



AGENDA

Greater Victoria Public Library Board Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2026

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 on the unceded traditional territories of the Songhees and Xwseps'am (Esquimalt) Nations, the WSÁNEĆ Nations of STÁUTW (Tsawout) and WJOLÉLP (Tsartlip), and the Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) Nation.

Colonization and systemic racism still impact the lives of Indigenous Peoples today. Their historical and cultural relationship with the land and sea continues as they steward these sacred lands as they have since time immemorial.

3. Welcome and Introductions

4. Consent Agenda

Motion to Approve

4.1. Approval of Agenda

4.2. Approval of Minutes – February 24, 2026 [Attachment 4.2](#)

4.3. Chair Report [Attachment 4.3](#)

4.4. CEO Report

4.5. Correspondence

4.5.1. Email from Patron received February 26, 2026 [Attachment 4.5.1](#)

4.5.2. Email Response to Patron Sent March 5, 2026 [Attachment 4.5.2](#)

5. Chair's Remarks

For Information

6. Business Arising from previous meeting

6.1. Board Retreat

For Discussion

7. Committee Reports

7.1. Planning and Policy Committee -Oral Report

For Information

8. New Business

8.1. Staff Presentation – ID Clinics and Community Connections

For Information

8.2. Staff Day 2026 [Attachment 8.2](#)

Motion to Approve

8.3. 2025 Public Library Grant Report [Attachment 8.3](#)

For Information

9. In-Camera

Motion to Approve

10. Next Meeting Date

Motion to Approve

Tuesday April 28, 2026 12:00-1:00

11. Adjournment



MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
GVPL Central Branch, 735 Broughton Street
Community Meeting Room & MS Teams
February 24, 2026

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 (Chair)
Trustee S. Donaldson
Trustee D. Grove
Trustee R. Henderson
Trustee S. Kim
Trustee S. Khair
Trustee S. Lansdowne
Trustee G. Lemon
Trustee R. McClure
Trustee M. Morley
Trustee G. Newton
Trustee T. Phelps Bondaroff
Trustee K. Roessingh
Trustee R. Stromberg
Trustee M. Wey

Regrets:

Trustee R. Ranjan
Trustee N. White (Vice- Chair)

Staff:

M. Sawa, CEO/Board Secretary
M. Collyer, Director Marketing & Communications
D. Fergusson-Hirmer, Director, People & Culture
J. Gingera, Director, System Integration, Resource Management and IT
S. Harrison, Acting Assistant Director, Service Design
D. Joyce, Executive Director, Library Services
R. Rogers, Acting Assistant Director, Collections and Technical Services
E. Russell, Recording Secretary
S. Shojaei, Assistant Director Safety Security, Facilities, & Risk Management
R. Baugniet, CUPE 410

1. CALL TO ORDER

D. Cavens called the meeting to order at 12:02 pm.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

D. Cavens provided the Indigenous Acknowledgement.

3. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Move items 4.5.1 – 4.5.3 from the consent agenda to New Business 8.3

Moved by Trustee K. Roessingh; Seconded by Trustee D. Cavens

THAT items 4.1 & 4.2 be approved, and items 4.3 & 4.4 be received for information.

4.1. Approval of Agenda

4.2. Approval of Minutes – January 27, 2026

4.3. Chair Report

4.4. CEO Report

MOTION CARRIED

5. CHAIR'S REMARKS

D. Cavens expressed gratitude to staff for the successful resumption of service on Sundays, noting that three branches are now open and have been well attended

Planning is underway for the spring board retreat and trustees are encouraged to respond to the poll so a date can be selected. The proposed agenda will be discussed further in today's meeting.

6. PRESENTATIONS/DELEGATIONS

6.1. L. Herriot & F. Herriot- Unaccompanied Children in GVPL

Dr. Lindsay Herriot, Finnegan Herriot, and Isabeau Boulanger-McPherson addressed the board, reading letters regarding unaccompanied children in the library.

7. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

7.1. Board Committees

7.1.1. 2026 Board Committee Memberships

D. Cavens confirmed the board committee memberships have been finalized and are included in attachment 7.1.1.

7.1.2. 2026 Committee Meeting Schedule

D. Cavens reminded trustees that the 2026 schedules for the Planning and Policy Committee, and Finance Committee have been circulated.

7.1.3. 2026 Committee Priorities

D. Cavens highlighted that committee priorities will be determined at each committee's inaugural meeting.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1. 2026 Board Retreat

D. Cavens reviewed topics to be covered:

- GVPL's 2025-2027 Strategic Plan
- GVPL's Regional Service Delivery Plan Future Trends and Opportunities

8.2. Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) National Impact Study

M. Sawa provided an overview of the outcomes of the CULC National Impact Study that was released in January, 2026.

8.3. Correspondence

4.5.1 Email from Patron received January 24, 2026

4.5.2. Email from Patron received February 13 2026

4.5.3. Email from Patron received February 17 2026

K. Roessingh enquired about the two items of correspondence received in February regarding unaccompanied children in the library.

