



AGENDA

Greater Victoria Public Library Board Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

Date: Tuesday March 25, 2025

Time: 12:00-1:00 PM

Location: In Person: Community Room, Central Branch, 735 Broughton Street, Victoria, BC
Electronically: Microsoft Teams

1. Call to Order

2. Territorial Acknowledgement

Greater Victoria Public Library's service area is located within the traditional territories of many First Nations, known today as the Songhees First Nation and Xwsepsem (Esquimalt) First Nation, as well as the WSÁNEĆ Nations and Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) First Nation.

Their historical relationships with the land and sea continue to this day. It is an honour to work on these sacred lands that they have stewarded since time immemorial

3. Welcome and Introductions

4. Consent Agenda

Motion to Approve

- 4.1. Approval of Agenda
- 4.2. Approval of Minutes – February 25, 2025 Attachment 4.2
- 4.3. Chair's Report Attachment 4.3
- 4.4. CEO Report Attachment 4.4
- 4.5. Correspondence
 - 4.5.1. A Simeon Attachment 4.5.1
 - 4.5.2. K Cambridge Attachment 4.5.2
- 4.6. Liaison Report
 - 4.6.1. IslandLink Library Federation Attachment 4.6.1

For Information

5. Chair's Remarks

For Information

6. Business Arising from Previous Meeting

- 6.1. Board Engagement Survey
- 6.2. Board Retreat

For Information
For Discussion

7. Committee Reports

- 7.1. Planning and Policy Committee - Oral Report

For Information

8. New Business

- 8.1. Provincial Library Grant Report 2024 Attachment 8.1

For Discussion

9. Next Meeting Date

April 22, 12:00pm – 1:00pm

10. Adjournment



MINUTES REGULAR BOARD MEETING

GVPL Central Branch, 735 Broughton Street

Community Meeting Room & MS Teams

February 25, 2025

A hybrid meeting of the Greater Victoria Public Library Board was held on the above date. The following individuals were in attendance:

Board Members:

Trustee A. Appleton
Trustee K. Boehnert
Trustee D. Cavens (Vice-Chair)
Trustee S. Donaldson
Trustee D. Grove
Trustee R. Henderson
Trustee S. Khair (Chair)
Trustee S. Kim
Trustee S. Lansdowne
Trustee G. Lemon
Trustee R. McClure
Trustee M. Morley
Trustee G. Newton
Trustee T. Phelps Bondaroff
Trustee R. Ranjan
Trustee K. Roessingh
Trustee R. Stromberg
Trustee N. White
Trustee M. Wey

Staff:

M. Sawa, CEO/Board Secretary
M. Barnes, Assistant Director, Finance
J. Gingera, Director, Systems Integration, Resource Management and IT
D. Wood, Executive Director, Library Services
E. Russell, Recording Secretary
R. Bagniet President, CUPE 410

1. CALL TO ORDER

S. Khair called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

S. Khair provided the Indigenous Acknowledgement.

3. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Request to remove the following items from the Consent Agenda:

- 4.5.1. Correspondence

Items 4.5.1 and 4.5.2 were removed from the Consent Agenda and moved to New Business 9.3 and 9.4 respectively.

Moved by Trustee Roessingh seconded by Trustee Lemon,

THAT items 4.1 & 4.2 be approved.

THAT Item 4.3 be received for information.

- 4.1 Approval of Agenda
- 4.2 Approval of Minutes – January 28, 2025
- 4.3 Chair's Report
- 4.4 CEO's Report

MOTION CARRIED

5. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair reported that the 2025 budget presentations to councils continue with the latest presentation to the District of Oak Bay on January 24, 2025. Initial meet and greet sessions between the Chair, Vice- Chair and new board trustees have taken place. The Chair noted British Columbia Library Trustees Association (BCLTA) engagement opportunities and advised that a date for board retreat will be confirmed in the near future.

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

6.1. Board Committees

6.1.1. 2025 Committee Membership

2025 Board committee appointments are included in the agenda package. Trustees are welcome and encouraged to attend meetings of both committees.

6.1.2. 2025 Committee Meeting Schedules

2025 Finance Committee meeting dates have been confirmed. The 2025 meeting schedule for the Planning and Policy Committee will be developed following the committee's inaugural meeting in March.

6.1.3. 2025 Committee Priorities

The Chair provided an overview of the roles of the two committees, noting the importance of member participation.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1. Board Engagement

The Chair announced that a board engagement survey has been prepared that will be distributed to trustees following this meeting to provide trustees with an opportunity to share feedback and expectations regarding their role.

7.2. Correspondence

7.2.1. Email received from Patron, February 9, 2025

M. Sawa noted that the resumption of Sunday service is not yet possible due to current limitations of staffing. As our staffing levels stabilize, we will be able to support increased open hours.

7.2.2. Patron letter received February 17, 2025

M. Sawa reported that GVPL's InterLibrary Loan service is scheduled to resume on March 12.

8. NEXT MEETING DATE:

March 25, 2025; 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

9. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Lemon, Seconded by Trustee White,

THAT the February 25, 2025 Regular Board Meeting be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED

Board Chair

Board Secretary



This month has been a particularly eventful and productive one for the GVPL, marked by budget presentations, committee starts, and exciting new initiatives. Below are some highlights:

2025 Budget Presentations to Councils

Throughout March, we participated in presenting the 2025 Budget to several municipal councils. Budget presentations continue to provide invaluable opportunities to engage with our municipal partners, gather their questions and feedback, and share updates on GVPL's new initiatives and service delivery highlights over the past year.

