

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 | • Music Makers |
| • College of New Caledonia | • Fort St. James Senior Association |
| • The Key Resource Centre | • John Prince Research Forest |
| • Fort St. James National Historic Site /
Friends of the Park | • The Stuart Lake Recycling Co-op |
| • Community Arts Council / Pope
Mountain Arts Centre | • The Fort St James Curling Club |
| | • The Fort St. James Community Centre |
| | • The Fort Forum Arena |

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

B.C.'s Strategic Plan for Public Library Service is focused on these priorities:

- Improving access for British Columbians
- Building capacity
- Advancing citizen engagement
- Enhancing governance

The strategic goals of the Fort St. James Public Library closely align with those of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Libraries Branch (formerly under the Ministry of Education).

Ministry Priorities	FSJaPL Priorities	Notes
<i>Improving access for British Columbians</i>	<p><i>Technology Engagement:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep software as current and relevant as possible • Improve digital equipment for staff and patrons • Increase digital access and digital literacy of staff and patrons • Valuable and easy to use website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a space for staff and patrons during the pandemic, where everyone feels safe. • New printer. • Renewal of Gale Courses. • Website maintenance.
<i>Building capacity</i>	<p><i>Professional Development:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board education • staff training • Increased staff communication <p><i>Technology Engagement:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase digital access and digital literacy of staff and patrons <p><i>Environment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve study areas and reading areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at conferences, webinars, teleconferences, etc. • Increased awareness of tools and resources for professional development. • Regular performance evaluations with training goals. • Study and reading space made available in mezzanine, though seating currently limited due to pandemic.
<i>Advancing citizen engagement</i>	<p><i>Community Connections:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating and strengthening partnerships with community and regional organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint programming. • Working with CUPE-4951 to improve workplace environment and expectations.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with local schools to provide easier access to library materials for students.
<i>Enhancing governance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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"> Review of Policy Manual. Total overhaul of Procedure Manual. Promoting Board activities and Board recruitment.

Progress of the Fort St. James Public Library’s Strategic Plan:

Community Connections

- The Collective Agreement with CUPE-4951 was ratified.
- Due to COVID-19, the library closed from March 17 – July 28. During this time, book delivery was offered for senior patrons and those otherwise homebound due to health issues. The option for curbside pick-up was also offered, and both services have continued after the library reopened. They have allowed patrons who might otherwise not use our services to continue to take out books safely and comfortably. All returned materials are put into quarantine for three days and then wiped down by staff.
- There are plans to post author readings and Q&As on the library website.
- A new bulletin Board was placed in the front vestibule where notices can be easily seen by patrons; these notices had previously been placed in plastic sleeves on the doors and were largely ignored. Another bulletin Board was placed in the back office for staff notices and CUPE information, replacing the smaller Board that had previously occupied the space.

Professional Development

- The library’s Board and staff continue to attend a number of online 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 a new Brother printer for staff and public use.
- Renewal of the Gale Courses subscription.
- Electronic Wi-Fi stat counter was activated.
- The website and Facebook page are updated frequently by the Library Director.
- A new cordless barcode scanner was purchased for the front desk.
- A second receipt printer was purchased for the Assistant Librarian.

Environment

- The entire library collection was weeded to make space for new materials and get rid of older, uncirculated materials.
- The children’s DVD section was moved from the back wall by the DVD aisle to the more open concept wall next to the children’s area, which originally housed the YA books. This allows for the younger patrons to have their own space and gives them easier access to the DVDs which are now lower to the ground.
- Because most seating was removed in the library during the pandemic, the seats in the children’s area were converted into display tables for new and old books alike, as well as a bi-monthly display for children’s books on topics like dinosaurs, Star Wars, and snow.
- staff also added a small tree and a dragon kite hanging from the ceiling. The colouring tables were moved to the front desk to keep patrons and staff at a safe distance from one another during check out, while a smaller table was used to provide colouring pages for children to take home.
- We continue to put out new monthly adult book displays, featuring such themes as Canada Reads, the Alex Awards, Combating Racism, and Library Month.

