



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee **Date:** August 29, 2024
From: Susan Walters **File:** 97-RPL
 Chief Librarian, Richmond Public Library GENERAL/2024-Vol
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Re: Your Library, Our Future: Richmond Public Library Strategic Plan 2024-2028

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled, "Your Library, Our Future: Richmond Public Library Strategic Plan 2024-2028", dated August 29, 2024, from the Chief Librarian of Richmond Public Library, be received for information.

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Susan Walters
 Chief Librarian, Richmond Public Library
 (604-231-6466)

Att. 2

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
<i>BJS</i>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS:
	<i>CS</i>
APPROVED BY CAO	
<i>Sen</i>	

Staff Report

Origin

This report provides an overview of the Richmond Public Library's comprehensive strategic planning process that was undertaken to develop a new 2024–2028 Strategic Plan.

The project initiated in September 2023 and completed in June 2024 with the Library Board's approval of the completed strategic plan. The Library is excited to share *Your Library, Our Future* (Attachment 1), which will guide the library's strategic initiatives and resulting services to the community for the next four years.

One of the Library Board's intentions with this strategic planning process was to ensure that the library's strategic planning and operations integrate smoothly and efficiently with Richmond City Council's goals and objectives. This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026, Strategy #1 Proactive in Stakeholder and Civic Engagement:

1.1 Continue fostering effective and strategic relationships with other levels of government and Indigenous communities.

This report also supports Strategy #6 A Vibrant, Resilient and Active Community:

6.1 Advance a variety of program, services, and community amenities to support diverse needs and interests and activate the community.

6.3 Foster intercultural harmony, community belonging, and social connections.

6.4 Support vulnerable populations through collaborative and sustainable programs and services.

Analysis

Project Objectives

Underpinning this project was an awareness that the prevalence of digital services, emerging digital and artificial intelligence technologies and social media are dramatically reshaping how users look for, use and share information. Library services need to rapidly adapt to this changing environment, and identify new ways to promote library services.

The library has also been observing changes in customer expectations with an increased focus on customer convenience in accessing collections, programs and spaces. It was imperative that consideration be given to leveraging advanced technologies that can be integrated into the library experience and assist with library data collection that will enable the library to collect new information to assist in curating personalized library experiences.

Engaging and building relationships with our Indigenous communities was a key goal of the Library Board in this strategic planning process. Libraries have been called upon to implement

and support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 94 Calls to Action, several of which are specific to libraries. The library also recognizes that it has opportunities to support the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The library remains committed to broadening our partnerships, building relationships and collaborating with Indigenous communities. Fostering an environment of respect, tolerance and understanding and advancing equity, diversity and social inclusion are core to the Library's role in the community we serve.

In addition to the above, the Library Board had several objectives in developing a comprehensive strategic plan which included:

- Reviewing the Library's current vision, mission and values;
- Assessing public engagement in accessing library programs, services and collections;
- Expanding use of library services by reaching out to current and non-users in new ways;
- Working with community partners to identify innovative options for library service; and
- Understanding community preferences for localized library services.

The process to develop the plan took into consideration the changing demographics of Richmond and shifting trends in library services, through a data-driven and community-focused approach.

Engagement Strategy

A thorough engagement process sought feedback from Library stakeholders both internal and external. The engagement process for *Your Library, Our Future* was carefully designed to capture diverse voices and perspectives in Richmond. The main goals of this engagement process were to:

- Reflect the diverse needs, aspirations, and values of all community members, including those often underrepresented;
- Identify current and future trends in library services to ensure they meet community expectations and incorporate technological advancements;
- Foster a sense of collective ownership and commitment to the library, reinforcing its role as a central community hub; and
- Use the insights collected to inform the Library's strategic priorities, making sure they are responsive to community input and aligned with the Library's mission to inspire curiosity, transform lives, and empower all individuals.

