



North Vancouver District Public Library Board Retreat - Saturday November 28, 2015 Summary Report

Introduction

Library Director Jacqueline van Dyk welcomed Board Members and Staff to the NVDPL Board Retreat at the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, and introduced the retreat facilitator, strategic planning consultant Michael Shoop.

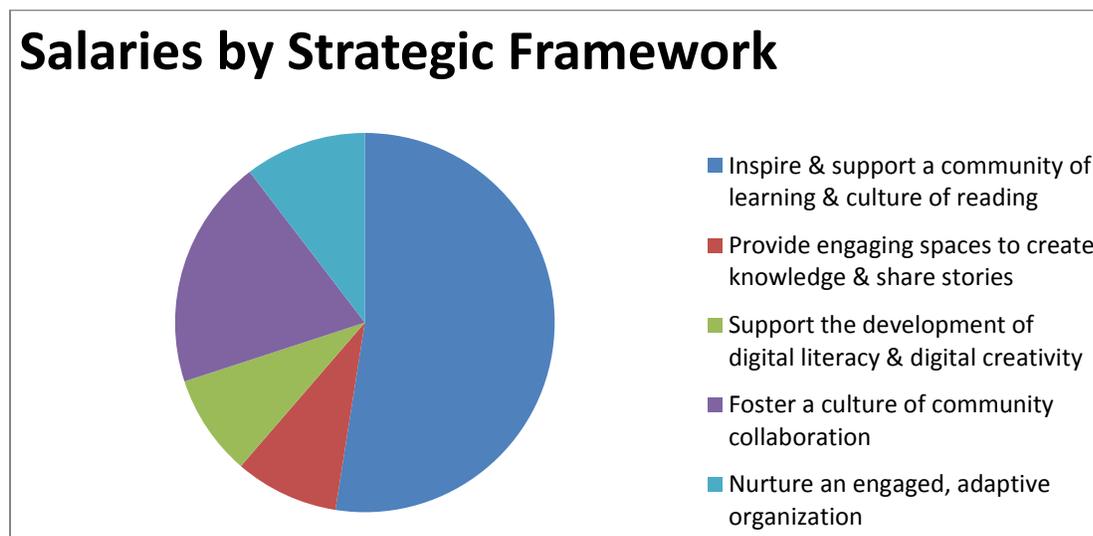
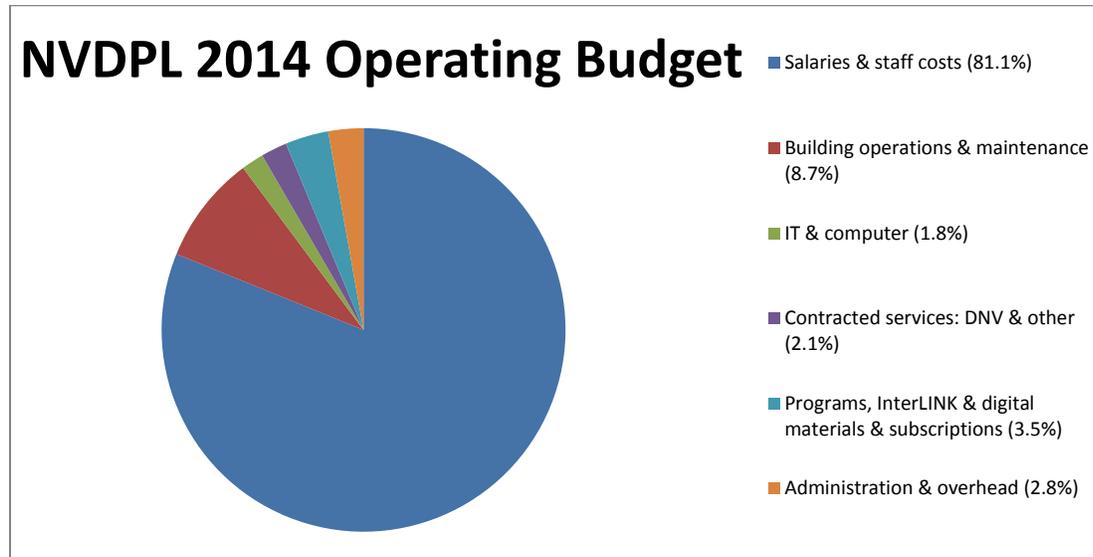
Michael Shoop provided an outline of the day, integrating Staff presentations and Board participation within a framework of discussion based on his experience of successful strategic planning within the library context. His approach included reference to appreciative inquiry, action learning, and system thinking. He described the challenges of planning in “VUCA” times, reflecting on the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity of current general societal conditions.