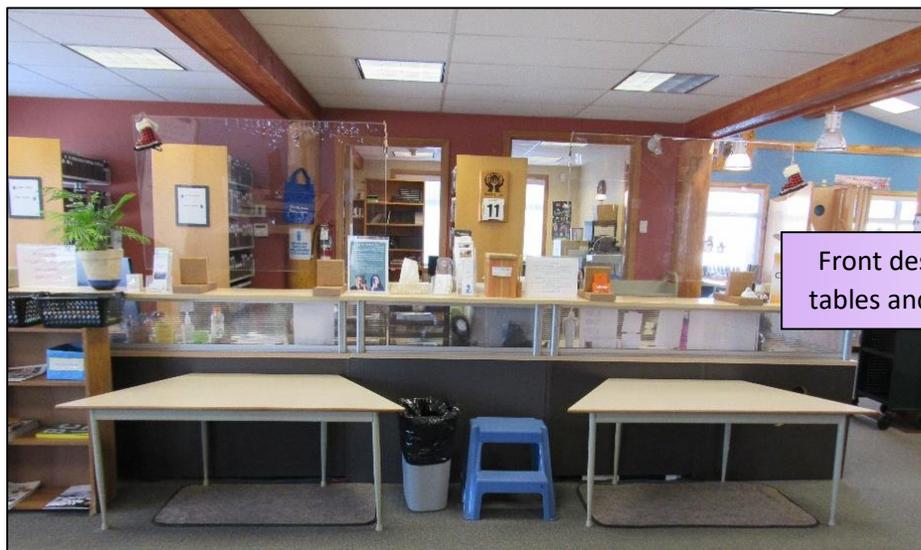
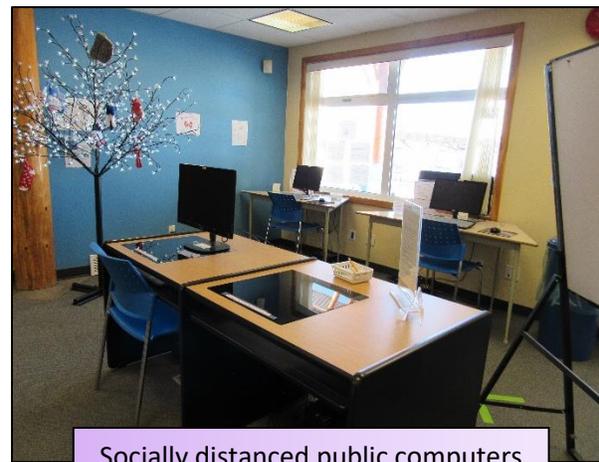
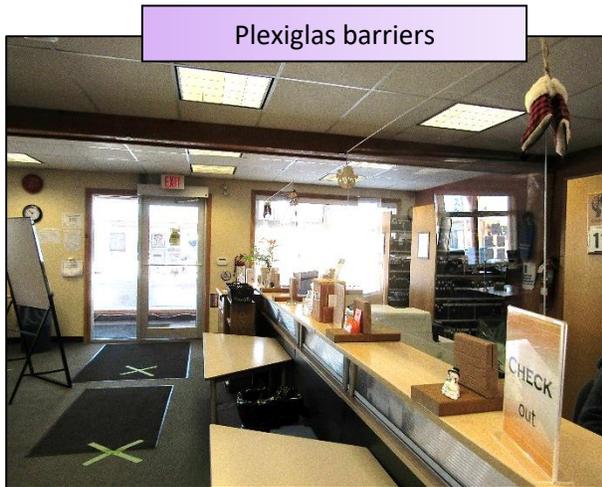


- The new DVD section was moved to the back wall, using wire racks which had been purchased several years prior but not put to use. This increased display space for new DVDs from 12 to 16, and freed up shelves which were used to store DVD cases.
- The Young Adult area was completed and officially opened to the public in July. Along with YA books, there are also chairs and desks for studying.