- **District of Saanich** – March 6
- **Township of Esquimalt** – March 10
- **District of Central Saanich** – March 31 (our next and final presentation!)

My sincere gratitude to Vice-Chair Cavens for his exceptional support in representing the Board at the Saanich and Central Saanich presentations.

Our budget presentations thus far have been marked by thoughtful questions and engaging discussions with municipal councillors, who raised points around the role of the public library in countering disinformation and supporting intellectual freedom. The year over year rise in usage of library materials and spaces was welcome news from councils, and even made [local headlines](#) following our presentation to Oak Bay municipal council in late February. We also heard that resumption of Sunday hours is a key priority for municipal partners, which is a priority shared by the GVPL Board.

Of special note, the Mayor and council from the District of Saanich praised GVPL staff regarding their dedication and close collaboration on opening the Nellie McClung Express Branch. Knowing just how much work has gone into this project, these comments were very affirming and have been shared with staff.

Nellie McClung Express Branch

I am excited to announce the “soft opening” of the Nellie McClung Express Branch on March 26. This interim branch is a critical milestone, and I would like to extend my thanks to everyone at the GVPL and District of Saanich who contributed to making this new branch a success. Given the limited capacity of the express branch, the GVPL has decided not to hold a large opening ceremony; nonetheless we invite all Board members to visit the express branch this spring as part of our regular branch tours for Trustees.

New Board Trustee Orientation & Welcome Lunches

Continuing on new beginnings, this past month the Vice-Chair, CEO and I were pleased to host two lunch meetings with our new Board Trustees. These gatherings are always a great opportunity to welcome our new Trustees, foster relationships, and provide an introduction to roles on the Board.

Planning & Policy Committee

The Planning & Policy Committee held its inaugural meeting on March 18. I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone for their interest in and commitment to this important committee. Many thanks to Board Trustees Nik White and Susan Kim for stepping into the Chair and Vice-Chair roles, respectively. We have much to look

forward to, including upcoming policy reviews, strategic planning, and the Board retreat. A detailed committee report will be provided by the new Chair during the March 25 regular Board meeting.

Board Engagement Survey

Thank you to all who have submitted their feedback on the Board Engagement Survey so far. For those who have not yet completed it, I encourage you to do so as soon as possible. Your input is invaluable in guiding our meetings.

As of last Thursday, 10 responses were received. I encourage all Trustees who have not yet submitted feedback to do so as soon as possible. Some highlights so far:

- Overall satisfaction with board meetings is generally positive, with many Trustees finding the meetings are well-organized and efficient. However, some express a desire for more opportunities for in-depth discussion.
- Feelings of engagement are generally high, with most feeling that there is time and opportunities to ask questions. However, some Trustees struggle to determine how best to engage. Citizen representatives would like greater clarity on their role, in particular.
- Some suggestions for improvement include prioritizing more discussion-heavy items earlier in meeting agendas and providing better feedback mechanisms to understand how Board input influences policy and strategic planning.

As always, I am deeply appreciative of the hard work and dedication of the Board and staff in advancing GVPL's mission and goals. I look forward to the continued momentum as we move into the months ahead.

Respectfully,

Shahira Khair
GVPL Board Chair



Welcome to Spring!

With Spring Break upon us, GVPL branches have been hubs of activity as students and families utilize our services and spaces more frequently during the school break. This is a great time to showcase the library's resources and promote our role as destination for information, fun and discovery.



Nellie McClung Express Branch

The soft launch opening of the Nellie McClung Express Branch will take place this week, on Wednesday, March 26. Our temporary location at 3561 Shelbourne Street is in a compact space (with occupancy limit requirements of 50 maximum) and will serve as a convenient service point for holds pick up and library returns, 3 public computers for express use (including one adaptive station) and a small browsing collection. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all GVPL staff involved along with our District of Saanich project partners who have worked so hard together to bring this interim space to life. We look forward to welcoming the community.



2025 Budget Presentations

The last of our 2025 budget presentations will take place on March 31st when we present to the District of Central Saanich council. We greatly appreciate the warm welcome and thoughtful questions we have received at our meetings with our municipal partners.

Construction Impacting Central Branch Access

Earlier this month, BC Hydro and the City of Victoria began underground infrastructure upgrades in front of the Central Branch at the Broughton Street entrance. This work is expected to last approximately one month, followed by sidewalk and curb improvements early to mid-April. During this time, there will be limited sidewalk and stair access on Broughton. BC Hydro workers will be on-site for the duration to direct patrons to alternative entry points to the library.

InterLibrary Loan Service

I am delighted to report that our InterLibrary Loan (ILL) service resumed on Wednesday, March 12. Special thanks to all staff for their extraordinary efforts and support in relaunching this service.



Maureen



GREATER VICTORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Attachment 4.5.1

March 19, 2025

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
By email: [Redacted]

Dear [Redacted]:

Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding the temporary disruption of our interlibrary loan service, your letter was shared with the GVPL Library Board of Trustees at the February 25 board meeting. We understand how important this service is, and we sincerely apologize for the inconvenience the temporary pause has caused.

The interruption of the interlibrary loan service has been due to staffing challenges, specifically with filling library assistant positions. I am pleased to let you know that these roles have now been filled, and the library is excited to reinstate this valuable service. As of March 12, 2025, GVPL's Interlibrary Loan service has been reinstated to the same level it was before the pause, and you can once again request materials from libraries across British Columbia. For the latest updates and information, please visit www.gvpl.ca.

