

# RED DEER PUBLIC LIBRARY



## PLAN OF SERVICE

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JANUARY 1, 2021 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022



# PART A: PREAMBLE, CONSIDERATIONS, & METHODOLOGY

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CITY OF RED DEER PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

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Who could have predicted the enormous impact that the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic was to have on the world? Its magnitude and our helplessness has required us to practice patience, while we rely on protocols and guidelines from various governments to guide us to the new world.

Our vision last year was to expand the advocacy role and elevate the profile of the library, by interacting with other boards and raising the awareness of the benefits of the Library to the community and agencies. Due to the changing circumstances, our major function this year was changed to support the efforts of our CEO, and offer our assistance and feedback as she navigates these troubled waters.

This plan of service builds upon the successes of previous plans which have guided us for the last two years. It was built upon the solid foundation of extensive community consultation and resulted in five service priorities:

1. Create Young Readers: Early Literacy
2. Express Creativity: Create and Share Content
3. Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning
4. Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure
5. Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces

As the Board reflected upon previous goals and successes, we can see that these service priorities remain active, and there is still work that can be done in all these areas. Our creative library staff have initiated amazing programs to achieve these priorities. Congratulations to all the library staff! We look forward to seeing how they continue to advance the goals of the plan in creative, educational, fun, and interesting ways.

Our basic functions of supporting our CEO and advocating and promoting the Library whenever an opportunity arises, remains unchanged. I know that we will all do our best!

— Mark Waters, Red Deer Public Library Board Chair



## “HOW DID WE GET HERE? AND EXACTLY WHERE ARE WE?”

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The Red Deer Public Library was established over a century ago, in 1914, by Red Deer town council under the provisions of the Libraries Act of the province of Alberta. That's over a century of service to the people of Red Deer! That makes our library one of our city's longest established entities. In that time, many Boards and dedicated Library workers have worked diligently to develop a public library service that has been a mainstay of the community.

The library is managed by an autonomous Board of Trustees, appointed by Red Deer City Council. The library is largely publicly funded by the City of Red Deer. The Library also benefits from grants and electronic resources from the provincial government, and from grants, gifts, partnerships, fees and fines.

Today's RDPL operates three branch locations; the Main Branch located at 4818 - 49th Street, the Dawe Branch at 56 Holt Street, and Timberlands Branch at 300 Timothy Drive.



# THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC: EFFECTS ON RED DEER PUBLIC LIBRARY'S OPERATIONS AND HOW WE SERVICE OUR COMMUNITY OF USERS

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The Covid 19 Pandemic has affected all people, all nations, all organizations, and all enterprises on our planet. It is a globally shared phenomena. The phrase “business as usual” no longer applies. Early in 2020, as the enormity of the pandemic began to take hold, the Board and management of the library acted decisively to alter our normal operational model by taking steps to protect and safeguard our library patrons and library staff. These measures necessitated drastic restrictions in public access to library buildings, materials, and programs, and temporarily curtailing the library’s ability to continue to provide the face-to-face personalized service our patrons so enjoy and have come to expect.

*“The Board of Trustees of the RDPL regret this loss of access to the public. At the same time, we stand by these decisions, because our first guiding principle is to ensure that the Library is a safe place for all those who enter it.”*

How long the pandemic will remain with us is unknown. Our pledge to all library users is this: our library will reestablish normal operations at the earliest possible opportunity, taking into account all public health guidelines and directives, and when it is determined that health risks to patrons and staff alike are once again at acceptable levels. Until then, we appreciate the understanding and support of all library users during this challenging period.

# A COMMUNITY-BASED STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

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Public libraries in Alberta are legislated by the *Libraries Act*, which is administered by the Public Libraries Service Branch (PLSB), within the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. The regulations of the Act require public library boards to develop a Plan of Service, including mission statement, goals, and objectives, based on a community needs assessment. A Plan of Service is more than just a legal requirement; it serves as a strategic direction for the library, assisting the Library Board to govern and library staff to manage operations and deliver services. By using a community consultation process, each library can identify improvements and service opportunities, and then measure achievement of goals through outcomes.

The Plan of Service you are reading had its origins in this process. It stems from the formation of a Community Advisory Committee, made up of community leaders from a wide variety of organizations, backgrounds, and perspectives. Facilitated meetings were held to focus on the future of the library and its community. Community needs were identified with regard to the role of the Library. Included in the process were meetings with library staff to gain feedback and input on the identified areas of Service Priority, Goals, and Objectives.

The process identified many potential areas of Service Response for consideration. The Board of Trustees at that time determined that 5 of those were of particular interest, and these constitute the focus of the Red Deer Public Library Plan of Service, 2021-2022.