Shara: January 2021

- Lifelong patron.
- Used to visit once a week before COVID; now visits once a month.
- **What do you enjoy about the library?:** “The books! The friendly staff. I LOVED the kid area. It use to be one of our favorite places to go. My daughter loved it for the toys and playing with other kids, exploring books and most of all Story Time. We really miss it a lot.”

- Shelves were added to the new book section so that new adult non-fiction books can be faced beside the new adult fiction books. This has led to an increase in the number of new non-fiction books being taken out by patrons.
- In response to COVID-19, Plexiglas barriers were installed at the front circulation desk. Most seating was removed, and the seating that remained was placed so that patrons who needed to sit can sit 6 feet/2m apart. Arrows were placed on the floor using bright green tape to help guide patrons through the stacks. Three of the public computers were placed in storage for the time being to allow for patrons to use the remaining computers while practicing social distancing.
- Polls asked for patrons' opinions on new magazines, new hours, and new books.





Green markers for directing patrons through the stacks and encouraging social distancing



New arrivals: adult non-fiction books



LIBRARY PRIORITY 1: Improving access for British Columbians

The COVID-19 pandemic had a great impact on how public libraries run in 2020. We went into the year with several plans already in the works for programming, including improved advertising and activities for the Summer Reading Club, reintroducing Game Nights, inviting more class visits, and even bringing back Movie Nights. All of these plans had to be put on hold as all Northern BC libraries shut down and then reopened in limited capacities. Any plans involving groups had to be postponed due to the new provincial regulations and our own decision to limit our capacity to 8 patrons at a time.

We did not give up on our patrons. Instead we turned to ways we could provide service while simultaneously obeying COVID-19 guidelines and keeping everyone involved safe and comfortable. Upon reopening, we were frequently told by our patrons how much they valued our services and how thankful they were that we were open.

Two new printers, a Brother MFC-L3770CDW printer and a Star Micronics TSP143III receipt printer, were purchased using money from the Library Technology Grant.

In June, the electronic Wi-Fi stat counter was activated, immediately increasing the recorded number of people using the Wi-Fi each day by double or triple the regular amount. The counter also freed up staff from having to periodically check who appeared to be using the Wi-Fi by doing rounds to see who was using a laptop or phone.

At the beginning of January, we purchased and installed a security camera for a corner of the library that is often used by patrons and can't be seen from the front desk. There are signs up telling patrons there is a camera in place, and the camera itself is easy to see. The camera is set up to just record movement. In the past we have had incidents of patrons drinking, doing drugs, making messes, and engaging in sexual activities in that corner. This camera enables staff to

observe the back corner without having to leave the front desk or alert patrons that they are approaching.

The website and Facebook page are updated frequently by the Library Director. The website was edited to remove any broken links, added new information where needed, and a section for Policies, Board Meeting Agendas, and Board Meeting Minutes was added, the latter two being updated monthly with new agendas and minutes.

Erin

January 2021

- Patron for one year.
- "I appreciate the later opening hours."
- **What do you enjoy about the library?:** "Exploring books I wouldn't have found any other way/ the physical presence of books and the joy of going to an area of interest and getting to page through so much related information. Likes that the library is 'central located'."

2020 Goals:

1. Provide a space for staff and patrons during the pandemic, where everyone feels safe.
2. Purchase new printer.
3. Renewal of GALE Courses.
4. Update website frequently.