Via an internal survey in Q4 2023, feedback from 80 library staff was compiled and informed the public engagement survey hosted on Let's Talk Richmond in early 2024. With 3,291 completed responses, this engagement met the goal of reaching a wide and diverse audience from the Richmond community. Broad promotion of the survey also engaged people from various equity-deserving groups such as racialized communities, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, individuals with disabilities, newcomers to Richmond, and recent immigrants to Canada.

The age range of participants in the survey varied, with strong representation from seniors and adults in their mid-thirties to mid-fifties, and the smallest representation from youth. Most feedback came from Richmond residents, showing a deep engagement with the local community's needs and interests. A wide range of Richmond neighbourhoods were represented overall, though the majority of participants identified as living in City Centre or Steveston.

Five workshops for families, youth, newcomers, seniors, and equity-focused organizations were also held and provided another opportunity for participants to share their thoughts. This combined approach provided the Library with a rich base of feedback to inform the strategic planning process. This engagement was crucial for developing a strategic plan that meets community needs and reinforces the library's place in Richmond's social life.

Findings

Feedback from engagement activities highlighted several priorities for strategic planning. There was a strong interest in transforming the library into a vibrant space that encourages innovation, creativity, and learning. Participants called for more interactive and educational programs and versatile spaces suitable for both individual study and group activities.

Emphasizing community resilience and diversity, the need for inclusive spaces where issues like intellectual freedom and freedom of expression, climate change and social equity can be addressed was also a recurring theme.

Additionally, feedback pointed out the importance of making library services and collections more accessible and adaptable, including enhancing digital access and creating more inclusive programs. Overall, the community clearly desires a library that keeps pace with both technological and societal shifts while continuing to address the diverse needs of its members.

Your Library, Our Future

A comprehensive visioning exercise took place as part of the previous strategic planning process and the Richmond Public Library's new 2024-2028 Strategic Plan *Your Library, Our Future* affirms our vision and mission:

Vision: Inspire Curiosity, Transform Lives, Empower Everyone

Mission: Creating opportunities to learn, connect and belong

The Strategic Plan also identifies five updated values (Attachment 2) that recognize the library's role in providing a welcoming environment and safe space for discourse, promoting intellectual freedom, being responsive to and anticipating community needs, and being a place of wonder and delight:

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The library is a safe space where all are welcome

Relationships: We are a human-centered hub for our community

Service: We strive to deliver an excellent customer experience

Innovation: We are fearlessly forward-looking

Fun: We are always having fun at the library!

Originally presented as having four strategic goals, the Library Board recognized the importance of having a standalone goal to address the increasing challenges to intellectual freedom and freedom of expression that is being encountered at a local, national and global level as libraries have a critical role in supporting this basic right. Consequently, the strategic plan has five clearly

defined goals with a total of 32 related priorities. A sampling of key priorities are outlined with each strategic goal below:

1. Reduce and remove barriers to improve accessibility
 - Improve awareness and benefits of low- or no-barrier membership
 - Implement and enhance delivery and mobile service options to our community
2. Champion intellectual freedom and freedom of expression
 - Define approaches that support inclusive and equitable civic engagement in our library spaces
 - Research and evaluate emergent best practices for intellectual freedom and inclusion
3. Provide excellent customer experiences
 - Improve wayfinding with a consistent and accessible approach to signage across all library locations
 - Optimize how we gather and use data to guide decisions
 - Embrace employees' diverse strengths to support positive and impactful experiences for customers
4. Strengthen our social and economic sustainability
 - Continue outreach to and engagement with Musqueam First Nation, moving at the pace of trust
 - Implement policies and procedures that minimize environmental impacts of library operations and promote environmental sustainability
5. Improve brand recognition and engagement
 - Pilot new partnerships and data-driven tactics to promote programs, collections and experiences
 - Explore ways to situate RPL as a high-value destination

For a complete listing of all strategic priorities please refer to Attachment 1.

Next Steps

Your Library, Our Future is for everyone who interacts with the Richmond Public Library and the intent is to share it broadly. The communications plan includes library staff and board, City Council and leadership, and community partners, volunteers, customers and residents.