We truly appreciate your patience and understanding during this time. If you have any further questions or need support with alternative services, please do not hesitate to contact GVPL for assistance.

Thank you again for sharing your feedback, and your continued support of GVPL.

Maureen Sawa

Maureen Sawa
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: [Redacted], [Redacted]

Attachment 4.5.2

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Ongoing frustration with lack of interlibrary loans
Date: February 17, 2025 4:36:23 PM

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

*** [This message originated from outside GVPL. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.] ***

Dear [REDACTED]

I am a regular user of the Oak Bay branch of the GVPL. Recently I have been very frustrated with GVPL's ongoing failure to reinstate the inter-library loan service - it has been six months or more since I was able to take out an inter-library loan.

The GVPL website cites "ongoing staffing issues" as a reason for cutting this service. However, if there are staffing issues it would be more equitable to cut a small percentage across all services, not cut out one service altogether. The inability to access inter-library loans is all the more galling as GVPL has been divesting its books for several years now. As a result, some small town libraries in BC boast larger stocks than Victoria. The only way residents of Victoria are able to access these books (which used to be available right here) is through inter-library loans. This is a priceless and irreplaceable service, as even a used book costs upward of \$10.

I wish to bring this issue to the Board's attention. We all pay for the library through our taxes and it's not acceptable to just reduce the level of service (similar to what the grocery chain are doing by keeping the prices down but reducing the weight of the product). It is time for the Board to step up and demand that GVPL deliver on its mandate. If a bigger budget is required, then the library should negotiate with the city about it, not quietly drop services.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Victoria



**GREATER VICTORIA
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Attachment 4.5.2

March 19, 2025

Via email [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]:

Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding the temporary disruption of our Interlibrary Loan (ILL) service. We completely understand how important this service is, and we sincerely apologize for the inconvenience the temporary pause has caused.

As you've mentioned, the interruption has been due to staffing challenges, specifically with filling library assistant positions. We understand the critical role ILL plays in connecting our community with resources from across the province, and I am pleased to let you know that these roles have now been filled, and this valuable service has resumed.

As of March 12, 2025, GVPL's Interlibrary Loan (ILL) service has been reinstated to the same level it was before the pause, and you can once again request materials from libraries across British Columbia. For the latest updates and information, please visit www.gvpl.ca.

We truly appreciate your patience and understanding during this time. Our Board of Trustees is aware of the situation, and we are focused on ensuring our library operates at its highest potential. If you have any further questions or need assistance with alternative services, please do not hesitate to contact GVPL for support.

Thank you again for your feedback, and your continued support of GVPL.

Sincerely,

Maureen Sawa
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: lack of staffing for interlibrary loan
Date: March 20, 2025 9:36:55 AM

[You don't often get email from [REDACTED] Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

*** [This message originated from outside GVPL. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.] ***

Thank you very much for your reply. Good news that interlibrary loans are now available.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

> On Mar 19, 2025, at 11:24 AM, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]> wrote:

>

> Good Morning [REDACTED],

>

> Please find attached a response to your email from GVPL CEO Maureen Sawa.

>

> Regards,

>

> [REDACTED]
 > [REDACTED]

> Greater Victoria Public Library

>

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: [REDACTED] C <[REDACTED]>

> Sent: March 4, 2025 2:43 PM

> To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

> Subject: lack of staffing for interlibrary loan

>

> [You don't often get email from [REDACTED] Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

>

> *** [This message originated from outside GVPL. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.] ***

>

> Hello [REDACTED]

>

> I am writing this letter to the library Board of Trustees to complain about the lack of inter library loan service this past few months. I have been advised by library staff at several branches that this has been a staffing issue and I can only assume that library assistant positions are not being filled in a timely manner.

>

> I rely on inter library loan services quite frequently and have in numerous places around the province. This delay in providing a source of publications is not acceptable.

>

> I would hope that this service can commence again very quickly and that the Trustees will not be remiss in their duties to keep the library operating to its maximum potential.

>

> Kind regards,

>

>

> <2025-03-19-GVPL Response [REDACTED].pdf>



4.6.1 Island Link Library Federation

IslandLink Library Federation Board Report

March 25, 2025, virtual

Report by Island Link Chair, Shelly Donaldson

Thom Knutson, Director of IslandLink Library Federation (ILLB), recently led an informative orientation session for several trustees, providing a thorough overview of the board's history and mandate. The session also highlighted the collaborative efforts between federations to support and enhance library services across BC. He explained how the board connects with library federations across the province following the ILLB guiding principles:

Vision: Libraries linking to lead, learn, and collaborate to benefit our communities.

Mission: To strengthen local libraries to provide services, resources, and opportunities.

IslandLink is an active member of the newly established BC Public Library Professional Development Coalition, which includes all six federations as well as key library partners such as BCLA, BCLTA, BC Libraries Coop, and the Association of BC Public Library Directors. Building on the framework developed in 2024, the Coalition is working on a strategic plan to better coordinate professional development and training across the BC public library sector.

Two bursaries for member library staff to attend the intensive 6-day *LLEAD* leadership program were offered by IslandLink—one fully funded by IslandLink and the other co-funded with other federations. The training covered key areas such as Indigenous awareness and relationships, customer service, understanding vulnerable populations, and managing challenging interactions.

Additionally, IslandLink continues to support and fund various programming initiatives, including Leif David's popular magic show tour in May 2025, the annual *Comic Camp*, spring break events, and collaborative projects aimed at strengthening programming partnerships with community organizations.