2020 Outcomes:

1. The director, with assistance from the Library Board, the staff, WorkSafeBC, and the BC CDC, wrote a detailed Restart Plan and a Reopening Safety Plan for the Library before reopening in July 2020. Safety measures were put into place before COVID-19 had become a local issue for residents, and were taken seriously by all staff, who enforced these new rules with kindness and understanding. Along with Plexiglas barriers and arrows, we purchased new cleaning and safety supplies:
 - Gloves and a bleach/water cleaner for cleaning the returned materials, and placed bins in the back for the books, which remain in the bins for three days of quarantining before being checked in.
 - Hand sanitizer for all staff workstations and the front door for patron use.
 - Disposable masks for any staff or patrons who forgot to bring their own.
 - Plastic keyboard covers for the three public computer keyboards.
 - The library has limited total patron capacity at 8 to allow for social distancing.
 - All toys have been placed in storage, and the children's play place is off-limits.
 - staff have familiarized themselves with the Plans and have been included in all discussions regarding library health and safety during the pandemic.
 - DVDs have been limited to one per patron per day.
 - All public computers are wiped down after use, as are high touch services in the washroom.

2. Using the Library Technology Grant from the Ministry of Education, the director purchased several new and upgraded products for the library:
 - A new Brother printer for staff and public use, replacing the older HP printer, which had been experiencing frequent technological problems as it aged.
 - A new cordless barcode scanner was purchased for the front desk. This new purchase allows for easier scanning. This will be very useful to staff during inventory time, as materials will no longer need to be carted from the shelves to the desk and back again for scanning.
 - A second receipt printer was purchased for the Assistant Librarian so that ILL/ILC orders can be done at their desk without using the regular printer and wasting both paper and toner on receipts.
3. GALE courses were renewed.
4. The Library Director continues to update the website several times a month, and has gone through every page to remove dead links and update new links. The director created a YouTube account to host videos which will be embedded on the website.

LIBRARY PRIORITY 2: Building capacity

The staff continue to attend online webinars from the Librarian's Guide to Homelessness hosted by Ryan Dowd. Our new assistant librarian has been taking multiple GALE courses to improve their knowledge of Excel and WordPerfect. The Library Director took an Introduction to Cataloguing course from the Library Juice Academy, and an Introduction to PC Repair course from the University of Waterloo.

2020 Goals:

1. The Library Director will take First Aid training and take WHMIS training.
2. Continue to access educational opportunities for the Board and staff.
3. Diversify staff skills so that a service is not reliant upon one individual.
4. Increased staff communication.

2020 Outcomes:

1. The Library Director completed the First Aid and WHMIS training in March 2020.
2. Staff took several courses over the year to improve their knowledge and skills:
 - The Library Director applied for and received the \$500 Future Focused Library Leaders - Personal Learning Grant from the NCLF to go towards training courses. They took the course Introduction to Cataloging from the Library Juice Academy in October 2020, a course which trained the Library Director in how to create

MARC records. In November 2020, they took Introduction to PC Troubleshooting, a course hosted by the University of Waterloo. The Director passed both courses.

- The new Assistant Librarian attended two additional Ryan Dowd webinars, Burnout, Vicarious Trauma, & Compassion Fatigue and Jerks With Homes. They took two GALE courses, Introduction to Microsoft Excel and Introduction to Microsoft Word 2016, and received certificates for successful completion. They are currently taking an intermediate Microsoft Word course from GALE.
 - Thanks to funding provided by the NCLF, several Board members were able to attend virtual BCLTA Governance Workshops in 2020. These included Governance Big Picture: The effective board and role clarity; Intellectual Freedom, Censorship and Reconciliation; and Governance and Operations.
3. The Library Director hired a new Desk Assistant in the fall of 2020. We plan to train them in doing the ILL/ILC orders so that we have a second staff member who can perform these duties should the need arise. The Library Director has also been allocating more duties to the Assistant Librarian so that they are able to take over the job should the Library Director be absent for an extended period.
 4. staff communicate via emails, written notes, text messages, talking, and meetings. There is a notebook at the front desk specifically for staff to record messages for their colleagues, including news, updates, and requests that they are not able to ask them in person. This assures important information is not forgotten between shifts.