M. Sawa advised that a procedure had been developed to provide staff with direction regarding the interpretation of GVPL Policy 1.8 Responsibilities of Library Users, specifically the expectations regarding supervision of young children in the library.

Action: Current GVPL protocols and procedures relating to unattended children in the library will be brought forward to the Policy and Planning Committee at the committee's March meeting. Following a full review, the committee will bring forward recommendations to the April 28 board meeting.

9. IN CAMERA

Moved by Trustee K. Roessingh; seconded by Trustee Grove

THAT the Board of Trustees move in camera

MOTION CARRIED

10. NEXT MEETING DATE:

March 24, 2026; 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

11. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Roessingh; Seconded by Trustee Grove

THAT the February 24, 2026, Regular Board Meeting be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED

Board Chair

Board Secretary



It's been a busy month at GVPL- and for councils around the region as we struggle with a very difficult budget season. Something one of my colleagues said really struck me- our residents expect us to keep tax increases low, but they also expect us to provide the services that our communities need and have come to rely on. This is certainly the case with our work here at GVPL. And as we've continued to do budget presentations to our member councils, we've heard similar feedback: appreciation for the clarity of our presentation and budget materials, as well as sincere appreciation for the work GVPL does in our communities. We've had presentations to Saanich on March 5th and Esquimalt on March 9th, with two still to come (as I write this) at Colwood on March 23rd, and Central Saanich on March 30th.

Thanks to Melina and Maureen for doing the bulk of the work at these presentations; thanks to our Council representatives for asking good questions; and thanks to our community representatives for showing up to support us in the audience.

On March 9th we had our first Planning and Policy Committee meeting of 2026 – thanks to Susan Kim, and Teale Phelps-Bondaroff for stepping up as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. We'll get an update this meeting on the Committee's agenda for the year.

On March 15th, I was present for the first Sunday opening of the Esquimalt Branch – there's been lots of excitement in our community from the announcement, and despite terrible weather, there was a bit of a line up for the 1pm open. It was great to see all the families who came out to use the library on a Sunday. Thanks to all the work behind the scenes from staff on the Sunday re-openings- I know it's been an interest of the board and of our councils during the budget presentations the last few years.

A reminder that our Board Retreat is coming up on April 11th in Langford- if you haven't already RSVP'd to Erika, please do so as soon as possible. A first draft of the agenda was shared at the Planning and Policy Committee – Vice Chair Nik and I are working with staff on refining it. As of now, the plan is to review progress on the Strategic Plan, discuss updates to the Regional Service Delivery Plan, especially considering some questions we've had about service improvements across the region, and talking about big picture trends and needs the Board sees coming at GVPL over the next 3-5 years. It should be a great morning- looking forward to seeing you all.

Duncan



March has been another busy and rewarding month for GVPL, as reflected in my report for this month.



Programs at the Library March 17-March 28, 2026

Join us for Family play, STEAM activities, storytime, Lego building, and more. [Learn more.](#)



With Spring Break well underway, there has been a noticeable increase in activity across our branches. The range of library programs offered during this time has significantly increased this year and it is wonderful to see families and children making full use of our spaces, collections, and programs during this time. This busy and vibrant period highlights the value of the services we provide and the important role our libraries play in the community.

Sunday Openings

Sunday service was introduced at the Esquimalt Branch on March 15, following the resumption of Sunday hours at the Central Branch, Saanich Centennial Branch and the Juan de Fuca Branch earlier this year. My thanks to staff for their collaborative efforts to support this important service expansion.

Nellie McClung Express Branch

This month marks one year since the Nellie McClung Express Branch opened. I want to acknowledge the professionalism and adaptability of the staff team delivering excellent service within this interim space. Planning and development for the new branch at the 3950 Cedar Hill Road location continues to move forward. The old Nellie McClung building has been fully demolished and removed, and the site is now clear. The future library will provide a modern and welcoming space designed to serve the community for decades to come. We look forward to sharing further updates as the project progresses.

Milano Cortina 2026 Paralympic Winter Games

As we did during the Olympic Games, many of our branches hosted Community Living Room series with seating for live streaming of select events of the Games on branch screens. These drop-in gatherings reinforced the library's role as an inclusive and welcoming public space, and I'm so pleased that we continued this initiative in partnership with CBC.

I.D. Clinics

In partnership with the Community Social Planning Council, ID Clinics continue to be held monthly on the fourth Thursday of each month at our Central Branch. Obtaining ID can be a stressful experience and these drop-in events help people to replace or obtain ID. A brief staff presentation will be made at this month's Board meeting to provide trustees with information on the impact of this initiative.