All staff information and planning sessions were held in August to share key learnings and engage library staff from all levels across the organization to identify initiatives that will populate operational action plans, demonstrating how goals and priorities will be met and reported on over the next four years. The Library Board will review the operational plan at their September meeting.

Your Library, Our Future will be shared with the community and library partners in September and will be promoted on the library's website and across the library's social media channels. Library staff will also be considering innovative ways to share key milestones and updates with the community as the plan progresses through 2024 to 2028.

Conclusion

Your Library, Our Future Richmond Public Library's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan affirms our mission and vision, introduces updated values and outlines our intention for the next four years:

All will feel welcome, find what they need, and leave inspired. We will make life-changing connections, every day.

The plan also outlines our goals and priorities, which will inform resourcing, operations and activities at Richmond Public Library. Developed through a data-driven and community-focussed approach that included a thorough engagement process, consideration was also given to the changing demographics of Richmond and shifting trends in library services.

The Richmond Public Library Board and staff are excited to share this strategic plan with the community and for the aspirational direction it sets for the next four years.



Susan Walters
Chief Librarian, Richmond Public Library
(604-231-6466)

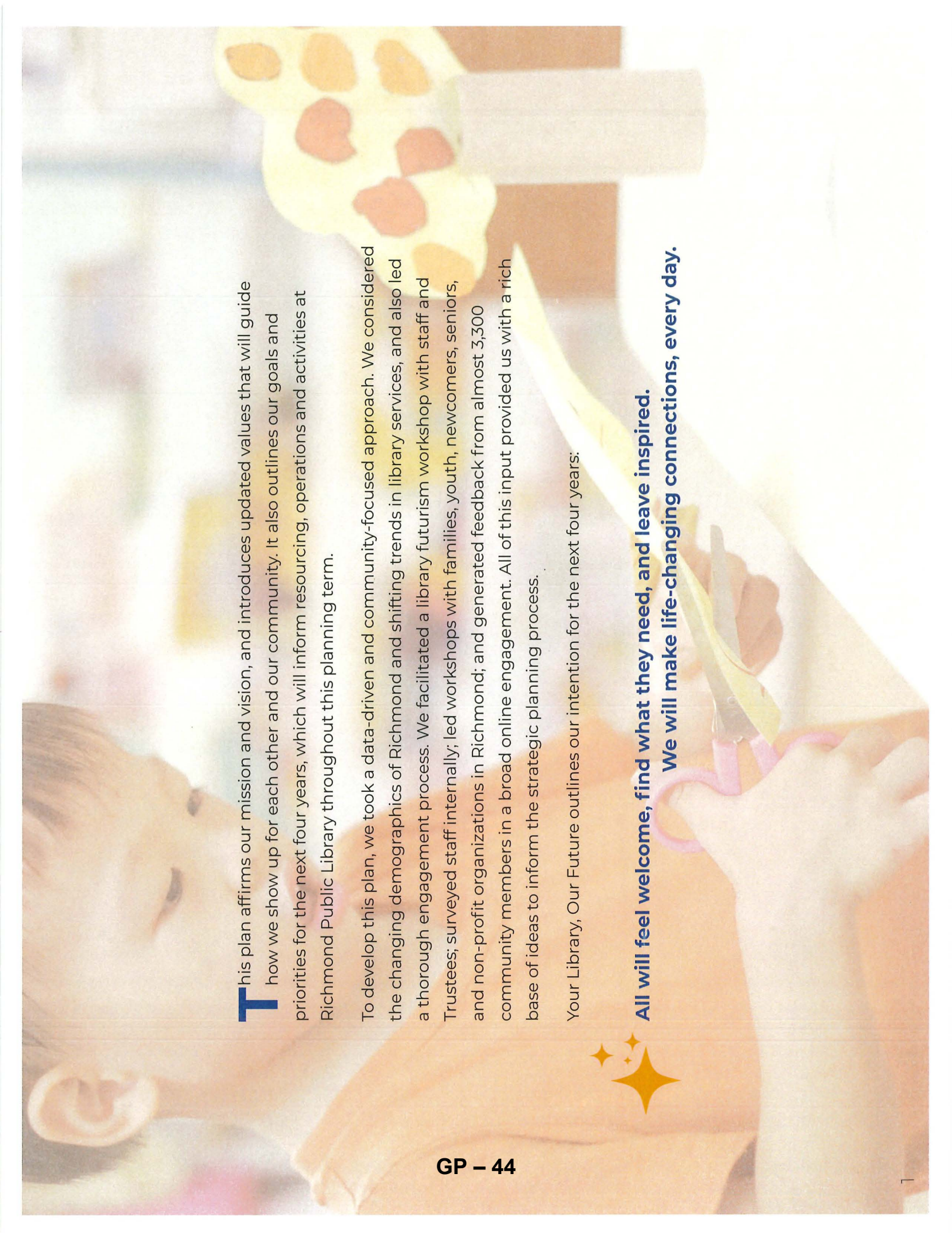
- Att. 1 *Your Library, Our Future* Richmond Public Library's 2024 – 2028 Strategic Plan
- Att. 2 2024 -2028 Strategic Plan: Values Definitions