LIBRARY PRIORITY 3: Advancing citizen engagement

Following the winter closure of the public washrooms in Spirit Square, the Library Director applied for and received a Grant in Aid from the District of Fort St. James. Using this money, we were able to open one of our washrooms to the public, while ensuring it was thoroughly cleaned each day by our cleaners. This provides a much needed public washroom at a time when many public washrooms are closed due to the pandemic. The grant will cover the extra costs until early summer, when the Spirit Square washrooms will reopen.

Our plans for joint programming have been put on hold, but we still hope to have something set up with the local arts council for the Summer Reading Club, if not for 2021, then for 2022. In early 2020, a group of students visited the library for a tour, and plans were made for future visits from David Hoy Elementary before the pandemic put a pause on all group visits. In the meantime, staff have allowed parents to take out extra children's books on their accounts, and have extended loan periods.

Though the play space in the children's area has been unavailable since March, we have implemented several new activities to help our younger community members feel included. We put away the stamps we gave out to children, due to safety restrictions, but we replaced them

with free stickers. In October, the Library Director and Assistant Librarian created Halloween toy bags for our younger patrons to pick up any time during the month. We knew their trick-or-treating would be downsized, if not canceled entirely, due to the pandemic. We did a similar treat in December for the children, creating reindeer paper bags filled with activities, jokes, and decorations.

Patrons have been encouraged to use our curbside pickup service, a service started June 9, 2020 while the library was still closed to patrons. This service, which has continued even after the library reopened, provides patrons with a way to take out books without coming into the library. Many patrons feel uncomfortable going into public places during the pandemic, yet rely on our services to help get them through these difficult times.

The CUPE-4951 Collective Agreement was ratified in 2020. The Board, Library Director, staff, and union continue to meet via Zoom, and to communicate through email and phone calls. Quarterly union meetings with staff and Board will commence in 2021.

We are grateful to all of the organizations that supported us through this difficult year:

- 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

2020 Goals:

1. Officially open the Young Adult section.
2. Provide delivery of books to elderly patrons, and pick-up options for all patrons.
3. Provide public washroom access while the Spirit Square public washroom is closed.
4. Change our hours to reflect the needs of our patrons.

2020 Outcomes:

1. In the Spring of 2020, staff took advantage of the library closure to move the Young Adult section from downstairs to the mezzanine. All books and graphic novels in the YA section were moved to the wire shelves on the slat wall on the mezzanine, and all the Children's DVD were moved to the shelves where the YA books had been located downstairs. The pillows were removed from the wooden seats to discourage sitting, and some were instead used to display books. The only chairs we kept were ones that could

be easily wiped down following use. We also brought out some tables and plastic chairs for study use.

2.

The Assistant Librarian’s desk was moved upstairs and the Library Director’s desk was moved to the back office downstairs. All the cupboards along the back wall of the mezzanine were cleaned out and organized. Since the reopening, we have already seen our younger patrons using the space to read, spend time with friends, study, and take tests using our laptops. Once it is safe again to gather in large groups, we plan to have an official opening event for the community.



The new Young Adult section.



The new YA fiction section.



New READ poster, and Tough Topics for Teens poster and bookmarks.

3. We began delivering to elderly and homebound patrons around April of 2020. One staff member offered their services to do the deliveries, which provided those who were unable to go outside with safe and easy access to books. In July 2020, we started our curbside service, which has been in effect ever since. This service provides patrons with access to our materials without going into a public space.
4. Using a Grant in Aid from the District of Fort St. James, we reopened one of our washrooms in the winter. We changed the men's room into an all-gender washroom, and got a lock installed on the door that can only be opened by a key at the front desk. This helps us keep track of when the washroom is in use, and for how long, and when we need to go in to wipe down the surfaces after use. The library cleaners come in every day during closed time to clean the washrooms. We will close the washrooms again once the public washrooms in Spirit Square have been reopened.

Valerie

January 2021

- Patron for 15 years.
- Used to visit weekly, pre-COVID. Now only comes in to pick up ILL requests.
- **What do you enjoy about the library?:** "In addition to borrowing books and dvds, access to Wi-Fi, one of the ONLY public washrooms in the community...pre-pandemic, I also appreciated the mezzanine meeting space and children's programming."