2025 Provincial Library Grant Report

GVPL's 2025 Provincial Library Grant Report was submitted earlier this month. This report is part of the accountability process for libraries that receive provincial funding and outlines how these grants support services, programs, and access across our system. While the format allows limited space to capture the full scope of our work, it provides an opportunity to reflect on the collective impact of the services delivered across GVPL. My thanks to our Project Management Office for coordinating the submission and to everyone whose work contributes to the outcomes reflected in the report. The full report has been included in the agenda package for this month's Board meeting.

BCLA Intellectual Freedom Statement

Earlier this month, [the British Columbia Library Association \(BCLA\) announced it had approved an updated Intellectual Freedom Statement](#) following a two-year review. The [updated statement provides](#) a shared provincial framework to guide library workers as we respond to questions or challenges related to collections, programming, and access to information. With the updated statement now approved, the Board's Policy and Planning Committee will resume its review of GVPL's Policy V.1 Intellectual Freedom which was put on pause until the BCLA statement was released.

2026 Budget Presentations

Finally, as we will soon complete this year's cycle of budget presentations to municipal councils, I would like to express my gratitude to our councillor trustees for providing such great support when we appear before our member councils. As this marks my final round of GVPL budget presentations, I would like to take this opportunity to extend special thanks to past and present Chairs and Vice-Chairs of both the Board and the Finance Committee for the time they have so graciously committed over the years to attend and actively participate in these presentations.

Maureen

From: [John F](#)
 To: [REDACTED]
 Subject: Formal Grievance Regarding Service Failures and Privacy Breaches – Nellie McClung Express
 Date: February 26, 2026 8:47:02 PM

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

TO: [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] The GVPL Board of Trustees; [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

RE: Formal Grievance Regarding Service Failures and Privacy Breaches – Nellie McClung Express

To the GVPL Leadership and Board of Trustees, and Relevant Municipal Leaders

I am writing to formally express my profound dissatisfaction with the current state of the Nellie McClung Library services. As a resident of this community and a taxpayer, **I find the facilities, the lack of functional infrastructure, and the conduct of the staff to be entirely unacceptable.**

Public libraries are often described as the "great equalizers" of a democratic society. However, the current "Express" iteration of the Nellie McClung branch is failing to meet even the most basic utilitarian needs of the working public. I am a working professional—I spend my days working manual labour in the service industry to support myself, yet I hold a Master of Arts in Political Science. I visit the library not for leisure, but to improve my career prospects and advance my life.

Infrastructure and the "Working Library"

The absence of a single laptop workstation with power access is a systemic failure. On February 26, 2026, when I attempted to access my own data by briefly unplugging an unused catalogue computer to make room on the power bar for my own AC adaptor, I was berated by staff. **This is a patron being punished for trying to find a solution to a facility's inadequacy.** A library in a residential neighbourhood must be functional, not merely a storage unit for children's literature. While I understand the "Express" nature of the current location, the complete removal of adult study spaces ignores the needs of the working class who do not have the luxury of private offices.

Technological Failures and Privacy Breaches

The digital infrastructure is, quite frankly, a joke. **A 15-minute limit on public terminals is insufficient** for any modern professional task. It barely allows for two-factor authentication and email login, let alone substantive work.

Far more concerning is a catastrophic failure of privacy I witnessed: last month, I logged into one of the 15-minute terminals to find the previous user's email account still open in Chrome. Their inbox was fully visible. **This is a fundamental breach of FIPPA (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) standards.** The fact that your systems do not automatically wipe sessions or that staff are not trained to ensure terminal security is a liability that should deeply concern this Board. Therefore, these express computers are completely untrustworthy and unsafe.

Staff Conduct and Culture

Finally, the culture of this branch is one of coldness and hostility. There is a total absence of basic civility; **I have never received a "hello" or a "goodbye" from the staff. Ever.** My socioeconomic appearance at the end of a work shift does not negate my education nor my right to be treated with the dignity afforded to any other citizen. **This branch is currently failing its mandate.**

Demand for Action

A library is not a community centre for children alone; it is a vital resource for the working person. I am requesting a formal review of the following:

1. **Workstations:** The immediate installation of at least two designated laptop-friendly spots with power access.
2. **Privacy Protocols:** An immediate audit of the public terminal "wipe" software to prevent further privacy breaches.
3. **Staff Oversight:** Professionalism training to ensure staff are welcoming and helpful rather than gatekeeping an inadequate space.

I have included the full list of recipients for this formal grievance above to ensure transparency and accountability across both the GVPL administration and our municipal leadership. **I will be following up with your respective offices in precisely one week** to receive an update on the corrective actions being taken regarding these facility and oversight issues.