Your Library, Our Future

Richmond Public Library
2024-2028 Strategic Plan





This plan affirms our mission and vision, and introduces updated values that will guide how we show up for each other and our community. It also outlines our goals and priorities for the next four years, which will inform resourcing, operations and activities at Richmond Public Library throughout this planning term.

To develop this plan, we took a data-driven and community-focused approach. We considered the changing demographics of Richmond and shifting trends in library services, and also led a thorough engagement process. We facilitated a library futurism workshop with staff and Trustees; surveyed staff internally; led workshops with families, youth, newcomers, seniors, and non-profit organizations in Richmond; and generated feedback from almost 3,300 community members in a broad online engagement. All of this input provided us with a rich base of ideas to inform the strategic planning process.

Your Library, Our Future outlines our intention for the next four years:

All will feel welcome, find what they need, and leave inspired.

We will make life-changing connections, every day.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Relationships
Service
Innovation
Fun

Values

Inspire Curiosity
Transform Lives
Empower Everyone

Vision

Creating opportunities
to learn, connect and
belong

Mission



Goals and Priorities

Reduce and remove barriers to improve accessibility

Reduce and remove barriers to our libraries' collections, programs and services

- Improve awareness and benefits of low- or no-barrier membership
- Reduce or remove barriers to using accessible materials
- Advance accessible services offered by sector partners
- Improve physical accessibility to library locations and within library spaces

Make experiences, programs and materials more accessible across our community

- Implement and enhance delivery and mobile service options to our community
- Expand express and self-serve infrastructure to access materials and cards in community spaces

Champion intellectual freedom and freedom of expression

Define our approaches to facilitating safe spaces for community dialogue

- Research and evaluate emergent best practices for intellectual freedom and inclusion
- Define approaches that support inclusive and equitable civic engagement in our library spaces

Improve brand recognition and engagement

Market our programs, spaces and collections in innovative and impactful ways

- Develop the library's brand to reflect Richmond's growing and diverse community
- Pilot new partnerships and data-driven tactics to promote programs, collections and experiences
- Explore ways to situate RPL as a high-value destination



Provide excellent customer experiences

Improve customer service and experience within our library spaces

- Explore enhanced amenities that facilitate enriching and inviting library experiences
- Improve wayfinding with a consistent and accessible approach to signage across all library locations
- Improve access to RPL's technology across library locations

Improve the customer experience of our digital platforms and communication systems

- Review and reimagine the RPL website, prioritizing the needs and objectives of our customers
- Strengthen customer-driven feedback channels for expanding and diversifying our collections
- Refine communication approaches to better align with customer interests and preferences

Equip and empower staff to deliver excellent customer experiences

- Prioritize customer service skills in staff recruitment, onboarding, training and assessment
- Strengthen customer service professional development opportunities for all staff
- Embrace employees' diverse strengths to support positive and impactful experiences for customers
- Develop and implement enhanced greeting and orientation roles at libraries