5. When we reopened, we kept our hours to 11:30am to 4:30pm weekdays and 11am-3pm Saturdays for the summer. After receiving feedback from patrons via a poll, we performed a trial month of new hours in October 2020. We agreed on changing our hours to Tuesday and Friday 11:30am-6pm, Wednesday and Thursday 10am-4:30pm, and Saturday 11am-4pm. These provided both earlier and later times for patrons unable to visit during our regular hours. Patrons responded positively to our new hours, so we made them permanent on November 24, 2020.

LIBRARY PRIORITY 4: Enhancing governance

The Library Board continues to update our Policy Manual. The Board decided to contract a policy contractor to go over our manual. During the closure, staff went through the outdated Procedure Manual and gave it a total overhaul.

Both Board and staff have been trying to recruit new Board members following the resignation of several members. This is an ongoing process as we try to find Board members who represent our community's diverse population. We elected two new Board members in 2020. We have also made the Board agendas and minutes more accessible to the public.

2020 Goals:

1. Hire a policy contractor.
2. Update the procedure manual.
3. Promoting Board activities and Board recruitment.

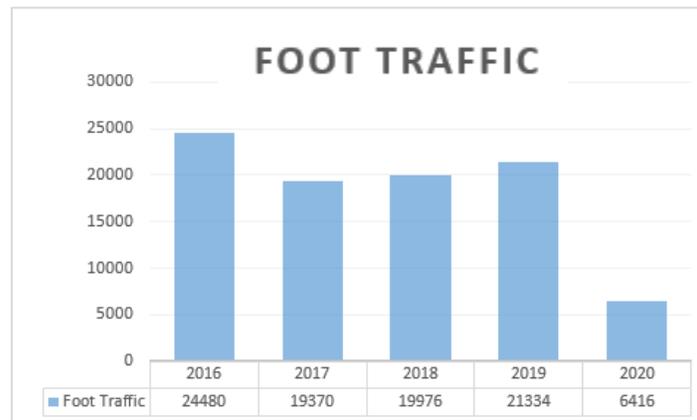
2020 Outcomes:

1. Kevin Crook was hired in December 2020 and has begun to go over our Policy Manual. He will also be comparing our current policies to the Collective Agreement to make sure the manual is consistent with what the agreement contains.
2. The Library Director and Assistant Librarian went through the Procedure Manual, which had not been updated since 2013. They updated every Procedure to reflect current library procedures, redesigned the manual to give every page a consistent design, organized the procedures into sections with coloured tabs and an index, and compared the procedures in the manual to the procedures in the policies to find any inconsistencies.
3. The Board elected Louise Evans-Salt to Chair position in 2020, and welcome two new members, Tim Hanley, a local author, and Jacqueline Soles, the librarian at David Hoy Elementary School. These additions have brought new insight and knowledge to our Board. We continue to advocate for future Board members. We had one patron attend a Board meeting in March 2020, and have provided the agendas, minutes, and meeting times on our website for any who are interested. We are currently meeting on Zoom.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