Sincerely,

John Francis

From: [Maureen Sawa](#)
To: [John F](#)
Subject: RE: Formal Grievance Regarding Service Failures and Privacy Breaches – Nellie McClung Express
Date: March 5, 2026 11:12:00 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear Mr. Francis

Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding the Nellie McClung Express Branch. I recognize the frustration and disappointment reflected in your letter, and I appreciate you taking the time to outline your experience and expectations.

The Nellie McClung Express Branch was established in March 2025 by the District of Saanich as a temporary library service point while the former 3950 Cedar Hill Road location is redeveloped into a new 29,000-square-foot full-service library. The Express Branch at 3561 Shelbourne Street was designed to provide a convenient location for residents to access holds pickup and returns, a small browsing collection, and express computer access. Occupancy limits established by the District of Saanich's Inspections Department in accordance with the Province of British Columbia's building code and space constraints of the temporary location do not allow us to provide the range of study spaces, workstations, and computer access available at our permanent branches.

Public computer session limits are in place to ensure fair access for all users within a small space. We regularly monitor demand and functionality, and your feedback will be included in that ongoing review as we assess how best to allocate limited resources during this interim period.

The Greater Victoria Public Library is committed to protecting library patrons' personal information. It is a matter that we take very seriously, and the library has policies and protocols in place to protect patron privacy. To allow for a thorough review of the privacy concern you have described, I ask that you please contact our Privacy Officer directly at privacy@gvpl.ca.

You also raise concerns about the culture and tone of service at the branch. We strive to ensure all our library users feel welcomed and supported. Every patron, without exception, should be greeted and assisted with courtesy, professionalism, and respect. We reinforce these expectations through ongoing leadership coaching, staff development, and training. We have followed up with branch leadership to ensure that our staff follow and maintain these standards.

For extended computer sessions, study tables, and additional workstations, nearby full-

service branches include the Emily Carr Branch at 101-3521 Blanshard Street, the Saanich Centennial Branch at 3110 Tillicum Road, and the Bruce Hutchison Branch at 4636 Elk Lake Drive. Staff at any of these locations would be pleased to assist you in accessing the resources you require.

While the Express Branch has inherent limitations due to its temporary nature, your feedback will help guide improvements to current operations and inform ongoing planning for the new branch. Our objective is to reopen a modern, accessible library that reflects the full range of community needs and restores the breadth of services residents expect.

Thank you again for writing and for advocating for strong public library services in your community.

Sincerely,

Maureen

Maureen Sawa M.I.S (she/her)
Chief Executive Officer, Administration
Greater Victoria Public Library
Victoria, BC



GREATER VICTORIA
PUBLIC LIBRARY

gvpl.ca

Your place to connect, discover and imagine.

Greater Victoria Public Library's service area is located on the unceded traditional territories of the Songhees and X̱wsep̱səm (Esquimalt) Nations, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations of S̱TÁUTW̱ (Tsawout) and W̱JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), and the SC'ÍΛNEW (Beecher Bay) Nation. Colonization and systemic racism still impact the lives of Indigenous Peoples today. Their historical and cultural relationship with the land and sea continues as they steward these sacred lands as they have since time immemorial.



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 24, 2026
To: Greater Victoria Public Library Board of Trustees
From: Maureen Sawa, CEO
Subject: GVPL Staff Development Day 2026

Background

First introduced in 2011, GVPL's Staff Development Day program provides all GVPL staff with an opportunity to gather in person for a full-day of shared learning and development.

GVPL's Staff Development Days have proven to be a most effective means of team building and professional growth across the system.

The support of the Library Board is greatly appreciated as we look forward to delivering our next staff day in 2026.

Recommendation:

That GVPL be closed system-wide for Staff Development Day on December 4, 2026

Recommended motion:

THAT GVPL be closed system-wide for Staff Development Day on December 4, 2026

Attachment 8.3

Provincial Library Grant Report

The Provincial Library Grant Report provides an opportunity for libraries to demonstrate how provincial funding supports the delivery of equitable, responsive, and communityfocused public library service across British Columbia. Using this form, libraries should present their community profile, major initiatives, and emerging challenges from the past year, showing how they continue to adapt to evolving community needs while ensuring responsible stewardship of provincial investments. For guidance on completing each section, please refer to the PLGR instructions [online](#).

For technical support, please contact PLB: publib@gov.bc.ca.

Completed reports must be submitted by March 6, 2026.

You can pause working on this report at any time before submitting. Click "Save and continue later" at the bottom of the page to generate a unique link for your saved responses. Use this link to come back and pick up where you left off.

