

## **INTRODUCTION Part 1: Community**

The Fort St. James Public Library acknowledges that our work takes place on the unceded homelands of the Dakelh Nations.

Founded by Simon Fraser in 1806 on the shores of Stuart Lake, Fort St. James is the gateway to a chain of rivers and lakes that traverse 400 kilometres of central British Columbia. The population of the Fort St. James area, including the municipality itself, rural areas, and First Nations, is slightly under 5,000 people. There is an established forest industry, a burgeoning mining sector and a growing tourism industry. The downtown core, near the District of Fort St. James office, hosts restaurants, retail shops, banks and a government service office. The library is located right beside the downtown core.

Fort St. James and area have played a significant role in history. Visual reminders of this history are evident throughout the town. Among the more prominent are:

- Fort St. James National Historic Site
- Ancient burial site of Carrier Chief Kwah
- Our Lady of Good Hope Catholic Church
- Monument to legendary bush pilot Russ Baker

Some of the First Nations communities served by Fort St. James include:

- Nak'azdli
- Yekooche
- Binche
- Tl'azt'en (Tache)
- Takla Lake

The town's important cultural, educational, and community institutions include:

- Fort St. James Public Library
- College of New Caledonia
- The Key Resource Centre
- Fort St. James National Historic Site / Friends of the Park
- Community Arts Council / Pope Mountain Arts Centre
- Music Makers
- Fort St. James Senior Association
- Fort St. James Community Foundation
- John Prince Research Forest

## **INTRODUCTION Part 2: Strategic Plans**

The *Strategic Plan 2016-2021* for the Fort St. James Public Library outlines four goals, each with three or more focus areas:

- Community Connections
- Professional Development
- Technology Engagement
- Environment

The Provincial Strategic Plan, *Inspiring Libraries, Connecting Communities (2016)*, is being reviewed, but Libraries Branch is still focused on these similar priorities:

- Fostering Equitable Access to Information and Services
- Developing Skills and Knowledge
- Working Together
- Enhancing Governance

As it has in the past, the strategic goals of the Fort St. James Public Library closely align with those of the Ministry of Education, Libraries Branch.

<b>MELB Priorities</b>	<b>FSJaPL Priorities</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Fostering Equitable Access to Information and Services</i>	<p><i>Technology Engagement:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep software as current and relevant as possible</li> <li>• Improve digital equipment for staff and patrons</li> <li>• Increase digital access and digital literacy of staff and patrons</li> <li>• Valuable and easy to use website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New computers.</li> <li>• Renewal of Gale Courses.</li> <li>• North Central Library Federation programming to libraries in the region.</li> <li>• Upgraded WiFi.</li> <li>• Keeping website updated.</li> </ul>
<i>Developing Skills and Knowledge</i>	<p><i>Professional Development:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board education</li> <li>• Staff training</li> <li>• Increased staff communication</li> </ul> <p><i>Technology Engagement:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase digital access and digital literacy of staff and patrons</li> </ul> <p><i>Environment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve study areas and reading areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at conferences, webinars, teleconferences, etc.</li> <li>• Increased awareness of tools and resources for professional development.</li> <li>• Regular performance evaluations with training goals.</li> <li>• Continued informal technology training.</li> </ul>
<i>Working Together</i>	<p><i>Community Connections:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating and strengthening partnerships with community and regional organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint programming.</li> <li>• Strengthened partnerships.</li> <li>• Working with CUPE-4951 to improve workplace environment and expectations.</li> <li>• Working with local schools to provide easier access to library materials for students.</li> </ul>

<i>Enhancing Governance</i>	The library is committed to measuring, reporting, and evaluating all data on services and programs throughout our Strategic Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Policy Manual.</li> <li>• Maintenance and Advocacy of library’s budgets.</li> <li>• Promoting Board activities and Board recruitment.</li> </ul>
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Progress of the Fort St. James Public Library’s Strategic Plan:

Professional Development

- The library’s Board and Staff continue to attend a number of conferences, webinars, courses, and other learning opportunities.
- Staff evaluations are being performed regularly, with frequent feedback and training opportunities throughout the year.