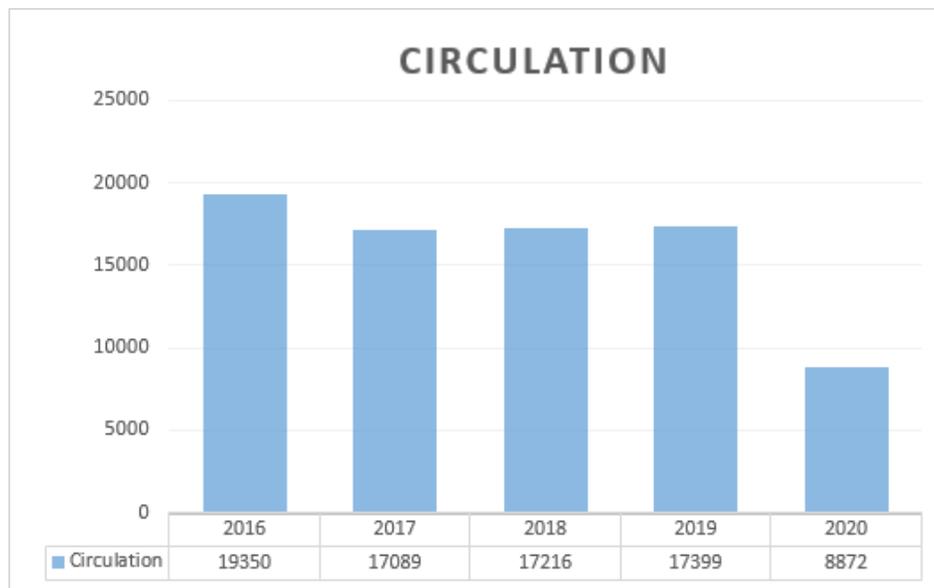
Due to the temporary closure and ongoing pandemic, the library numbers have been lower in 2020 than in previous years. Travel bans, self-isolation, lockdowns, and patrons generally avoiding going out for non-essential items have lowered the foot traffic count immensely compared to previous years.

Graph 1: Foot Traffic



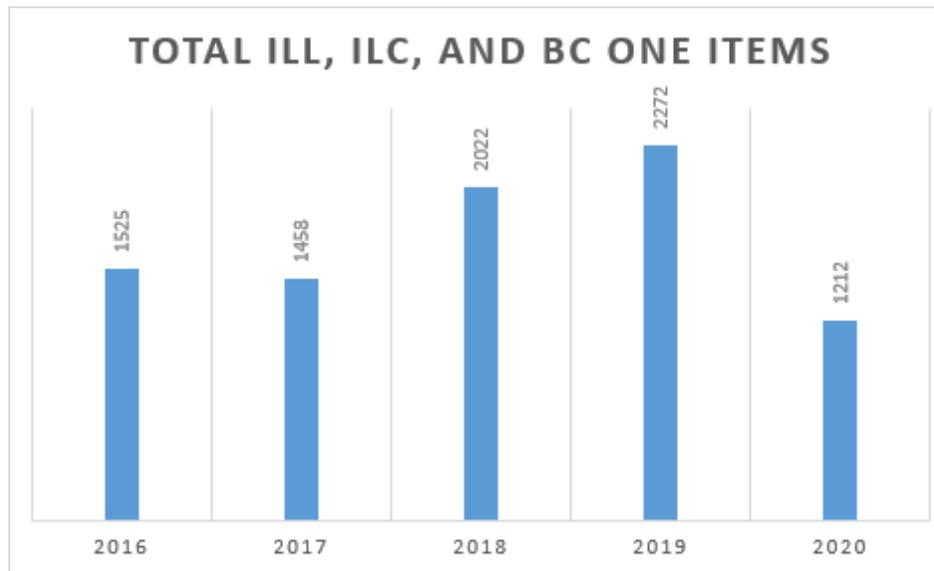
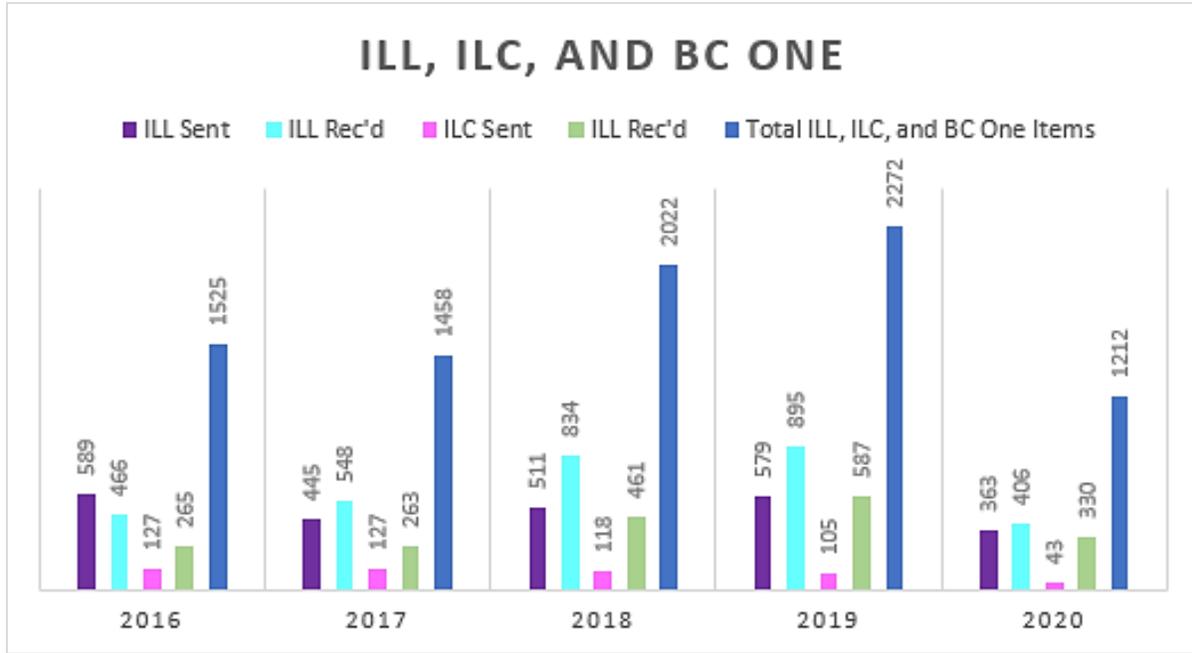
*In early 2017 a different collection method for foot traffic was implemented. This change in data collection method may affect numbers presented.