Overview

Library Name*

Greater Victoria Public Library (GVPL)

Library and Community Profile*

Provide a brief description of your library and the community it serves, focusing on significant changes in the community that have happened within the last year (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. GVPL's service area is located on the unceded traditional territories of the Songhees and Xsepsm (Esquimalt) Nations, the WSANE Nations of SAUTW (Tsawout) and WJOEP (Tsartlip), and the SC'INEW (Beecher Bay) Nation.

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 390,000 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 2025 Vital Signs Report, the ongoing challenges of the cost of living and affordable housing remain paramount in Greater Victoria, reflecting the concerns of preceding years, and reinforces the importance of our critical 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 Xsepsm (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 SC'INEW First Nation (Beecher Bay)
- The Songhees Nation
- The WJOEP (Tsartlip) First Nation
- The SAUTW (Tsawout) First Nation
- The City of Victoria
- The Town of View Royal

Executive Summary*

Provide a concise, high-level narrative of the library's major achievements for the reporting 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.

This was the first year of GVPL's 2025-2027 Strategic Plan that was adopted by the GVPL Board of Trustees at the end of 2024. This new strategic plan outlines five goals that will guide our staff and Board of Trustees for the next three years and inform the initiatives that we will undertake. With the support of municipal funders, provincial operating grants, including Enhancement Grants, reserve funds, and community donations, we have made significant strides towards these goals in 2025. The five goals along with some of the key accomplishments we made towards them are listed below:

Invest in People & Culture

Our People & Culture team made significant efforts to reduce GVPL vacancy rate to only 7% by the end of 2025. Staff recruitment and retention has been a key challenge for GVPL in previous years, impacting capacity to maintain open hours, deliver programs, and resource strategic planning initiatives. Bridging this gap has supported maintaining consistent hours, strengthening program delivery, and providing equitable access to critical services that people rely on every day. With funds from the Enhancement Grants, Workplace Civility training was provided to all staff to help improve the workplace culture.

Ground our Work in Trust & Respect

De-escalation training was provided to all staff and a revised board policy on responsibilities of library users was adopted by the Board of Trustees and implemented by staff. We also installed new Halo smart sensors in all public washrooms used to detect hazardous airborne substances.

Collaborate for Shared Success

May 2025 marked the tenth year of GVPL's Emerging Local Authors Collection. This collection features self-published, independently published, and small press books written by local authors which were published between 2015 and 2024. The Emerging Local Authors Collection launch event continues to be a highlight of the GVPL calendar and demonstrates our collaboration with our community and local authors. In Summer of 2025, we also saw the highest ever registration to BC Summer Reading Club recorded at GVPL with more than 9,800 children registering for the program.

Build Digital Literacy & Access

In September 2025, we opened "The Lab: Preserve Your Past" at the Esquimalt Branch to the public. This digital media lab provides patrons with the tools to convert older media formats like VHS and audiocassettes to digital formats and to digitize physical media like photos. In October 2025, we launched Vox Read Along Books and Yoto Screen-Free Audiobooks collections to the public provide children and tweens screen-free audiobook options.

Grow & Demonstrate our Impact

We continue to work with the District of Saanich on the redevelopment of the former Nellie McClung branch library and in March 2025, we opened our interim site, Nellie McClung Express, to continue providing library services to the neighbouring community. At the end of 2025, we were also able to announce the return of Sunday Service at the Central Branch starting January 11, 2026, and we continue to work to open more branches on Sunday.

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 Executive Summary section above. We recommend choosing only the top 3-5 most relevant themes.

- ☒ Staffing
- ☒ Facilities
- ☒ Strategic planning and governance
- ☒ Collections
- ☒ Technology
- ☐ Programming
- ☐ Community outreach
- ☐ Emergency preparedness
- ☐ Accessibility and inclusion
- ☐ Environmental sustainability, climate action
- ☐ Mental health and wellness
- ☐ Reconciliation and Indigenous relations
- ☐ Other (please specify):

You can pause working on this report at any time before submitting. Click "Save and continue later" at the bottom of the page to generate a unique link for your saved responses. Use this link to come back and pick up where you left off.

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*

Redevelopment of GVPL's Virtual Branch & Website

Summary*

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

The redevelopment of GVPL's virtual branch and website was prioritized as one of the first initiatives that was undertaken as part of GVPL's 2025-2027 Strategic Plan. The redevelopment is planned to be completed in two phases; first phase was requirements gathering and high-level design; the second phase is the build and relaunch of the 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 building 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?

At the start of 2025, GVPL began working with Affinity Bridge, contract awarded in December 2024, on the first phase of the virtual branch redevelopment, which focused on requirements gathering and high-level design. This phase was completed in December 2025. GVPL decided to proceed with Affinity Bridge as the vendor to complete the second phase of the initiative, which is to build and relaunch of the virtual branch. Work on the second phase has begun in January 2026 and is expected to be completed by the latter half of 2026.