Plans are underway for the in-person ILLB spring meeting in Alert Bay this April, which will involve a six-hour drive from Victoria, followed by a 45-minute ferry ride to Cormorant Island. The meeting will feature a local author presentation and a guided tour of the U'Mista Cultural Centre, offering attendees a valuable cultural experience.

Submitted date: 2025-03-07 13:14:53 Eastern Standard Time

Attachment 8.1

2024 Provincial Public Library Grant Report (PLGR)

Privacy Notice

Your responses are collected by the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs under sections 26 (c) and (e) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* for the purposes of grant reporting and accountability.

To protect your own privacy and the privacy of others, please do not include any personal information such as non-business contact details.

If you have any questions regarding the collection of personal/business information, please contact PUBLIB@gov.bc.ca.

Overview

Library Name
Greater Victoria Public Library (GVPL)

Library and Community Profile

Provide a brief description of your library and the community it serves (e.g., demographics, local economy, governmental relations, historical context, current issues, etc.).

The Greater Victoria Public Library (GVPL) delivers library services through a network of 12 branch locations alongside our virtual branch, gvpl.ca. GVPL champions literacy, lifelong learning, and community cohesion by offering free access to information, space, tools, and expertise. Our library branches are located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded lands of the Songhees, Xwsepsem (Esquimalt), Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay), and WSÁNEĆ Peoples, whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

In our service area, which encompasses ten of the thirteen municipalities and five of the ten Indigenous communities in the Capital Regional District, we engage with a population of approximately 380,000 residents. This demographic diversity emphasizes the significance of our mission to foster inclusivity and accessibility while addressing the evolving needs of our community. As highlighted in the Victoria Foundation's 2024 Vital Signs Report, the persistent challenges of the cost of living and affordable housing remain paramount in Greater Victoria, echoing the concerns of the preceding year, and underscoring the importance of our role as the community's living room.*

**GVPL provides Library Services to:*

- The District of Central Saanich*
- The City of Colwood*
- The Township of Esquimalt*
- The Esquimalt Nation*
- The District of the Highlands*
- The City of Langford*
- The District of Metchosin*
- The District of Oak Bay*
- The District of Saanich*
- The Scia'new First Nation (Beecher Bay)*
- The Songhees Nation*
- The Tsartlip First Nation*
- The Tsawout First Nation*
- The City of Victoria*
- The Town of View Royal*

2024 Year in Review

Highlight activities and accomplishments that the library has focused on this year. Briefly outline how library funding (local, provincial, annual, one-time/targeted) has been used or earmarked for library services and/or special initiatives to meet community needs. Use the Featured Initiatives section starting on the next page to go into more detail on specific projects.

In 2024, our focus on meeting evolving community needs directed our collective efforts toward a series of strategic objectives. With the support of provincial operating grants, including Enhancement Grants, municipal funders, reserve funds, and generous community donations, we made significant strides in advancing priority projects related to accessibility, inclusion, sustainability, innovation, and service excellence.

GVPL and its Board of Trustees began the process of developing a new strategic plan for the organization in 2024. This process included several activities such as the closeout and review of the 2021-2023 Strategic Bridging Plan, which provided insight into the challenges faced by GVPL during that period, and a Board Retreat, where trustees engaged in several activities designed to identify themes and focuses for the next strategic plan. With the assistance of an external consultant to compile and synthesize information gathered, GVPL Board of Trustees approved a new Strategic Plan Framework at the end of 2024. The framework will be reviewed by the incoming Board of Trustees and operationalized in 2025.

In the absence of a formal strategic plan, GVPL identified several key priority areas for the organization to focus on in 2024:

- Safety & Security
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA)
- Recruitment and Onboarding
- Infrastructure for Service Delivery

These strategic priority areas were chosen to address challenges faced by GVPL and their staff, including reducing the number of vacancies and addressing the increase of security incidents. They also included several initiatives from the 2021-2023 Strategic Bridging Plan that were carried forward for completion in the coming years that included the development of an EDIA strategy, which was initiated at the end of 2023. In 2024, an external consulting firm, Experience Advisors (XA), completed a current state assessment phase at GVPL and delivered a report with recommendations to consider.

In addition to this priority area, GVPL completed the implementation of a Fine-Free service model which launched in January 2024, a priority from the 2021-2023 Strategic Bridging Plan. Eliminating overdue fines for items returned after their due date as well as removing unpaid overdue fine charges from patron records removes a potential barrier to library use. Starting in the Summer of 2024, GVPL began collaborating with one of its municipal funders, the District of Saanich, on their project to redevelop the current site of the Nellie McClung branch. This work continues to be a substantial project for GVPL, drawing on resources and expertise from across the organization. In December 2024, the Nellie McClung location was closed to the public with an interim location expected to open in early 2025.

Major Themes

Use the checkboxes below to indicate which areas your library primarily focused on this year. These themes should be reflected in the Featured Initiatives section starting on the next page, and/or in the Year in Review section above. We recommend choosing only the top 3-5 most relevant themes.

Staffing

Facilities

Strategic planning and governance

Accessibility and inclusion

Other:

Safety & Security

Featured Initiatives

Use this section to provide detail on up to four significant initiatives the library has undertaken in the past year, focusing particularly on use of the Enhancement Grants. Use one page per initiative. To add more pages, select Yes for "I have more initiatives to report" at the bottom of this page.