Jacqueline van Dyk introduced the staff presentations which were developed around specific areas of strategic concern identified by the North Vancouver District Public Library Board and Staff.

“Our job is to help the community flourish. We want Council to see us as a vehicle to help the District look good.” – Sanford Osler, NVDPL Board Trustee

Social Capital

Business Manager Nicola McLaren, delivered a well-researched PowerPoint presentation challenging the traditional perspective of staff as a cost or financial liability, and showing how the statistical view changes when staff are viewed as a valuable asset aligned with the organization’s objectives. This was illustrated by looking at the NVDPL salaries budget through the lens of the NVDPL Strategic Framework:



“On what high-performing companies should be striving to create: A great place for great people to do great work.” – Marilyn Carlson, former CEO of Carlson Companies

Programming Strategies

Manager, Community Engagement Barbara Kelly's presentation focused on the high, and unique value of library services within the community, including how Library programming relates to community-building and to developing a special place for people for learning, in a high quality, safe, comfortable, public space. She noted that by tuning in to the human-centred experience of the Library, patron support becomes more human, fun, engaging, and connecting, "pushing boundaries of what library can be". In this light, the Library requires real demographic data – age plus socio-economic factors, lifestyle, proximity to libraries – to be able to target our services most effectively. Barbara Kelly referenced the Stakeholder Report she developed for the NVDPL.

Issues related to Adult Programming:

- Dialogue-based programming and community conversations; are there any gaps?
- How to ration a free service – the need to maximize value to the community through our assessment of value and impact and through alignment with the District of North Vancouver's Official Community Plan (OCP).
- The need to identify our unique values: intellectual freedom, privacy, access, free service with highly skilled interpreters.
- The requirement that programming be in tune with organizational capacity and facilities.

Issues related to Children's Collections and Services:

- Children require high quality literature to allow for those delightful moments that engage different parts of the brain and encourage children to look at the world differently
- Children's books are a key part of the collection, and there is a need for high quality tangible books on site – good content, format, and hardware.

Library Collections

Manager, Collections Management and Access, Corinne McConchie reviewed the current NVDPL collections strategy, generating discussion by leading the Board and Staff through exercises that illuminated the broad range of the Library collection and the value of the collection to the community. The Library Collection is not just books!

The challenge of meeting patron demands was examined, noting that the Library Collection is facing a perfect storm: buying power has gone down due to rising costs and the \$US exchange rate, and demand has increased dramatically with the demand for multiple formats (Books, eBooks, DVDs, CDs, Audio books, etc.) Colleen McConchie noted that the annual budget for purchasing NVDPL collections materials is the same today as it was 10 years ago.

"The way your employees feel is the way your customers will feel. And if your employees don't feel valued, neither will your customers." – Sybil F. Stershic

Corinne McConchie facilitated a discussion regarding addressing the problem of rationing a free resource to a community with the following:

- Determine value by content, format, hardware, lifestyle (e.g. can we wait until later in a format lifecycle? Idea that children need physical books and they need them now, versus adults who can perhaps wait for a book to be brought in from another library)
- The quality of the physical materials has the greatest impact on families. We need to be able to buy the best picture books and highest quality literature.
- How can we better partner with others – complement our library partners
- Look at space costs – perhaps compact storage or offsite storage will make sense to enable library to do higher value things with the space
- Differentiation between libraries: while NVCL is focused on digital collections, the NVDPL could be known as the “culture of reading/community of learning” library.
- “real value”: what we do to benefit the community: patron support & self service

Readiness for Change

Manager, Welcoming Initiatives, Andrea Freeman described her work with NVDPL Staff to create readiness for a new kind of service in the Library. Simply put - people are not simple. You cannot tell someone to change and do something differently, and expect great results. Change, especially meaningful, lasting change, only comes from within. The work Andrea Freeman has been doing is aiming to slowly nudge NVDPL Staff towards individual growth and the capacity to fulfill the NVDPL strategic framework. The work is subtle, it's daily, and it's working.