Funding Sources*

Select from the following checkboxes which funding source(s) made this initiative possible.

☒ Local government funding

☐ Provincial annual grants

☒ Provincial Enhancement Grants

☐ Other government funding - please specify:

☐ Other local community funding (e.g. donations, fundraising, service club) - please specify:

☐ Other source not listed above - please specify:

Approximately what proportion of this initiative was funded using Enhancement Grant funds?

The completion of the first phase of the project cost GVPL \$199,150, of which \$153,775 was funded by Provincial Enhancement Grants. The second phase of the project is expected to cost up to \$222,000 and will be supported by operational reserve funds.

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 and improve discoverability of programs, services, and collections. 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.

I have more initiatives to report*

If you select Yes, a new Initiatives page will be generated for you.

If you select No, you will be taken to the Challenges section of the report.

☒ Yes

☐ No

You can pause working on this report at any time before submitting. Click "Save and continue later" at the bottom of the page to generate a unique link for your saved responses. Use this link to come back and pick up where you left off.

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*

Physical & Digital Collection Enhancements

Summary*

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

With the additional support from the Provincial Enhancement Grant in 2025, GVPL was able to make meaningful enhancements to both the physical and digital collections available to patrons. These enhancements included expanding the collection of audiobooks, children's print materials, English language learning materials, and much more. In addition to the expanded collections, these funds also supported the purchase of new collections like Vox Read Along Books and Yoto Screen-Free Audiobooks. Both the Vox Read Along Books and Yoto Screen-Free Audiobooks offer children and tweens screen-free option for audiobooks and engages young minds in storytelling. These enhancements have help GVPL maintain a modern and inclusive collection that better serves the needs of our growing 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?

The expansion of existing collections started in June 2025 and have been rolled out throughout the second half of 2025. Both the Vox Read Along Books and Yoto Screen Free Audiobooks were launched to the public in October 2025. Several unannounced new collections have been purchased and will be rolled out to the public in 2026.

Funding Sources*

Select from the following checkboxes which funding source(s) made this initiative possible.

☐ Local government funding

☐ Provincial annual grants

☒ Provincial Enhancement Grants

☐ Other government funding - please specify:

☐ Other local community funding (e.g. donations, fundraising, service club) - please specify:

☐ Other source not listed above - please specify:

Approximately what proportion of this initiative was funded using Enhancement Grant funds?

In total, expansion of existing collections and the purchase of these new collections will cost \$259,723, with \$257,662 being spent in 2025 and the remaining will be spent in 2026, and was fully funded by the Provincial Enhancement Grants.

Rationale*

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

These enhancements were prioritized as it directly supports GVPL's purpose of supporting lifelong learning by provide free access to information, tools, and expertise. Maintaining a modern and inclusive collection helps ensure GVPL meets the everchanging needs of our community and demonstrates GVPL's commitment to service excellence, inclusion and innovation.

I have more initiatives to report*

If you click Yes, a new Initiatives page will be generated for you.

If you click No, you will be taken to the Challenges section of the report.

☒ Yes

☐ No

You can pause working on this report at any time before submitting. Click "Save and continue later" at the bottom of the page to generate a unique link for your saved responses. Use this link to come back and pick up where you left off.

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*

Nellie McClung Branch Redevelopment Project

Summary*

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

The Nellie McClung branch site was selected for redevelopment as part of an Affordable Housing Initiative led by the District of Saanich and the Capital Regional Housing Corporation, which will include a new 29,000 sq. ft. library and over 210 affordable rental housing units. The new branch will significantly improve GVPL's ability serve the growing community in the District of Saanich and will enhance library services system-wide. As the old Nellie McClung Branch was one of GVPL's busiest branches, it was determined that an interim express branch would be opened as an alternate location close to the original site to maintain access to key services during the estimated four-year redevelopment and to reduce the system-wide pressures created by the prolonged closure. In 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 costs. Some additional costs outside those covered in the agreement, such as the celebration farewell event, were funded by GVPL's operating funds. The decommissioning costs of the site were not borne by GVPL since this was handled entirely by the District.

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?

Since 2024, GVPL has been working with the District of Saanich on the redevelopment project and the creation of an express location for the Nellie McClung branch. In December 2024, GVPL held a farewell celebration before officially closing the historic Nellie McClung branch to the public. After received access to the interim site in January 2025 from the District of Saanich, GVPL began the move to and programming of the interim location. After completing the final preparations, the Nellie McClung Express branch opened to the public on March 26, 2025. Additionally, GVPL has been working collaboratively with the District of Saanich throughout 2025 on the design and development of the new branch at the former Nellie McClung location. In April 2025, the site of the old branch was handed back to the district for deconstruction, which is expected to begin in 2026.