Initiative Title #1

Enter a brief, descriptive title for your initiative.

Nellie McClung Branch Redevelopment Project

Summary

Provide a brief description of the activities undertaken this year. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this initiative.

The site of GVPL's Nellie McClung branch was identified for redevelopment as part of an Affordable Housing Initiative undertaken by the District of Saanich, in partnership with the Capital Regional Housing Corporation (CRHC). The redevelopment will include a new 25,000 to 30,000 square foot library and 200 or more affordable rental housing units. The Nellie McClung branch was previously identified by GVPL's Regional Service Delivery Plan as a branch in need of additional space to continue to support the growing community in Saanich. Due to this project, the current Nellie McClung branch will be closed after nearly 50 years of serving the surrounding community. The Nellie McClung Branch is one of GVPL's busiest branches, and it was determined that an interim Nellie McClung branch location would be required in an alternate location close to the original site. The establishment of an interim branch location will allow for citizens to maintain access to some branch services for the duration of the project, which is estimated to be three years. This will not only ensure service continuity in the local area, but alleviate some of the increased space constraints that would result with the prolonged closure of one of GVPL's branches.

Timeline and Progress Report

What is the expected timeline for this initiative? What is the current status (e.g. planning, implementation, complete, ongoing). If you have reported on this initiative in a previous year's PLGR, what has changed since then? What progress has been made, or what obstacles have you encountered?

In the Summer of 2024, GVPL began collaborating with the District of Saanich on the redevelopment project and the establishment of an interim branch. GVPL compiled a list of requirements and space configuration to assist the District of Saanich on identifying a suitable location for an interim site. In September 2024, a location for a small interim branch was secured by the District, and planning proceeded for the relocation of the branch and closure of the existing Nellie McClung branch. This process not only included the moving of collections, IT equipment, and furniture to the interim site, but also required a system-wide collection rebalancing effort to absorb the remaining branch collections that cannot be contained in the much smaller space provided for the interim branch. In December 2024, GVPL held a farewell celebration marking the closure of the historic Nellie McClung location before the branch was closed to the public. GVPL then began the process of vacating the site and redistributing the furniture, IT equipment, and collections to other branches. In January 2025, GVPL will begin to move and set up the Nellie McClung Express location which is expected to be open to the public in early 2025.

Budgetary Information

Please outline whether/how provincial funding (annual or one-time/targeted e.g., Enhancement Grants) contributes to the estimated cost of this initiative.

GVPL's operating agreement with its municipal funders, including the District of Saanich, it is the municipality's responsibility to provide the facilities of a library branch, including the set up and relocation cost. Some additional costs outside those covered in the agreement, such as the celebration farewell event, were funded by GVPL's operating funds.

Rationale

Why was this initiative prioritized? (e.g. fulfilling commitments under strategic plan, responding to emergent community need, availability of funding, etc.)

The Nellie McClung branch was identified as early as 2009 as an undersized facility in need of replacement. The building of a new branch with a significant increase in size, the future Nellie McClung branch will help address GVPL spaces challenges and increase the library's ability to meet the needs of the growing community served by the Nellie McClung branch.

As the current Nellie McClung branch was one of GVPL's busiest locations, the requirement to provide an interim branch in a nearby location was evident. Maintaining the same number of locations helps ensure that access to library services and collections is maintained during the closure of the original branch and completion of the overall redevelopment project.

What impacts does/will this initiative have on the library and/or the community?

Please include any applicable metrics or quantitative data to demonstrate impact.

A new Nellie McClung branch will significantly improve GVPL's ability to enhance library services and as part of the District's redevelopment project, this initiative supports the municipality's Official Community Plan's long-term vision for a liveable community based on shared values and sustainability.

The temporary relocation of the Nellie McClung branch to an interim site will provide patrons of the Nellie McClung branch with ongoing access to essential library services in their local area. As well, continued operation of all 12 locations ensures awareness and access to the entire GVPL collection. While the space constraints of the temporary location's site (which will be referred to as the Nellie McClung Express Branch) will restrict the range of services that can be made available at the interim branch, the provision of a convenient point of access to core services and staff support for patrons is far preferable to the alternative of a full branch closure for three years.

I have more initiatives to report:

Yes

Featured Initiatives

Use this section to provide detail on up to four significant initiatives the library has undertaken in the past year, focusing particularly on use of the Enhancement Grants. Use one page per initiative. To add more pages, select Yes for "I have more initiatives to report" at the bottom of this page.

Initiative Title #2

Enter a brief, descriptive title for your initiative.

Enhancing Digital Literacy and Access

Summary

Provide a brief description of the activities undertaken this year. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this initiative.

An initiative that was selected to be carried forward from GVPL's 2021-2023 Strategic Bridging Plan for completion was the relaunch of GVPL virtual branch. The redesign and relaunch of GVPL virtual branch will enhance library accessibility within an ever-changing digital landscape and provide the platform for implementation of future digital services. This initiative aligns with GVPL's objective of enhancing digital literacy and access and underscore the organization's commitment to bridging the digital divide within our community.

Timeline and Progress Report

What is the expected timeline for this initiative? What is the current status (e.g. planning, implementation, complete, ongoing). If you have reported on this initiative in a previous year's PLGR, what has changed since then? What progress has been made, or what obstacles have you encountered?

In 2024, GVPL awarded a contract to Affinity Bridge to begin the first phase of virtual branch development in 2025. The first phase of virtual branch development, requirements gathering and high-level design, is slated to start in January 2025 and is expected to be completed by summer of 2025. GVPL will tender another RFP for the second phase of the virtual branch development, build and implementation.