Technology Engagement

- The library purchased three new Lenovo computers for public use, replacing the old outdated public computers. The plan is to replace all computers, including staff computers, within the next year.
- The library recently renewed the Gale Courses subscription.
- HL is creating easy to understand How-To manuals to increase online eBook and audiobook use.
- The 3D Printer (donated by the Community Futures British Columbia) has been repaired and is available for patron use.
- WiFi has been upgraded, with plans to include an automatic WiFi recorder to get accurate numbers for the WiFi use.
- RebootRestoreRX has been installed on all public computers to ensure a clean wipe of any changes every time the computers are turned off.
- The website and Facebook page are updated weekly by the Head Librarian, and the Facebook posts have begun to encourage interaction with the visitors via surveys, contests, and questions.

Environment:

- The mezzanine furniture has been set up, with plans to move the Young Adult section upstairs in March.
- There was a problem with the lift not locking properly, but this issue has been resolved. A change in staff hours was implemented to ensure two staff will be present at all times to properly and safely run the lift.

<p>Bear R.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visits 2-3 times a week.</li> <li>- “[The library] is a peaceful place where people can hang out, read books, and use the computers.”</li> </ul>	<p>Interviewed Feb 2020</p>
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### Community Connections

- The library's Board and Staff continue to meet regularly with community groups to promote sharing knowledge and services.
- The work with CUPE-4951 continues to be discussed.
- The Head Librarian has made preparations for school visits, and has been working on allowing class visits to the library while the library is closed to allow students full access to the building. The first visit took place February 2020.
- A take-home form was created to enable children to get library cards without requiring their parents physically come in to the library. These forms have been handed out to school groups and at schools for teachers to distribute among the student body.

### **LIBRARY PRIORITY 1: Fostering Equitable Access to Information and Services**

The library continues to improve and increase programs and services provided to the community. 2019 was a period of transition for us, including a shuffling of Board Members, new staff members, and a new Head Librarian. The library has continued to provide programs to the public, including Summer Reading Club, Storytime, Online Gale Courses, and Pro-D Day events. We held two book sales, one in January and one in October, providing the residents of Fort St. James with easy and affordable access to buying their own books.

The library is recently renewed our online access to the Gale Courses platform, which continues to be a popular and useful commodity among patrons. We also acquired a much-needed upgrade to our WiFi service, allowing patrons easier and faster access to the internet. For many residents, the library's WiFi is their only way of accessing the internet.

The library has recently added physical audiobooks to our collection, at the request of several patrons. This allows patrons with vision trouble to easily access audiobooks without needing to navigate the library website.

The library's 3D printer, a donation from the Community Futures British Columbia (Northeast Region), was made available for public use in late 2019. The Head Librarian created a form for users to fill out when using the printer, to go along with the 3D Printer Policy. The 3D printer has been used successfully since then. Patrons have expressed interest in using the printer but are unfamiliar with how to find models or create their own, so the Head Librarian is creating a How-To manual for easier use. Several groups have expressed interest in using the printer as a fun activity for their members, and the local Girl Guide troop used the printer in January 2020. Staff has also made use of the printer to create needed materials for the library, including creating extra keys to our paper towel dispenser.

**2019 Goals:**

1. Provide higher quality technology and tools to our patrons.
2. Find replacements for the Board and Head Librarian positions that were vacated.
3. Making the library a healthier place by including plants.
4. Taking books to seniors.

**2019 Outcomes:**

1. The library purchased three new Lenovo computers for public use, replacing the old outdated public computers. All computers have the latest version of Microsoft Office and have been formatted with the RebootRestoreRX program so that all changes are removed from the computer when shut down. This saves staff time and effort in searching each computer every night before closing to ensure no personal or private information has been saved to the harddrive by a patron. The plan is to replace all computers, including staff computers, within the next year, and to fit all public computers with the RX program.
2. A new Head Librarian was appointed at the end of July 2019, and a new Board Chair and Treasurer were appointed to replace the previous ones.
3. The library procured more plants to increase the health quality of the library. There are plans to have the vents and ducts washed and the carpets steam cleaned later this year.
4. We are in the early stages of creating a program to allow seniors and other house-bound residents access to our collection. We are also working on having regular visits from the senior centre.

Leanne P.

Interviewed Feb 2020

- Visits twice a week, if not more.
- "I love the movie selection, computers, [and] newspapers."
- Likes that the library is "central located."

**LIBRARY PRIORITY 2: Developing Skills and Knowledge**

Developing the digital skills and professional development of the library's Board, Staff, and Patrons is a substantial goal of the Fort St. James Public Library. The Board has sought out professional development through conferences, presentations within the community, and online resources. The Board has also directed the Head Librarian to attend conferences, webinars, teleconferences, and read a variety of online resources. For other staff, the Head Librarian has helped identify the needs of the library and interests of the staff members. Finally, the library continually provides resources and reference help to patrons.