Funding Sources*

Select from the following checkboxes which funding source(s) made this initiative possible.

☒ Local government funding

☐ Provincial annual grants

☐ Provincial Enhancement Grants

☐ Other government funding - please specify:

☐ Other local community funding (e.g. donations, fundraising, service club) - please specify:

☐ Other source not listed above - please specify:

Approximately what proportion of this initiative was funded using Enhancement Grant 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 a facility in need of replacement. The building of a new Nellie McClung branch with a significant increase in size and up-to-date features will ensure that GVPL continues to meet the needs of the growing community in this service area. As the old Nellie McClung branch was one of GVPL's busiest locations, the requirement to replace it with an interim branch in a nearby location while the new facility is built was evident. Maintaining a physical presence in close proximity to the permanent branch site ensures that access to library services and collections is maintained during the closure of the original branch and completion of the overall redevelopment project.

I have more initiatives to report*

If you click Yes, a new Initiatives page will be generated for you.

If you click No, you will be taken to the Challenges section of the report.

(X) Yes

() No

You can pause working on this report at any time before submitting. Click "Save and continue later" at the bottom of the page to generate a unique link for your saved responses. Use this link to come back and pick up where you left off.

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 #4*

Customer Experience Enhancements

Summary*

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

As one of GVPL core values, Service Excellence was a key area of focus in 2025. This resulted in several system-wide projects to improve the customer experience for patrons and expand the services offered to them. These enhancements included expanding the number of self-checkout stations across all branches, two new meeting pods installed at the Central and Esquimalt branches to increase the availability of meeting and study space, upgraded children's play area amenities at several branches, and upgrading the public-use computers across all branches for better user experience. These improvements have helped enhance the customer experience for all patrons across the wide range of library services provided by GVPL.

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 purchased 20 Bibliotheca Self-Checkout stations, which were received in August 2025. Fifteen of the twenty purchased Self Checkouts have been deployed across GVPL 12 branches with the remaining five to be deployed in Q1 of 2026. The new meeting pods were installed at the Central and Esquimalt branches, and third meeting pod was in at the entrance of the Central branch as an on-floor office for GVPL's safety and security team. The enchantments to the children's play areas that were completed in 2025 include large train table and Lego table by 3Branch for the Central Branch, three Touch2play digital game tables deployed at three separate branches, updated playhouse, rug, table and chairs for the Oak Bay Branch, and new children's stools for the Jaun de Fuca branch. In 2026, GVPL will install two wall mount game boards (non-digital) at branches to be determined and will be purchasing and deploying twelve touchscreen Magic Desktop computers to provide children a safe digital education experience. Starting in March 2025, GVPL IT team began upgrading the public-use computers at each branch. By the end of 2025, all but four of the twelve branches have been updated with the remaining schedule for early 2026.

Funding Sources*

Select from the following checkboxes which funding source(s) made this initiative possible.

- ☒ Local government funding
- ☐ Provincial annual grants
- ☒ Provincial Enhancement Grants
- ☐ Other government funding - please specify:
- ☐ Other local community funding (e.g. donations, fundraising, service club) - please specify:
- ☐ Other source not listed above - please specify:

Approximately what proportion of this initiative was funded using Enhancement Grant funds?

The Enhancement Grant fully funded the purchase and installation of the Meeting Pods (\$131,915), purchase of the Self-Checkout stations (\$239,246) and the enhancement for the children's play areas (~\$81,000), including the planned purchase of the thirteen Magic Desktop computers. The upgrade of the public-use computers was funded through GVPL operating budget (~\$157,000), which is funded by its member municipalities.

Rationale*

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

The projects in this initiative were prioritized to help address GVPL's challenges with its facilities and infrastructure and assists the growth of services provided by GVPL. The additional meeting space helps alleviate the pressure on existing meeting space, while upgraded public-use computers and new Self-Checkout stations provide improved customer experience. The various enhancements made and coming to the children's play areas across GVPL will make them a more enjoyable place for young families in our community. These enhancements demonstrate GVPL commitment to its values of Service Excellence and Innovation, while directly supporting GVPL strategic goals of Building Digital Literacy & Access and to Grow & Demonstrate our Impact.

You have reached the end of the Initiatives section of the report. You can edit your reported initiatives by clicking Previous Page below. Otherwise, click Next Page to proceed to the Challenges section of the report.

You can pause working on this report at any time before submitting. Click "Save and continue later" at the bottom of the page to generate a unique link for your saved responses. Use this link to come back and pick up where you left off.

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)

- ☒ High Concern
- ☐ Moderate Concern
- ☐ Low Concern
- ☐ Not a 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. The addition of tariffs in 2025 have also put more pressure on library budgets due to the raising cost of library equipment and technology. 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. Furthermore, the changes to the provincial sales tax made in the latest provincial budget will lead to a 7% increase in costs for some of the professional services used to ensure safe and efficient operations of public libraries across BC.