Budgetary Information

Please outline whether/how provincial funding (annual or one-time/targeted e.g., Enhancement Grants) contributes to the estimated cost of this initiative.

The redesign and relaunch of GVPL virtual branch has been budgeted to cost \$380,000 and will be supported by provincial funding earmarked from Enhancement Grants. In 2024, \$9,200 was spent with the remaining funds to be spent in 2025.

Rationale

Why was this initiative prioritized? (e.g. fulfilling commitments under strategic plan, responding to emergent community need, availability of funding, etc.)

The decision to prioritize the redesign and relaunch of the GVPL virtual branch reinforces our dedication to meeting the evolving needs of our community in an ever-changing digital landscape. The virtual branch will become the platform for GVPL to revamp its e-service delivery model to provide even greater access to programs and services. This initiative reflects GVPL's proactive approach to ensuring equitable access to information and technology, ultimately enriching the lives of our patrons, and fostering a more connected community.

What impacts does/will this initiative have on the library and/or the community?

Please include any applicable metrics or quantitative data to demonstrate impact.

The redesign and relaunch of GVPL virtual branch will have a major impact on the GVPL's digital footprint and improve discoverability of GVPL programs, services, and collections. The virtual branch will allow all patrons access to resources and services in ways that best serve their needs.

I have more initiatives to report:

Yes

Featured Initiatives

Use this section to provide detail on up to four significant initiatives the library has undertaken in the past year, focusing particularly on use of the Enhancement Grants. Use one page per initiative. To add more pages, select Yes for "I have more initiatives to report" at the bottom of this page.

Initiative Title #3

Enter a brief, descriptive title for your initiative.

Enhancement of Physical Spaces and Public Services

Summary

Provide a brief description of the activities undertaken this year. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this initiative.

To address infrastructure and facilities challenges, GVPL has prioritized enhancements to physical spaces and public services to elevate the experience for library users, while balancing the needs of staff to conduct the delivery of innovative library services. GVPL has installed three new meeting pods at the Central branch; one is to provide an additional meeting room for patrons, and the other two are to provide much-needed meeting spaces for staff. In addition, GVPL is also in the process of updating and adding self-checkout service points throughout the entire GVPL library system. These self-checkout service points will increase patron experience by adding a convenient point to checkout items from their local branch and will be installed on height adjustable tables to increase accessibility.

Timeline and Progress Report

What is the expected timeline for this initiative? What is the current status (e.g. planning, implementation, complete, ongoing). If you have reported on this initiative in a previous year's PLGR, what has changed since then? What progress has been made, or what obstacles have you encountered?

The three new meeting pods were installed and made available to staff and patron in September 2024. GVPL continues to evaluate the addition of more meeting pods for both staff and public use.

The new self-checkout equipment was purchased at the end of 2024 and is scheduled for arrival to GVPL in early 2025. This new equipment will be deployed at several branches and made available to patrons throughout 2025.

Budgetary Information

Please outline whether/how provincial funding (annual or one-time/targeted e.g., Enhancement Grants) contributes to the estimated cost of this initiative.

The cost of these improvements is primarily supported by provincial funding from Enhancement Grants, including \$135,558 for Meeting Pods and \$80,000 for Self-checkout Equipment. Additional funds have been earmarked under this initiative and are to be spent by December 31, 2025.

Rationale

Why was this initiative prioritized? (e.g. fulfilling commitments under strategic plan, responding to emergent community need, availability of funding, etc.)

GVPL is prioritizing enhancements to its physical spaces and public services to elevate the experience for library users and address emerging community needs, including providing accessible services points and expanding access to public meeting spaces.

What impacts does/will this initiative have on the library and/or the community?

Please include any applicable metrics or quantitative data to demonstrate impact.

Improvements in GVPL facilities will elevate the patron experience at the library by providing more spaces for them to meet, access new services, and enjoy their 'community living rooms'. The additional meeting spaces for staff has helped alleviate the pressure on existing staff meeting spaces as well as expanded the utility of our public spaces.

I have more initiatives to report:

Yes

Featured Initiatives

Use this section to provide detail on up to four significant initiatives the library has undertaken in the past year, focusing particularly on use of the Enhancement Grants. Use one page per initiative. You have reached the maximum number of reportable initiatives.

Initiative Title #4

Enter a brief, descriptive title for your initiative.

Enhancement of Security Protocols and Training to Safeguard Staff and Library Users

Summary

Provide a brief description of the activities undertaken this year. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this initiative.

As noted in previous reports, GVPL is committed to enhancing its security protocols and providing staff training that helps safeguard staff and patrons. In 2024, this ongoing organizational priority manifested into a series of related initiatives including:

- Board review of Policy 1.8: Responsibilities and Conduct of Library Users*
- A trial of Paladin Mobile Security to evaluate its effectiveness in providing branches without static security guard service with additional support*
- A threat assessment and review conducted by Paladin Security to evaluate risk levels at all twelve GVPL branches.*
- Attaining the services of Good Sense Workplace Solutions to conduct emergency evacuation and violence risk assessment across the organization and provide recommendations to address gaps and enhance protocols.*
- Providing Management of Aggressive Behaviour (MOAB) training to staff with a focus on providing this training to frontline staff at branches with the increased incident rates.*

In addition to these initiatives, GVPL created and recruited two new positions, Coordinator, Safety, Security and Risk Management, and Assistant Director of Facilities, Safety, Security, and Risk Management, who will bring additional safety and security expertise to the organization.