The District has provided funding for each staff member to take 8 hours worth of courses from websites [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com); [www.bcmsa.ca](http://www.bcmsa.ca); and [cnc.bc.ca/campuses/fort-st-james](http://cnc.bc.ca/campuses/fort-st-james). Along

with WHMIS training, the staff plans on taking courses in Office Safety, Cyber Security, Harassment Prevention Training, and Team Building, among other courses. The staff is in the process of taking the Homeless Library Training program by Ryan Dowd.

#### 2019 Goals:

1. Continue to access educational opportunities for the Board and Staff.
2. Diversify staff skills so that a service is not reliant upon one individual.
3. Increased staff communication.

#### 2019 Outcomes:

1. Board members and the Head Librarian attended various training opportunities. Other staff attended few training sessions, but staff were given on-the-job training by the Head Librarian.
  - a. Board members attended the BCLA Conference, NCLF Conferences, webinars, TOP training, and other sessions. These helped increase Board Member's awareness of library initiatives around the province.
  - b. The Head Librarian attended various conferences, teleconferences, webinars, and kept up to date through many newsletters and listservs.
  - c. One staff member attended the Beyond Hope conference in May 2019, where they attended two days of courses.
  - d. All staff including the Head Librarian are taking the Homeless Library training course.
2. The new Head Librarian will attend First Aid training and take WHMIS training in March 2020. This will ensure that there are two staff members with First Aid level 1 and WHMIS training on staff for 2020, and at least one on duty on every shift.
  - a. There are still many duties that are reliant upon the Head Librarian. This should be an area of improvement in the future.
  - b. Assistant Librarian is spending 1-2 hours out front during shifts to practice her front desk skills and to allow the Desk Assistant to do tasks away from the desk.
3. The staff has been holding several staff meetings per month, during Mondays when the library is closed. This provides staff with the opportunity to share ideas, be updated on future events, and to interact with staff from other shifts whom they might not work with regularly.

#### **LIBRARY PRIORITY 3: Working Together**

In 2019 the library continued to work with partners made in past years. We continued to work closely with Connexus (formerly the Nechako Valley Community Services Society), which helps facilitate the library's weekly Storytime and related programs. We received a grant from the

government through Canada Summer Jobs which enabled us to take on a student to help run our Summer Reading Club.

The Fort St. James Public Library Association continues their work with the Canadian Union of Public Employees. The Library Board, Municipal District, and CUPE have been in talks since September 2018 and have been meeting regularly to work towards a mutual understanding and the creation of a Collective Agreement. Despite some set backs and a change in the Head Librarian and the Board representatives, we have had several successful meetings and, barring any unforeseen circumstances, are entering the last stages of creating our Collective Agreement.

The Head Librarian has been in touch with both the elementary schools in Fort St. James, Nak'al Bun Elementary School and David Hoy Elementary School. Child Permission Forms were created at the request of one teacher who expressed concern that her students were unable to get their own library cards due to their parents be unavailable to visits. Permission Forms were delivered to David Hoy and will be delivered to Nak'al Bun. There have also been several attempts to book class visits, though these had to be postponed due to staff changes at the school. The library staff is looking forward to being able to provide tours as soon as the classes are ready and able to visit.

We are grateful to all of the organizations that supported us through the year, which are too numerous to fully detail in this short report:

- BC Libraries Cooperative
- BC Libraries Trustee Association
- Community Arts Council of Fort St. James
- Community Futures British Columbia
- Connexus
- David Hoy Elementary
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Fort Outreach Employment Services
- Fort St. James Chamber of Commerce
- Fort St. James Community Foundation
- Fort St. James Secondary School
- Ministry of Education, Libraries Branch
- Municipal District of Fort St. James
- Nak'azdli Whut'en
- Nezul Be Hunuyeh
- North Central Library Federation
- Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

#### 2019 Goals:

1. Encourage community organizations to use the library's space and/or resources.
2. Provided a suggestion box to enable more recommendations from patrons.
3. Prepare the mezzanine space for use by patrons.
4. Provide informative signs and redesigned areas of the library to make them easier for patrons to access.

