and the 5-year Business Plan) will focus on this very important issue.

Planning/Community Engagement

Public library services are undergoing a transformation in order to meet the needs of a rapidly changing society. The challenge the CRDL faces, along with all public libraries, is to ensure that its facilities and services accommodate the past while anticipating the future. The library's strategic plan will provide guidance and focused direction in the planning of future library services that will inform and work in conjunction with the business plan.

Community engagement remains important in public libraries, particularly when developing plans for library services in future years. The perfect opportunity for the community to engage with library staff, to express their views and contribute to the direction library services will take in the future, is during the strategic planning process. The last major community engagement initiative resulted in the present Library Strategic Plan. The next major community engagement initiative will take place in 2025 in preparation for the next Library Strategic Plan. Smaller scale engagements may take place before that time that focus on a particular community or library service.

Measuring Previous Years Performance

In January 2020 CRD Library staff began work on goals identified in the 2020-2024 Library Strategic Plan. In March 2020 all branch libraries closed to the public when the COVID-19 pandemic was officially declared. From that point in time every focus moved from specific tasks in the Library Strategic Plan to tasks related to how staff could continue to provide as many library services to the public as possible, as safely as possible, while library buildings remained closed and pandemic restrictions remained in place. The Manager of Library Services remained in close contact with other library managers across the Province at weekly meetings held on the Zoom platform, and monitored workplace restrictions and advice from WorkSafeBC and the BC CDC as they applied to the public library sector so appropriate protocols and safety plans could be drafted and put into place. CRD Library Managers used the CRD's Microsoft Teams platform to discuss pandemic-related library issues and to make plans for the return of library services to the public. In November 2020, the Library Management team will meet to discuss whether the Library Strategic Plan should be extended to 2025 to mitigate the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant library shutdown has had on progress planned for 2020.

Pandemic related accomplishments include:

- Library staff successfully shifted from in-person children's programming to digital programming by learning how to record, edit, and produce their own videos; and

- load them to the Library's Facebook platform for viewing by library customers. The videos were enormously popular with parents and children. Staff who were at first reluctant to participate discovered a previously unknown talent.
- After library branches were closed to the public in March, library users were unable to access the Library's physical collections. With encouragement from staff to take advantage of the Library's digital resources, library customers discovered digital resources they had never used before.
 - A new service to offer library card registration by phone and email was initiated so residents who did not previously have a library card could access the Library's digital resources while the Library was closed to in-person visits.
 - A new Curbside Holds Pickup service was initiated so people could have access to the Library's physical collections while buildings remained closed.
 - At first thought to be in jeopardy due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Summer Reading Club went ahead with digital programming replacing in-person meetings. Craft kits related to weekly digital productions were distributed to registrants using the Library's new Curbside Pickup service. Like permanent staff, summer students learned how to use a completely unexpected and different set of skills to deliver their programs to children who were unable to attend in person.
 - Due to the Library's willingness to pivot the Summer Reading Club to a digital format, the Library was able to capitalize on an increased Canada Summer Jobs Grant that covered 86% of the wages paid to 3 summer students. Normally, the grant covers only about 43% of those wages.
 - Quesnel Library staff began to do a monthly spot on local radio to promote services offered at the Quesnel Branch.
 - Using an unexpected matching grant from Francophone Affairs, 100 Mile House, Quesnel, and Williams Lake Branches were able to supplement their French language collections.
 - Using an unexpected grant from the Province of BC for technology related projects, Library Services was able to purchase equipment to support ongoing digital programming (softbox lighting, ring lights, green screen backgrounds, microphones, computer tablets to use as recording and editing devices, and video editing software). Library Services is working with IT to use a portion of this grant to improve internet access in all Branches by purchasing and installing upgraded routers, and sourcing and purchasing tablets for use by the public in Library Branches. Equipment to secure and keep tablets charged will also be added. This grant (\$34,846) has been received and will be expended over the 2020 and 2021 budget years.

In spite of the pandemic, the following progress was made on 2020 goals.

Goal: Improve access to the Library's digital collections and other online services by developing an improved library website.