Timeline and Progress Report

What is the expected timeline for this initiative? What is the current status (e.g. planning, implementation, complete, ongoing). If you have reported on this initiative in a previous year's PLGR, what has changed since then? What progress has been made, or what obstacles have you encountered?

GVPL's Board of Trustees approved changes to the Board Policy 1.8 Responsibilities and Conduct of Library Users in April 2024. This approval was followed by consultation with staff to develop an interpretation guide to implement the revised policy and update current procedures and protocols. The work to develop an onboarding and orientation program to support the successful implementation of the policy changes is ongoing and expected to be implemented in 2025.

The Paladin Mobile Security pilot began in May 2024 and ran through to August 2024. While the pilot did provide some security support to the three branches involved in the pilot, it was not extended. GVPL continues to review its options to provide branches with additional security support.

GVPL began work with Good Sense Workplace Solutions in September 2024 to provide recommendations to GVPL's Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

A MOAB (Management of Aggressive Behaviour) training program began in June 2024 with frontline staff at branches identified as high priority. The rollout of de-escalation training for all staff is a priority and development and delivery of staff training options is ongoing.

Budgetary Information

Please outline whether/how provincial funding (annual or one-time/targeted e.g., Enhancement Grants) contributes to the estimated cost of this initiative.

Additional costs incurred from this priority that was not part of GVPL's operational budget were funded from the Province of BC Covid and Emergency Preparedness Grant. These costs include:

- \$19,661 for the trial of mobile security*
- \$3,500 for Paladin Security's threat assessment and review, and*
- \$10,648 for MOAB security training delivered to frontline staff.*

Rationale

Why was this initiative prioritized? (e.g. fulfilling commitments under strategic plan, responding to emergent community need, availability of funding, etc.)

Work undertaken to enhance safety and security within our libraries is a response to the evolving societal dynamics within our communities. Prioritizing safety and security measures within our libraries helps ensure the well-being of staff, patrons, and visitors, fostering a sense of security and trust within the community. Creating a safe environment also helps ensure equitable access for all community members including vulnerable populations, thereby enhancing inclusivity and accessibility. Additionally, security measures help deter criminal activity and disorderly behavior, safeguarding library resources, collections, and infrastructure from theft, vandalism, and damage, and preserving valuable assets for future generations. Prioritizing safety measures also supports library staff by providing a more secure work environment, reducing stress and anxiety, and fostering a positive workplace culture.

What impacts does/will this initiative have on the library and/or the community?

Please include any applicable metrics or quantitative data to demonstrate impact.

Implementing enhanced security protocols and providing staff additional safety training, GVPL hopes to ensure that:

- Every patron experiences a safe and welcoming environment when they are at the library*
- Staff feel protected when they are at work*
- And staff have the tools and knowledge to handle incidents when they do occur*

You have reached the maximum number of reportable initiatives. Click [Previous Page](#) to edit your initiatives, or [Next Page](#) to proceed to the following section.

Challenges

The following topics have been identified as recurrent themes in prior years' PLGRs, along with challenges that have surfaced throughout the current year. Select the level of concern each challenge presents for your library.

Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues, forecasting uncertainty, local budget)

Moderate Concern

Describe how the challenge has affected your library in the past year, and what actions your library has taken to address it. If no action was taken, explain what the barriers are. If the issue is of low concern, you may leave this field blank.

Inflationary pressures continue to affect both labour and non-labour expenses, including utilities, library equipment, and contracted services. Necessary cost-of-living adjustments to salaries and benefits further challenged financial resources. Ongoing technological infrastructure updates, increased security services and increased subscription and licensing fees for digital services and resources has also added financial pressure to GVPL budgets.

Governance (e.g., changes on the library board, relationship/conversations with local government)

Low Concern

Describe how the challenge has affected your library in the past year, and what actions your library has taken to address it. If no action was taken, explain what the barriers are. If the issue is of low concern, you may leave this field blank.

Governance challenges were a lower concern for GVPL in 2024 due to the high number of trustees who remain on GVPL's board from 2023 to 2024.

Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)

Moderate Concern

Describe how the challenge has affected your library in the past year, and what actions your library has taken to address it. If no action was taken, explain what the barriers are. If the issue is of low concern, you may leave this field blank.

While not designated as official heating and cooling centers, we promote our libraries as free, inclusive spaces for those seeking refuge from extreme weather. We observed increased foot traffic in our libraries both when the Greater Victoria area experienced extreme heat and cold, and when air quality statements were issued due to wildfires created thus generating demand for clean air spaces. Beyond physical support, we continue to dedicate resources as community connectors, linking library users with extreme weather resources, and sharing emergency preparedness information during events such as Emergency Preparedness Week and the Great BC ShakeOut.

Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health, and wellness)

High Concern

Describe how the challenge has affected your library in the past year, and what actions your library has taken to address it. If no action was taken, explain what the barriers are. If the issue is of low concern, you may leave this field blank.

Staff recruitment and retention has been a key challenge for GVPL in 2024. Staff vacancies and fluctuations have impacted capacity to maintain open hours, deliver programs, and resource strategic planning initiatives.

With the evolving role of the public library beyond its traditional function requiring increased operational and administrative resources and requires a wide range of skills to be employed. Challenges such as high cost of living, especially affordable housing, competition from other industries, and the evolving skills needed to meet the growing complexity of our community's needs continue to challenge recruitment efforts. Additionally, addressing the diverse needs of the community can be emotionally taxing, potentially straining staff mental health and impacting retention.

Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)

Moderate Concern

Describe how the challenge has affected your library in the past year, and what actions your library has taken to address it. If no action was taken, explain what the barriers are. If the issue is of low concern, you may leave this field blank.

GVPL has seen increased community demand for its public computers, Wi-Fi, and printing services. Providing these services play a critical role in addressing the digital divide by meeting the community's demands for tools to apply for jobs, complete schoolwork, access government services, and stay connected with family and friends. This sustained demand for these services in our libraries is evidence of these needs. In our community, distinct generational and socioeconomic gaps in technological literacy and access persist, prompting us to consistently invest considerable resources in helping library users navigate the digital world.

Infrastructure/facilities (e.g., aging/damaged, renovations, new builds/upgrades/expansions)

Moderate Concern

Describe how the challenge has affected your library in the past year, and what actions your library has taken to address it. If no action was taken, explain what the barriers are. If the issue is of low concern, you may leave this field blank.

Several of our libraries require renovations and ongoing maintenance work to meet modern standards and ensure full accessibility for individuals of all abilities. In addition, space constraints, both for staff and public areas, and aging branch facilities remain a challenge to GVPL's ability to grow its collection, offer innovative programs to our community, and deliver cutting-edge digital services.

In 2024, one of our municipal funders, the District of Saanich, begun the process of redeveloping the current site of our Nellie McClung branch. In the future, this new branch will help to address our challenges in this area, but the move to a smaller temporary branch will exacerbate these issues in the short term. Capital funding for future major projects is a concern.

Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)

Moderate Concern

Describe how the challenge has affected your library in the past year, and what actions your library has taken to address it. If no action was taken, explain what the barriers are. If the issue is of low concern, you may leave this field blank.

GVPL serves a wide geographical area with varying levels of density and inconsistent infrastructure which can make it challenging to provide equitable access throughout our entire service area.

Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)

High Concern

Describe how the challenge has affected your library in the past year, and what actions your library has taken to address it. If no action was taken, explain what the barriers are. If the issue is of low concern, you may leave this field blank.

As a critical frontline service, we are committed to supporting the overall health and well-being of our community amidst unprecedented pressures to adapt and respond to increasingly diverse needs and the challenges facing the most vulnerable.

With the diminishing availability of local public spaces, public libraries have become integral to community resilience and serve as places of refuge for our most vulnerable, providing public washrooms, access to clean drinking water, and a sheltered space to escape inclement weather. Our libraries also serve as inclusive gathering places where people can come together for meetings, events, experience art, or simply connect with others in their community.

The diminishing availability of local support services has heightened the significance of libraries as knowledge hubs, with some members of the community increasingly relying on our branches to access information on health, education, employment, housing, and other crucial topics. The lack of reliable community services places additional pressure on library staff to address diverse needs, leading to an expansion of their roles beyond traditional library functions.

Public health (e.g., COVID-19, vaccinations, access to Telehealth)

Moderate Concern

Describe how the challenge has affected your library in the past year, and what actions your library has taken to address it. If no action was taken, explain what the barriers are. If the issue is of low concern, you may leave this field blank.

Public libraries serve as essential hubs for disseminating accurate and current information on public health issues and countering misinformation. Their function as a digital gateway is particularly critical for individuals lacking reliable internet access, especially amid the increasing reliance on telehealth and digital access requirements for government services and applications. The lack of publicly available free technology and internet connectivity presents a substantial obstacle for many members of our community.

Regulatory impacts (e.g., accessibility, privacy, employment standards)

High Concern

Describe how the challenge has affected your library in the past year, and what actions your library has taken to address it. If no action was taken, explain what the barriers are. If the issue is of low concern, you may leave this field blank.

Cybersecurity and privacy considerations have heavily influenced our priorities and strategic approach to digital services in 2024. The rise in cyber threats and aging IT infrastructure has made libraries vulnerable and make ongoing investments in cybersecurity necessary.

In addition to privacy concerns, aging infrastructure and facilities that are not purpose-built challenge our commitment to creating safe and welcoming spaces for staff and patrons.

Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)

High Concern

Describe how the challenge has affected your library in the past year, and what actions your library has taken to address it. If no action was taken, explain what the barriers are. If the issue is of low concern, you may leave this field blank.

Like other public libraries around the country, we continue to face significant challenges in serving vulnerable communities due to limited community resources for those experiencing homelessness, addiction, and mental health crises. Additionally, ensuring equitable access to library services for all members of our community remains a pressing concern. We are actively working to overcome challenges that are beyond our traditional mandate by securing additional resources and engaging with our community partners to leverage our collective resources and expertise.

Sociopolitical tensions (e.g. intellectual freedom, protests, global events, racism, homophobia)

Moderate Concern

Describe how the challenge has affected your library in the past year, and what actions your library has taken to address it. If no action was taken, explain what the barriers are. If the issue is of low concern, you may leave this field blank.

Heightened tension over ongoing local protests and global events have created stress for staff, particularly those working in public-facing positions. We continue to prioritize being an inclusive, safe, and welcoming space, fostering free expression, and nurturing community engagement.

Board Approval

Download the [board approval signature form](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/arts-culture/public-libraries/tool-resources-library-administrators/reporting-accountability) from the Public Libraries Branch website here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/arts-culture/public-libraries/tool-resources-library-administrators/reporting-accountability>.

Upload the signed form by clicking the button below.

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