2019 Outcomes:

1. The library continued and increased community participation with the library.
  - a. The Storytime program we provide with the assistance of the Learning Hub and Nechako Valley Community Services had 574 participants throughout the year. In 2017 there were only 399 participants. It has become a fundamental part of the week for many families.
  - b. The library hosted a number of repeated meetings throughout the year, including Foster Children, Parent Counselling, the Gardening Club, and the Television and Radio Society.
  - c. Two book sales were held in 2019, one in January and one in October, running for one week. Despite the recent closing of one of Fort St. James' mills in the summer of 2019, which put many residents out of work, the October sale raised more money than the January sale.

Larry A.

Interviewed Feb 2020

- Visits the library every day.
- Likes the movies, and the staff.
- Likes that if we don't have what he is looking for, we will order it for him.
- "I like coming to the library. I'm always going 'Let's go to the library, let's go to the library!'"

2. The library began using a suggestion box in the Autumn of 2019 for patrons to request materials to add to our collection. The box received weekly use, and in February 2020, an anonymous patron built and donated a wooden suggestion box to replace our cardboard one.
3. The eventual goal is for our mezzanine space to become our new Young Adult space, and to move the Assistant Librarian's desk and computer upstairs. This has been planned for the last few years, but was put on hold until the lift could be properly fixed.
  - a. In the summer of 2019, the remaining furniture which had been ordered for the mezzanine was assembled and set up in the mezzanine area.
  - b. A security camera was purchased to enable staff to observe the mezzanine area from downstairs should they be otherwise occupied and unable to go upstairs.
  - c. The lift was inoperable due to a missing screw. Head Librarian contacted the lift company and they were able to order the part internationally. The lift was in operational order by October 2019. All staff has been trained in how to operate the lift.
  - d. In January 2020, shift hours were rearranged to ensure that all shifts would be covered by at least two staff members. The lift requires two staff members to safely operate; this change ensures the lift can be used by patrons needing help to access the mezzanine.



- e. Once the change in shifts has been tested, and as long as there are no problems, the mezzanine move will take place.



4. Due to the creation of a new policy regarding food and drink in the library, we also created and posted allergy alert signs around the library to inform patrons who may have allergies. We added new signs by the public computers, detailing how patrons should properly log out of their social media and email accounts to avoid other patrons having access to their private information.

#### **LIBRARY PRIORITY 4: Enhancing Governance**

The Library Board continues to update our Policy Manual. In 2019 we added a new policy regarding food and drink in the library, and updated several existing policies to better reflect the needs of the staff and patrons. The Board recognizes the importance of having, and adhering to, strong guiding Policies.

Both Board and staff have been trying to recruit new Board members following the resignation of several members. The Board is making efforts to diversify our membership to better reflect the makeup of our community. The Board has begun posting our Board meeting minutes and agendas to the library website to increase transparency to the community, as well as inviting patrons to sit in on our monthly meetings. Plans are in place to provide pictures of the Board members online and in the library to help personalize the Board.

#### **2019 Goals:**

1. Review or revise all policies due for inspection.
2. Use of data informed metrics to enhance the library and community.
3. Continue dutiful management and review of library finances.

#### **2019 Outcomes:**

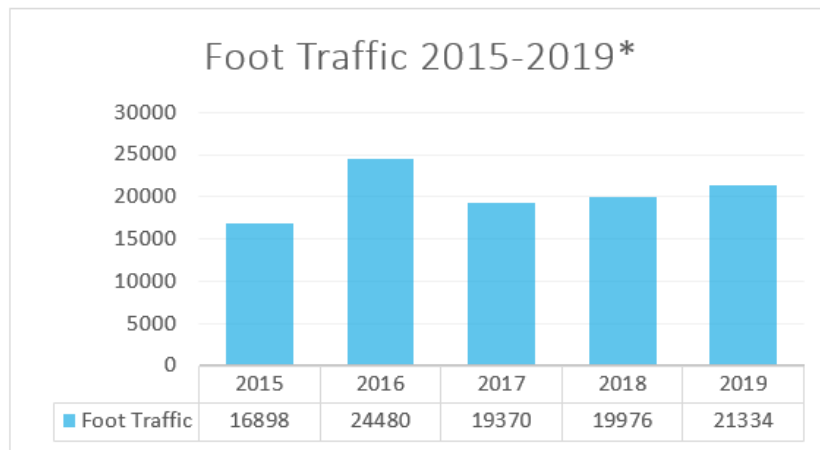
1. The Board created, reviewed, or revised 26 policies throughout the year.
  - a. There are a handful of policies left due for inspection, but which require staff attention.
  - b. Some policies will need to be revised again or removed this year after the signing of the Collective Agreement with CUPE.
  - c. The Head Librarian continues to provide monthly Librarian Reports to the Board, and communicates with the Board Chair or Vice Chair on a weekly basis.
  - d. Staff have refined methods by which Collection Materials are purchased, focusing on the areas which receive the most circulation. Staff have also begun weeding out materials from the collection which have not been circulated for years. These materials are placed in our book sale.
2. The Board and Head Librarian have continued to be careful with expenses, and seek to find additional funding sources for projects.