Governance*

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

- ☐ High Concern
- ☐ Moderate Concern
- ☒ Low Concern
- ☐ Not a 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/no concern, you may leave this field blank.

Emergency response*

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

- ☐ High Concern
- ☒ Moderate Concern
- ☐ Low Concern
- ☐ Not a 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/no 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. Responding to the unforeseen influx of patrons due to inclement weather impacts branch staffing and security costs. 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
- ☒ Moderate Concern
- ☐ Low Concern
- ☐ Not a 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/no concern, you may leave this field blank.

With the new strategic goal of Investing in People & Culture, GVPL made considerable efforts in reducing its vacancy rate to 7% by the end of 2025 that resulted in a lower concern compared to 2024. However, public libraries' role in our communities has continued to evolve beyond its traditional function requiring increased operational and administrative resources and 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)

- ☒ High Concern
- ☐ Moderate Concern
- ☐ Low Concern
- ☐ Not a 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/no 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. However, the costs of providing broadband internet connectivity and printing services have steadily escalated by 50% over the last decade putting increased pressure on our operational budgets. Despite these raising costs, we have continued to invest considerable resources in helping bridge the distinct generational and socioeconomic gaps in technological literacy and access that we see persist within our community.

Infrastructure/facilities*

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

- ☒ High Concern
- ☐ Moderate Concern
- ☐ Low Concern
- ☐ Not a 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/no concern, you may leave this field blank.

Several of our libraries require renovations to meet modern standards and ensure full accessibility. Investments have been made to improve existing sites, but aging and undersized branches remain a challenge to grow GVPL's collection, offer initiative programs and deliver digital services. The District of Saanich is redeveloping the former site of our Nellie McClung branch and an interim location was opened in 2025. In the future, this new branch will help to address these challenges but the move to a smaller temporary site will exacerbate them in the short term. Uncertainty about the future of GVPL's Central Branch, which is in a provincially owned building within a strata arrangement shared by member municipalities, has complicated the planning for service improvements. While there is a need to address short-term safety and functionality concerns, securing capital commitments from municipal partners for a facility with an uncertain future limits GVPL's ability for long-term planning.

Community access to the library*

(e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)

- ☐ High Concern
- ☒ Moderate Concern
- ☐ Low Concern
- ☐ Not a 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/no 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
- ☐ Moderate Concern
- ☐ Low Concern
- ☐ Not a 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/no 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 pressures to adapt to increasingly diverse needs and challenges facing our community. With the diminishing availability of public spaces, libraries have become increasingly integral to community resilience and serve as a refuge for our most vulnerable, providing washrooms, access to drinking water, and a sheltered space. As services shift online, an increasing number of individuals depend on the library to provide these services. The diminishment of local services has heightened the significance of libraries as knowledge hubs, with the community increasingly relying on our branches to access information on crucial topics. As libraries are counted on to fill gaps resulting from disappearing services, staff roles have expanded beyond traditional library functions, resulting in direct and indirect cost increases for training resources and supports.

Public health*

(e.g., access to Telehealth, registering for vaccinations, COVID-19)

- ☐ High Concern
- ☒ Moderate Concern
- ☐ Low Concern
- ☐ Not a 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/no 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
- ☐ Moderate Concern
- ☐ Low Concern
- ☐ Not a 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/no concern, you may leave this field blank.

Cybersecurity and privacy considerations have heavily influenced our priorities and strategic approach to digital services in 2025. 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 welcoming spaces for patrons with diverse needs, including those with mobility challenges or sensory impairments.

Vulnerable communities*

(e.g., people experiencing homelessness, substance use disorder, mental health crisis)

- ☒ High Concern
- ☐ Moderate Concern
- ☐ Low Concern
- ☐ Not a 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/no 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 these challenges 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)

- ☐ High Concern
- ☒ Moderate Concern
- ☐ Low Concern
- ☐ Not a 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/no 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. In addition, we have seen increases in collection material challenges from the public. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy for violence, aggression, or harassment. While most instances are resolved respectfully, incidents where tensions or material challenges may result in unacceptable behaviour or an issue of safety and security, it may need to be escalated to our security team. Ensuring the safety and well-being of both staff and library users is non-negotiable and will always remain our top priority. We continue to prioritize being an inclusive, safe, and welcoming space, fostering free expression, and nurturing community engagement.

Other (please specify)

- ☐ High Concern
- ☐ Moderate Concern
- ☐ Low Concern
- ☐ Not a 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/no concern, you may leave this field blank.

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Board Approval*

Download the board approval form [here](#).
Then upload the signed form below.