Developing a new NVDPL service model includes the following goals and actions which set the tone for a welcoming environment:

- We are a people-focused library. The emphasis is on convenience for the customer, and meeting their needs above our own.
- We greet our patrons at the door and offer concierge-style service where they are either escorted or expertly directed.
- Our staff are cross-trained and anyone can help answer all commonly asked questions.
- When we're at a desk, we sit side by side with our patrons. We are on the same page and our body language reflects that.
- Information Staff and Circulation Staff share desks and are flexible about work duties - true integration of our service staff.
- Staff are out from behind desks and meeting patrons in the library, providing “proactive customer service” and “roaming customer service”.

Staff are encouraged to have empathy, confidence, curiosity, an open-minded attitude, to have a growth mindset, to be adaptive “learners”, to know it's safe to fail, and to let the heart drive the change, bringing their hearts to everything they do.

“Culture is about performance, and making people feel good about how they contribute to the whole.” – Tracy Streckenbach

Digital Service

Manager, Learning & Innovation, Adam Farrell noted that in this digitally connected world, the underpinning strategic priority for connectivity and our digital strategy is “lightning fast broadband”. He focused on three elements related to this opportunity and priority:

1. The WHAT of this priority is to:

- Connect all 3 branches to a stable, high-speed broadband internet connexion through a network such as Canarie or something similar. Canarie is the super high-speed high-capacity internet highway for the public educational sector and public libraries can have access. This high capacity is at reasonable costs (non-commercial rates).
- This is bigger than one institution. Making this happen would be done through collaboration and partnerships with other public libraries, academic institutions such as Capilano University, local government, and possibly the school district.
 - This innovation will require political effort, involve grant opportunities, and a substantial and stable infrastructure for NVDPL’s digital strategy success and the overall future of the library.

2. WHY is this a priority?

- A thoroughly well-connected library is essential
- We are not meeting public demand.
 - When we develop a Digital Strategy, the need will be even greater
- With a well-established broadband internet connection in place, NVDPL can better support digital collections, digital creation and other digital initiatives, and access to streaming educational resources.
- NVDPL plays a vital role in supporting lifelong learning, information literacy, and technology literacy to our citizenry.
- Access to the best possible internet is a key underpinning to supporting our mission and strategy.

3. The local Issue:

- The Canarie Hub is at Harbour Centre – just across the water. But getting access over one of the bridges is the huge stumbling block for the North Shore.
- Investments are being made, and infrastructure is being enhanced by local governments to connect to regional hubs. We know this from our provincial partners.
- The library needs access to the same hubs to leverage and participate in cost-effective services and to connect with the knowledge sector as a whole.
- The success of this broadband initiative will likely require Board involvement through meetings with local municipal and provincial politicians.

“Employees who believe that management is concerned about them as a whole person – not just an employee – are more productive, more satisfied, more fulfilled. Satisfied employees mean satisfied customers.” – Anne M. Mulcahy

Communications

Communication/Events Coordinator Meghan Crowe emphasized that “Messaging Matters!” In developing its message, the NVDPL will need to consider the following:

- What image do we want to reflect?
- What services or programs do we want our community to know about and engage with?
- What is our role within the community and how do we want the community to feel about the NVDPL?
- What areas of the NVDPL Strategic Framework do we want to highlight?

With the implementation of the Strategic Framework in 2014, the Library adopted a new identity which has guided innovative and unique programming that inspires stories, facilitates lifelong learning, and connects our community. This shift has not yet permeated our external communications. A fresh look at the NVDPL brand identity is recommended to better communicate the philosophical shift that is occurring at the Library, as it continues to grow within the guidelines of its Strategic Framework. These guidelines are:

- 1. Inspire and support a community of learning and a culture of reading.**
- 2. Provide engaging spaces to create knowledge and share stories.**
- 3. Support the development of digital literacy and digital creativity.**
- 4. Foster a culture of community collaboration.**
- 5. Nurture an engaged, adaptive organization.**

“A library in the middle of a community is a cross between an emergency exit, a life raft, and a festival. They are cathedrals of the mind; hospitals of the soul; theme parks of the imagination. On a cold rainy island, they are the only sheltered public spaces where you are not a consumer, but a citizen instead.”

– Caitlin Moran