## METHODOLOGY: RED DEER PUBLIC LIBRARY PLAN OF SERVICE, 2021-2022

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Collection and analysis of the results (metrics, goal measurements, etc.) from the 2019-2020 Plan of Service were largely pre-empted by the first wave of the Covid 19 Pandemic. The pandemic forced the library to close its doors to library users beginning in March 2020, with only limited public access since then. This significantly inhibited the ability of library managers and the Board to poll library users on the goals attached to the 5 Service Responses identified for close study from the previous Plan of Service.

The Library Board and the Library CEO discussed this situation at length, and identified a number of factors that influence the approach to creating an all-new Plan of Service. These include:

- insufficient collected goal results from the previous plan.
- inability to determine how long the pandemic will continue to disrupt normal operations.
- effect of pandemic on community members in general, recognizing distraction from assisting with providing input re: library usage/programs/visits, to overriding personal/family concerns over basic economic survival, school and work concerns, health and safety worries, political and social environment, etc.
- expected difficulty in getting library users to focus attention and “daily consciousness” on the Library and its future planning.

## METHODOLOGY (CONTINUED)

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Perhaps the most vexing of problems is how to plan a future roadmap without knowing how long the normal flow of people's activities will be impacted by Covid. Will we continue to see the necessary partial lockdown of public institutions? Will further (or additional) lockdowns be implemented? Will successive "waves" of infection extend the crisis for another 1 or 2 years? Or will its effects drag on even longer? What will the "new normal" look like when Covid has passed? What effects will be thrust upon our users and stakeholders, and our funding partners? In consultation with the Public Libraries Service Branch, it was decided the most reasonable course of action was to largely extend the main parameters and goals of the 2019-2020 Plan of Service as basis for this short duration 2021-2022 Plan.

It is hoped that well before the end of 2022 a much clearer picture may take form of how we are emerging from the Hydra-like tentacles of Covid 19. In that case, the Board will be operating in a sufficiently stable social and economic environment to undertake a new and thorough needs assessment, and to perhaps engage a research firm to undertake a "deep dive" in the community on its behalf to assess the needs, wants, and desires of the community in the Library's future service plan.







# PART B: RED DEER PUBLIC LIBRARY PLAN OF SERVICE, 2021-2022

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## MISSION

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Enrich lives by promoting literacy and providing access to knowledge and culture.

## VALUES

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- Learning and Literacy
- Access and Inclusion for All
- Community
- Relationships
- Fun
- The Arts

Outcome measurement is embedded in the strategic planning for results process. Goals focus on the audience — not on the library — and propose a benefit. The objectives for each goal are S.M.A.R.T.: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

The following pages will outline the goals, objectives, actions to date, and expected outcomes of the 2021-2022 plan of service, with a focus on these five key Service Responses:

### 1. CREATE YOUNG READERS: EARLY LITERACY

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### 2. EXPRESS CREATIVITY: CREATE AND SHARE CONTENT

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### 3. SATISFY CURIOSITY: LIFELONG LEARNING

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### 4. STIMULATE IMAGINATION: READING, VIEWING, AND LISTENING FOR PLEASURE

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### 5. VISIT A COMFORTABLE PLACE: PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL SPACES

# 1. CREATE YOUNG READERS: EARLY LITERACY

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Children from birth up to age 5 will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

## Goal 1

The Library will play a key role in the lives of children from 1-5 years of age, providing materials and programs that will help them to develop early literacy skills and enable them to become lifelong learners and succeed in school.

**Objective 1.1:** By the end of 2022, as a result of participating in library pre-school literacy programs, 85% of parents, families, and caregivers surveyed will rate the quality of early literacy programs for children as either high or very high and/or the Library's collection of children's materials as either high or very high.

**Objective 1.2:** By the end of 2022, 50% more children will have library cards than in 2020.

**Objective 1.3:** By the end of 2022, the Library will increase new partnerships by 25%, ensuring a greater variety of early literacy programs offered.

## RDPL Actions to Date:

- Early literacy programs for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers take place regularly at all branches. During the Covid 19 pandemic, these programs were adapted to a variety of virtual and at-home formats, including pre-recorded videos, live Zoom classes, take-home activity boxes, and more.
- RDPL offers a passive, at-home reading program, *1000 Books Before Kindergarten*, to create a culture of reading among infants, toddlers, and preschoolers and to encourage parent and child bonding through reading.



## 2. EXPRESS CREATIVITY: CREATE AND SHARE CONTENT

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Patrons will have the services and support they need to express themselves by creating original print, video, audio, or visual content in a real-world or online environment.

### Goal 2

The Library will provide Red Deerians of all ages with interactive programs, services, and collections that encourage creativity and sharing of original content.

