



RICHMOND - CITY OF READERS

Strategic Plan 2011-2014

MESSAGE FROM PAT WATSON, BOARD CHAIR



Go Anywhere. Learn Anything. Read Every Day.

This year marks 35 years of Richmond Public Library serving the community. Since our inception, our goal has been to support beginner readers, lifelong readers and everyone in between. Over the years, we have witnessed the evolution of reading from the printed word in books, to reading on computers, e-readers and other handheld electronic devices. Despite these dramatic changes, the fundamental

value of reading prevails and continues to play a crucial role in achieving our full potential. The library is in the unique position to transform lives and communities by encouraging and celebrating the power and joy of reading. Literacy has a powerful effect, not only on individuals, but also on the economic and social well-being of the entire community.

The people of Richmond love their library. National library statistics confirm that more people borrow more materials from our library per capita than any other large urban library in Canada. We truly are a city of readers. However, numbers are only one measure of the community's support. As you can see from the quotes throughout this document, our customers have a heartfelt connection with the library and its staff.

Richmond Public Library is recognized internationally for its excellence and continues to receive awards for its innovative services and programs. However, part of being successful includes a critical review of what has been accomplished to date and developing a strategic plan that lays out priorities and goals for the future.

During our strategic planning process the following questions were asked:

- Where can we make the greatest difference?
- How can we work collaboratively with other organizations?
- What are customers asking for?
- What barriers prevent effective library use?

In addition, we solicited comments from customers, community organizations and staff on how to improve services.

Our findings resulted in five strategic goals:

- Goal 1: Support reading in our community
- Goal 2: Use technology to connect readers
- Goal 3: Develop collections to meet popular demand
- Goal 4: Offer programs that inform and inspire
- Goal 5: Create friendly, welcoming facilities

The Library Board and staff look forward to working with Mayor and Council, city staff, our community partners, and our many generous donors to achieve these goals. And if the past is any indicator of the future, we anticipate many more years of invigorating challenges, innovations and change. Our focus will always be on our city of readers.



Thank you for reading this important document and keep enjoying our wonderful library!

“ A father came to tell us that his daughter had just been evaluated for English language comprehension and had scored a perfect 5. When the instructor asked what preschool she attended, she said, ‘I go to the library. That’s my preschool.’ ”

An elderly man with white hair, wearing a light-colored straw hat with a dark band and a white checkered button-down shirt, is focused on reading a newspaper. He is standing at a table in what appears to be a library or community center. The newspaper he is holding has the word "COUVER" visible on its front page. In the background, there are blurred bookshelves and other people, suggesting a public space. The overall lighting is bright and natural, coming from large windows.

SUPPORT **READING**
IN OUR COMMUNITY

CONSUMER GUIDES

GOAL 1: SUPPORT READING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Work with community partners to promote and support reading; especially to reach out and serve populations currently not using the library's resources and services. Many of these organizations work with vulnerable groups dealing with low income, low literacy and other life challenges that inhibit them from using the library.

Activities

- Enhance the effectiveness of existing partnerships.
- Identify new partners that will encourage reading and use of the library's resources.
- Identify barriers for underserved populations and find solutions to encourage them to use library services.
- Celebrate and promote the joy and value of reading by enhancing reading programs and finding new ways to highlight our collections.

“Years ago, as a young single mother of small boys, the library was an oasis of calm in a very chaotic life. Welcoming. Free. Interesting. Stimulating. A place where I could stop saying no, sorry honey, we can't afford that right now, but Yes! We can borrow books and movies - go ahead and choose! Yes! Let's stay and listen to a story! Yes, we'll come back next week.”

USE **TECHNOLOGY** TO CONNECT READERS



GOAL 2: USE TECHNOLOGY TO CONNECT READERS

Provide customers with access to the technology and skills required to navigate information and connect with people throughout the world.

Activities

- Ensure that customers have access to reliable computers with up to date software.
- Take advantage of social media technologies that will help us connect to customers and let readers connect to each other.
- Offer instruction on technology from basic computer courses to eBook downloading and advanced online database research.
- Continue to improve the library's website to reflect the needs and interests of readers.
- Develop virtual reference and customer service support systems to improve customer convenience.



My mom has been here for 2 decades, and if it weren't for the computer classes available, I don't think she would ever learn!!! Thank you!!!!



DEVELOP
COLLECTIONS
TO MEET
POPULAR DEMAND



GOAL 3: DEVELOP COLLECTIONS TO MEET POPULAR DEMAND

Help children, teens and adults find books and other materials to stimulate their imagination and foster lifelong learning at a variety of reading levels, and in various languages.

Activities

- Refresh and expand the merchandising of collections to highlight and increase the use of library materials.
- Continue to ensure popular material is widely available to meet the demand of customers.
- Further develop collections in languages other than English to reflect the demographics of our community.

“ *Our library is a fabulous place, with an excellent collection and friendly staff. What would I like? More of the same - bigger libraries with even more books, movies and CDs.* ”

OFFER PROGRAMS THAT
INFORM AND INSPIRE



GOAL 4: OFFER PROGRAMS THAT INFORM AND INSPIRE

Provide Richmond residents, regardless of reading ability or ethnic background, with programs to expand their interests, skills and knowledge.

Activities

- Continue to develop unique and appealing programs for youth that encourage a love of reading.
- Support literacy and reading readiness through the library's own programs as well as with community organizations involved with literacy.
- Offer programs that celebrate the diverse cultures of our community.
- Offer programs that support newcomers to Canada.
- Encourage community experts to present programs of interest to the community.

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When I was a new mom with my first child, I found support through a network of other new moms during babytimes and storytimes. They don't give you an instruction manual for being a mom, but at least with the library, you can find resources about parenting, find recipe books to cook the family a decent meal, travel books to take them on a well planned vacation, videos for family night, and the Summer Reading Club to encourage the kids to read during their vacation.

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CREATE **FRIENDLY, WELCOMING** FACILITIES

GOAL 5: CREATE FRIENDLY, WELCOMING FACILITIES

Ensure that people of all ages feel welcome in their local branch by providing a comfortable, engaging environment and friendly, helpful staff. Plan all policies and activities with the customers' needs and benefits in mind.

Activities

- Create warm, welcoming and safe public spaces.
- Offer exceptional customer service to ensure that everyone feels at home in their branch.
- Provide ongoing staff development that promotes passion and enthusiasm for reading.
- Work with the City of Richmond to plan branch development and expansion to meet growing needs.
- Promote the “greening” of the library and its operations and set an example for conserving resources and protecting the environment.

“ *I like to come to the library every day. It’s a part of my life and I feel comfortable coming here.* ”

RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD 2011



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