This goal was completely set aside as staff turned their attention to developing new services and new models for delivering old services after the COVID-19 pandemic forced libraries to close in March. Staff will return their attention to this project after library branches re-open and they adjust to the new tasks and procedures necessary for offering library services in a pandemic. Funding for this project has been moved forward to accommodate the shift in timing.

Goal: Provide facility/equipment improvements to Area and Community Library Branches.

Of the two projects identified within this goal for 2020, one was partially completed and one was not begun. Bathroom fixtures in the 100 Mile House Branch were replaced in both the public and staff washrooms. Taps in the public washrooms were upgraded from battery operated automatic taps that were a source of complaints by the public almost from the moment they were installed, to a wired-in automatic tap that can be adjusted for water flow. The source of public complaints involved the extreme force of the water as it came out of the taps. In addition, automatic taps in the staff washroom that had stopped functioning were replaced. In spite of items being on backorder due to pandemic-related production and shipping delays, the upgrades were completed in time for the Branch to re-open to in-person visits in late September.

The project to identify new uses for the mezzanine in the 100 Mile House Library was not completed and was identified as a low priority project for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Goal: Provide fair, equal and predictable library services to residents throughout the Cariboo Region.

Two of the three projects related to this goal were successfully completed in 2020. In the face of staff complaints about how complicated it has become and how much time it takes to track library statistics, a review of that process was undertaken and completed. A new form for the collection of statistics at the Branch level was developed in late 2019 and launched in early 2020. The form is easier to complete and reduces the amount of paperwork required of Branch staff. Further changes may need to be made as the Province of BC is currently reviewing which statistics are necessary to be reported to the Province in an attempt to make the process more user-friendly, less complicated, and less time consuming. The annual report of library usage statistics was presented and received by the CRD Board in September. Delays at the provincial level meant that statistics were compiled too late to meet the second quarter deadline for this report.

The third objective was the most time-consuming of the three and was not completed in 2020. The standardization of procedures throughout the library

system remains high in importance. Staff will return their attention to this objective in 2021, however completion may not be possible until the pandemic has come to an end and it becomes clear which procedures developed during the pandemic will become permanent.

Goal: Improve staff access to training in multiple formats.

Library staff were able to take advantage of various training opportunities in 2020. Almost all staff completed a core training course 'Librarian's Guide to Homelessness' about understanding homelessness, how homeless people view the world differently than other people and how to deal with homeless library customers with empathy and understanding. This course was made available courtesy of the North Central Library Federation.

Some staff also completed a workshop on traumatic brain injuries and how such injuries may affect the behavior of individuals while they are at the library. Other courses completed in 2020 included 'Serving the underserved: children with disabilities at your Library', '2020 Fiore Group BC Universal Respectful Workplace Training, and 'I-100 Introduction to Incident Command System'.

Goal: Provide a comfortable, welcoming, and useful environment for library users and staff in branches located throughout the region.

The goal to explore ways to adjust hours of operation was not completed in 2020. However, this remains an important goal and will be moved to 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed a number of issues that did not previously exist that need to be addressed in a Patron Code of Conduct to assist library staff when dealing with difficult customers. Work on the Patron Code of Conduct continues.

Goal: Improve access to the library's collections and other services.

Network Office staff completed the weeding of out-of-date legal material from all Branches, following weeding guidelines supplied by BC Legal Services. Replacing the out of date material has been delayed because the annual LawMatters Grant that was expected to cover the cost of replacing the discarded material was suddenly cancelled soon after the pandemic was declared. If the grant is not restored in 2021, the Library will start to replace the out-of-date, deleted material using its regular materials budget.

Staff will resume work on general weeding guidelines for library staff as the pressure of creating COVID-19 safety plans and protocols eases.

Conclusion:

Although some of the identified goals for 2020 were not met because Branches were closed in March, the COVID-19 pandemic did offer some unique opportunities for staff development, new services, and new ways of offering established services. The Library Management team was forced to focus on how to offer library services in a pandemic world. Staff had to look at library services from a completely different perspective. It remains to be seen which service changes will become permanent and which ones only last as long as the pandemic.

Overall, it was a successful year in spite of the challenges caused by the pandemic. Staff have generally responded well to the complete upset in their routines and the sudden necessity to learn how to do their jobs in a completely different way. We hope to resume work on goals identified in the Library Strategic Plan in 2021.