- a. Provincial Grants were largely devoted to current operations of the library, with some going towards expansion of programming, digital services, and technological upgrades.
- b. New funding grants were explored, such as Canada Summer Jobs funding for a Summer Reading Club Programming Coordinator position. We received a grant of \$2,500 from Law Matters to purchase new and updated law books for our collection.
- c. We remain in discussions with local and regional governments regarding increased funding to meet the needs of the community.

**STATISTICAL SUMMARY**

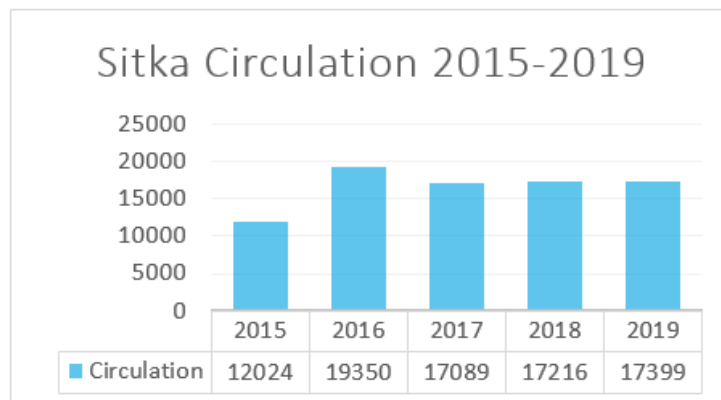
The Fort St. James Public Library saw a small increase in usage across all areas in the last several years. 2016 was an exception, which had dramatic increases which were not sustained. Still, the overall trend is an incremental and sustainable expansion of services used by our community.