**Objective 2.1:** By the end of 2022, 85% of users surveyed will indicate that the Library: encourages creativity through its programs and collections and/or offers sufficient opportunities for the sharing of original content. (e.g. art, music, literature, BiblioCommons review, blog, etc.) with others.

### RDPL Actions to Date:

- RDPL staff are continuously building their digital literacy skills so that they can effectively and confidently assist patrons in using new and emerging technologies and resources.
- Library programs, both in person and virtual, encourage participants of all ages to express their creativity in various ways. Recent examples include:
  - Evening Artistry, a popular program run in person pre-pandemic and live streamed on YouTube during the pandemic, with supply kits or lists provided for patrons to follow along from home.
  - Summer Reading Club, with opportunities for kids, teens, and adults to partake in craft activities, write book reviews, and try out new hobbies.
- RDPL staff created a number of "Kits to Go" for customers to take home during the pandemic, many of which offered opportunities for creating at home. Examples include Craft Take Out Boxes, Spice it Up Recipe Kits, Family Fun Storytime Kits, and Be Creative Bundles (Knitting 101 and Sewing 101).

### 3. SATISFY CURIOSITY: LIFELONG LEARNING

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Patrons will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and so continue to learn throughout their lives.

#### Goal 3

The Library will ensure that Red Deerians of all ages will have ready access to materials in a wide range of topics in a variety of formats, languages, and levels of complexity which will allow them to continue their lifelong learning in order to enrich their lives.

**Objective 3.1:** By the end of 2022, 85% of users surveyed will indicate that: they are either satisfied or very satisfied with the library's collection of materials for informal lifelong learning purposes and/or they agree or strongly agree that the Library enriches their life.

#### Goal 4

The Library will ensure that Red Deerians of all ages will have access to diverse programming that supports informal lifelong learning practices and literacy enhancement.

**Objective 4.1:** By the end of 2022, 85% of users surveyed will agree or strongly agree that, as a result of participation in a library program, they have increased their personal knowledge on a topic or skill.

**Objective 4.2:** By the end of 2022, 85% of volunteers who support library literacy programs will have completed two training modules relating to skills for tutoring learners of different ages.

#### RDPL Actions to Date:

- RDPL maintains and makes accessible a nonfiction collection to support the informal learning needs of Red Deerians and offers a variety of programs that encourage lifelong learning, such as Travel Memories, Tech Help, and co-sponsored Health Literacy and Financial Literacy programs.



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- The library's award-winning Adult Literacy Program trains volunteers to tutor learners in basic reading, writing, and conversation. The program also offers additional learning opportunities to the community, including Pronunciation Classes, IELTS courses, and Conversation and Vocabulary classes.
  - The library provides access to a number of online resources that promote lifelong learning, including Pronunciator (language learning), Road to IELTS (test prep resource), Solaro (homework help for grades 3-12), and Ancestry (genealogy research), as well as historical newspapers and other research and reference tools.

#### 4. STIMULATE IMAGINATION: READING, VIEWING, AND LISTENING FOR PLEASURE

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Patrons who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want and will have the help they need to make choices from among options.

##### Goal 5

The Library will provide Red Deerians of all ages with access to programs and events that will enrich their lives by stimulating imagination and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences.

**Objective 5.1:** Each year from 2021 to 2022, overall program attendance will increase by 10%.

**Objective 5.2:** By the end of 2022, 85% of users surveyed will indicate that they are satisfied with: the quality of programs offered at RDPL and/or the variety of programs offered at RDPL.

## Goal 6

The Library will ensure that Red Deerians of all ages and backgrounds will have access to a collection of materials that are current, engaging, and in great condition, in a wide variety of formats to satisfy their leisure reading, listening, and viewing needs.

**Objective 6.1:** Each year from 2021 to 2022, overall circulation will increase by 10%.

**Objective 6.2:** By the end of 2022, 85% of users surveyed will indicate they are satisfied with: the quality of the Library collection and /or the amount of time it takes to receive new materials.

### RDPL Actions to Date:

- Monthly adult book clubs take place at all branches, each with its own unique format and audience. During the Covid 19 pandemic, some of these book clubs moved to an online format, and library staff continued to engage participants and even recruit new members in the safest possible manner.
- Beginning in 2021, much of the library's print collection will be ordered via carefully-designed and expertly-selected automatic release plans, which were crafted over the course of 2020. Moving to this model will ensure that new items hit library shelves as soon as possible.
- Ensuring that library customers have quick and easy access to reading materials during the complicated circumstances that many faced due to Covid 19 was a high priority in 2020. Two ways that the library made this happen were to implement online membership registrations and to re-allocate some of the 2020 collections budget to eBooks and eAudiobooks, which saw a sharp spike in borrowing when the pandemic began. This way, library users could access reading materials almost instantaneously, without even leaving the house.