Graph 2: Circulation



Graph 3: Inter-Library Loans

Inter-Library Loans were put on hold from mid-March until July; given that interruption, the numbers are relatively good for 2020, close to the numbers for 2016 and 2017. Cost in shipping has risen again due to the recent increase in stamp costs, and the mail system has been understandably slower given the increase in online ordering due to the pandemic.



SUMMARY

- The library shut down from March 17 to July 28, a necessary step to keep patrons and staff safe.
- During our shutdown, the library was prepared for reopening in a pandemic.
- We took this time to weed the collection, move the Young Adult section to the mezzanine and reorganize the children’s and DVD sections.
- Thanks to the Library Technology Grant, we were able to purchase new technology to aid both patrons and staff.

- We ratified our Collective Agreement with CUPE 4951.
- The website was cleaned up and updated.
- Library Director, staff, and Board completed several online training and professional development courses and webinars.
- We opened one of our public washrooms for the Winter/Spring, using a Grant in Aid from the District of Fort St. James to pay for daily cleaning.
- The hours were changed to better accommodate the needs of patrons.
- The Procedure Manual was updated and redesigned, and we hired a policy contractor to help us update the Policy Manual.
- Two new members joined the Board, and we elected a new Board chair.

2020 was a year unlike any experienced by the library, and indeed, the world. The global pandemic brought on by COVID-19 brought everything to a halt and forced us to re-examine our day-to-day lives. Though our numbers are lower than previous years, we have not let this stop us from improving and updating how operate. The Library Director, staff and Board worked diligently in making sure the library was prepared for reopening in a pandemic. We continued to update and improve the collection, resources, and access to the library, while simultaneously making sure patrons and staff felt safe and comfortable using the library. In the new year, we plan to purchase more new technology, continue growing our collection, and hopefully start new programing and bring back existing programing once patrons can gather in groups. 2021 will no doubt bring new challenges, but we are all confident we can face them successfully.

Report written by Karli Fisher
Library Director

Fort St. James Public Library
PO Box 729
425 Manson Street
Fort St. James, BC
VOJ 1P0

(250) 996-7431
librarian@fortstjames.bclibrary.ca

Submitted February 26, 2021