**Graph 1: Foot Traffic**

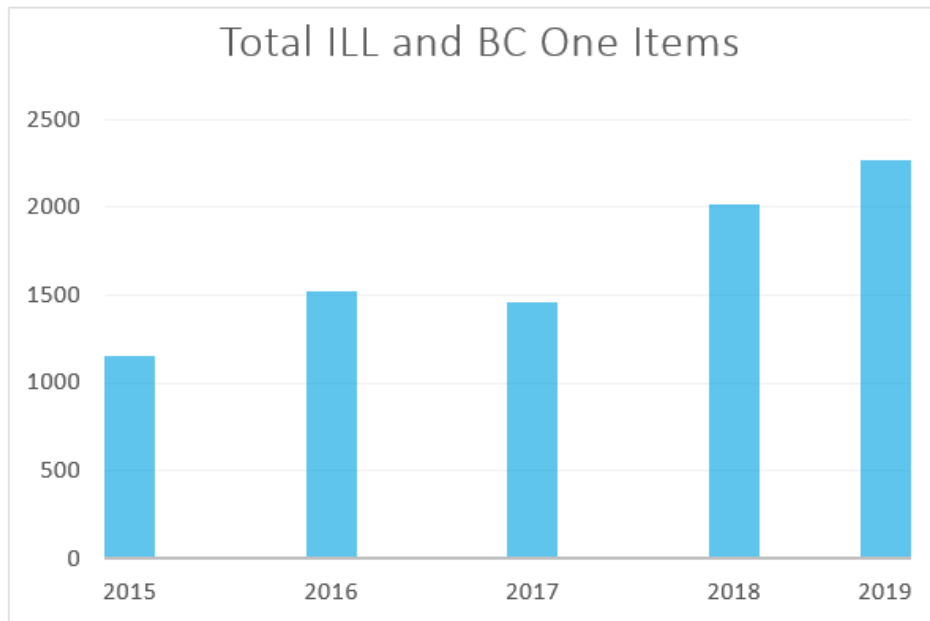
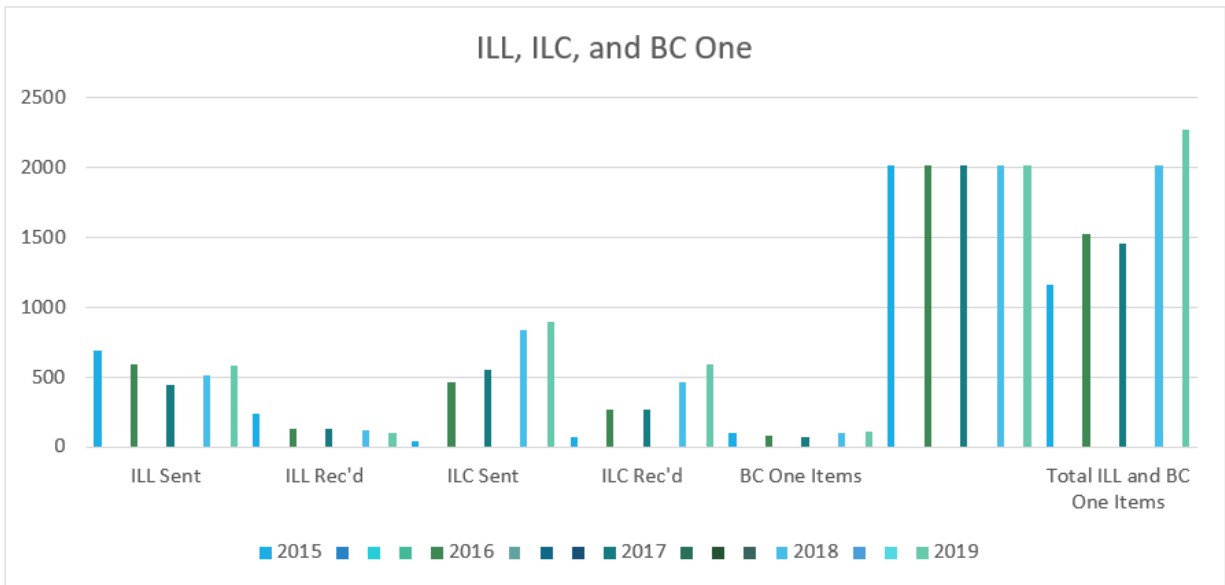


\*In early 2017 a different collection method for foot traffic was implemented. This change in data collection method may affect numbers presented.

**Graph 2: Circulation**



**Graph 3: Inter-Library Loans**



Inter-Library Loans have made more dramatic increases in usage than foot traffic or circulation. There has also been a notable shift from using the Inter-Library Loan system to using the Inter-Library Connect system. The Fort St. James Library consistently sends more items out to other libraries than we request in for our own patrons. Cost in shipping has risen due to the recent increase in stamp costs. Change in Canada Post’s delivery service (all books sent from other libraries are now first routed to Vancouver, regardless of the library’s location) have resulted in longer wait times for patrons and libraries.

## **SUMMARY**

2019 was a busy and productive year of change for the Library Board and the Library's staff.

- Library use has continued a steady upwards trend in services and programs. Storytime numbers have steadily increased, and we are going to put more focus onto our Summer Reading Club this year to ensure a good turnout.
- Professional Development is still a focus of the Board, and there is an interest in ensuring that all staff receive more training.
- We are maintaining, and improving, relations with other organizations and community groups. We are especially interested in partnerships that directly benefit our patrons, but also work with organizations to improve our community generally.
- The Board continues to focus on providing attentive governance and data-driven decision making.
  - The Policy Committee spent a great deal of the year reviewing, improving, and creating our Policies, as we believe they are a fundamentally important tool for the library's operations.
  - The Board and Head Librarian have also been working to improve our reporting frameworks, and the frameworks used by members of our community.
  - Our finances are being monitored and used for the betterment of our services. Some reserves are held for projects that are coming soon. We have put aside \$15,000 into GICs with Integris and the Royal Bank of Canada.

The library Board and staff continue to improve and enhance the services we provide the community. The library is a valuable resource, and is often the only source of free and necessary materials in a small town with a high cost of living. The work with the Municipal District and CUPE to create a Collective Agreement agreeable to both the employees and employers is still in the process of being completed. There is also work to be done in regards to upgrading technology, digital services, and facility improvements. While the Board and Staff are proud of what we have accomplished during 2019, we do see the challenges presented to us in the new year.