Enhance evaluation measures for programs and collections to increase value and improve engagement

- Refine evaluation frameworks, prioritizing impacts for equity-deserving communities
- Optimize how we gather and use data to guide decisions

Goals and Priorities

Strengthen our social and economic sustainability

Leverage new and existing cross-sector partnerships to meet diverse and changing community needs

- Create a plan to collaborate, promote and share specialized collections with partner libraries
- Deepen relationships with government agencies, non-profits, businesses and other partners
- Strengthen referral frameworks to ensure customers can access the support they need

Commit to environmental sustainability principles and practices

- Implement policies and procedures that minimize environmental impacts of library operations and promote environmental sustainability
- Enhance tracking and reporting of our carbon footprint

Ensure organizational readiness for decolonizing approaches

- Continue outreach to and engagement with Musqueam First Nation, moving at the pace of trust
- Strengthen collaboration with the City's Manager of Indigenous Relations
- Ensure staff have shared, foundational awareness of decolonizing approaches within the library sector
- Continue to offer programming, collections and experiences that advance truth and reconciliation

Thank you to each and every community member who contributed to our public consultation process, which will help to shape the future of your library.

We also wish to acknowledge the contributions of time, experience and ideas by library staff, community partners, our Library Board of Trustees, and our supporters at the City of Richmond.

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Richmond Public Library Locations

Brighouse (Main)

7700 Minoru Gate, Unit 100
Richmond, B.C. V6Y 1R8
604.231.6404

Steveston

4111 Moncton Street
Richmond, B.C. V7E 3A8
604.231.6424

Cambie

11590 Cambie Road, Unit 150
Richmond, B.C. V6X 3Z5
604.231.6462

Hamilton Library Service

(Saturdays)
Hamilton Community Centre
5140 Smith Drive
Richmond, B.C. V6V 2W5
604.231.6462

Ironwood

11688 Steveston Hwy, Unit 8200
Richmond, B.C. V7A 1N6
604.231.6468

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The library is a safe space where all are welcome.

We provide a welcoming and accessible environment so everyone can feel they belong in our library. We celebrate the diverse lived and living experiences of our staff, volunteers and customers. We continuously update our collections to reflect diverse perspectives, stories, ways of thinking and learning, and aim for our staff and spaces to reflect the diversity of the community we serve. We are committed to offering access to collections, events and technology free of charge, so the library remains a barrier-free gathering place. Finally, we recognize the role libraries play in advancing equity. We create environments where people can safely challenge systems that privilege some and harm others, and where we can advance Truth and Reconciliation, and justice.

Relationships

We are a human-centered hub for our community.

People are the heart of our library, from our customers, volunteers and staff, to the creators who populate our collections. We create environments and experiences where people can engage respectfully and in the spirit of curiosity. We promote intellectual freedom and constructive dialogue, which are integral to a healthy community. We encourage everyone at the library to engage with us and one another, strengthening our community as a whole. We ensure our customers get the support they are seeking when they come to the library.

Service

We strive to deliver an excellent customer experience.

Our staff are friendly and helpful. We are responsive to what our customers say they want and need from their library, and do our best to meet these expectations, as resources allow. We adapt to trends in technology, collections and library services as a whole, keeping our finger on the pulse of best practices in our field. We aim to be reliable to our customers and each other, taking ownership of opportunities to meet or exceed expectations, and following up to ensure people get the information or support they are seeking from us.

Innovation

We are fearlessly forward-looking.

Learning, exploration and imagination drive us. We aim to see opportunities and challenges on the horizon, fearlessly anticipating and preparing for relevant trends. We aim to create environments where people can experience new technology, foster unlikely connections, explore ideas, create new things and find collaborative solutions.

Fun

We are always having fun at the library!

We want the library to be a place of wonder and delight. That's why fun is welcomed and encouraged at RPL! Our collections include games, emergent technology, and kits to explore new hobbies and develop new skills. Our events span diverse passions and interests in our community. And our programs invite people to have low-barrier, fun experiences, whether they are young or young at heart.