## 5. VISIT A COMFORTABLE SPACE: PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL SPACES

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Patrons will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others, or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

### Goal 7

The Library will ensure that all Red Deerians will have ready access to a people-centric space so they have opportunities for personal, intellectual, and social growth.

**Objective 7.1:** By the end of 2022, there will be a 10% increase in the overall number of physical visits to the Library.

**Objective 7.2:** By the end of 2022, there will be a 10% increase in the overall use of meeting room space in the Library.

**Objective 7.3:** By the end of 2022, 85% of users surveyed will indicate that they are satisfied with the Library's facilities.

### Goal 8

The Library will provide all Red Deerians with access to well-maintained and safe facilities in which they feel welcome and safe, and in which they can take pride.

**Objective 8.1:** By the end of 2022, 85% of users surveyed will indicate that they: feel welcome in the Library and/or feel safe in the Library and/or take pride in the Library's facilities.

### Goal 9

The Library will ensure that all Red Deerians have access to a suite of patron focused online resources and tools (e.g. website, catalogue, subscription databases, etc.) which will allow them to access equivalent services in an online space as they have access to in the Library's physical spaces.

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**Objective 9.1:** By the end of 2022, 85% of users surveyed will indicate that they are satisfied with the Library's web site and/or online catalogue (Bibliocommons) and /or online resources (such as Overdrive, Zinio, etc.) and/or social media sites.

**Objective 9.2:** By the end of 2022, 25% of all new memberships and renewals will take place via the Internet.

**Objective 9.3:** By the end of 2022, 15% of all fine payments will be made via the Internet, or other online facility.

**Objective 9.4:** By the end of 2022, 75% of all patrons will have an email account registered with the Library.

**Objective 9.5:** By the end of 2022, there will be an increase of 10% in the daily reach measure on Facebook.

**RDPL Actions to Date:**

- The Downtown Branch saw a number of space and layout changes in early 2020, including relocating the teen collection, merging staff workspaces from all departments, and swapping the Waskasoo-Kiwanis meeting room with the staff room. Driving factors included staff and customer safety, improved workflow and cross-training of staff by removing departmental boundaries between staff, and meeting the identified community need for silent study space.
- When planning the Covid 19 phased reopening strategy, a number of new safety measures were implemented to ensure that we do our part to limit the spread of the virus. In addition, the HVAC renovation project at the Downtown Branch provides increased air quality and circulation in the building, key measures for safely reopening the facility.
- The library provides informative and engaging content across all of its social media channels. In 2020, with the shift to virtual programming, RDPL amplified its presence on YouTube and added a number of new Facebook groups to engage different audiences in new ways.



# EXPECTED OUTCOMES FROM RDPL'S PLAN OF SERVICE, 2021-2022

SERVICE RESPONSE	EXPECTED OUTCOMES
Create Young Readers: Early Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children &lt; 1 to 5 who have participated in library programs have developed or improved early literacy skills.</li> <li>Parents/family members and caregivers have a greater understanding of the value of reading to their children.</li> </ul>
Express Creativity: Create and Share Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community members' creative and active pursuit of self-expression is supported by library programs and services.</li> <li>RDPL provides a variety of ways for community members to learn to express themselves in recognition of different learning styles.</li> <li>Library programs encourage intergenerational participation for the purpose of expressing creativity.</li> </ul>
Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library programs and services meet the interests of all learners.</li> <li>Materials in RDPL's non-fiction collection (both print and A/V materials) are selected to meet the diverse tastes/needs of the community.</li> </ul>
Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RDPL programs stimulate imagination and meet the diverse needs of the community.</li> <li>Materials in RDPL's fiction collection (both print and A/V materials) are selected to meet the diverse tastes/needs of the community.</li> </ul>
Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our virtual and physical spaces are safe, welcoming, accessible, and inclusive for all community members and staff.</li> <li>RDPL is a virtual and physical hub for community members, and groups with common interest, to connect to community events and information.</li> </ul>



## CLOSING MESSAGE

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Many thanks to our current and former Red Deer Public Library Board members who worked to bring this document to life and provide strategic direction to guide RDPL management and staff through this term of service:

- Mark Waters (Board Chair)
- Dianne Wyntjes
- David Murphy
- Jerry Moore
- Raymond Savage
- Nancy Batty
- Ray Yaworski
- Brian Quigg
- Shelley Odishaw
- Leanne Gosse
- Anita Thomas
- Robert Kruchten

*Thank you!*





Be a part of the story.

#BeRDPL