



Vancouver Public Library

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: June 18, 2019
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Meeting Date: June 26, 2019

TO: Library Board
FROM: Kurt Heinrich, Chair, Community Relations, Planning & Development Committee
SUBJECT: **2020 to 2023 Strategic Plan - Update**

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the development of the 2020-2023 VPL Strategic Plan and seeks committee feedback on the process and level of Board engagement.

PURPOSE

This report is for information.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive the report for information.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Community Relations, Planning and Development Committee discussed the planning process and asked for additional information about the engagement plans. They recommended that the amount of time allocated for Board participation in September, which is the key planning session, be increased to a half-day workshop from the planned 90 minute pre-Board workshop, given the importance of the strategic plan process and that this level of commitment happens only once every 3-4 years. For new trustees, they identified that additional orientation

to existing services and the existing plan is needed in order to fully participate in strategic planning. Staff have been planning workshops to provide this, and will consider how to schedule these so that trustees have the information they need prior to the September strategic planning workshop.

Trustees also inquired about the mix of passive and active engagement, and staff described that specific stakeholder groups such as Council and community partners or organizations that work in target areas will be invited to participate in focus groups or interviews, while broad public engagement will be through surveys and pop-up or branch activities. Committee members identified a range of stakeholder groups to include in consultation, such as immigrant serving organizations, public space groups, creative and technology organizations, TransLink, street-involved youth and youth in foster care, and the Vancouver School Board.

Committee members also inquired about the sequencing of the strategic planning and operating planning processes, and staff described how VPL's learning from innovative services at other libraries will be incorporated into the operating plan after priorities are set based on community needs.

BACKGROUND

At the February 27 Board meeting, the Library Board appointed the Community Relations, Planning and Development Committee as the Steering Committee for the 2020 to 2023 Strategic Plan project. On February 28, VPL issued a Request for Proposal for a strategic plan consultant. Board Chair John Schaub and Board Trustee Kurt Heinrich were involved in the consultant selection process, participating in interviews with shortlisted proponents and providing feedback to staff.

The successful proponent was Nordicity West in partnership with Dysart & Jones Associates. Nordicity is a leading international consultancy, specializing in strategy, policy and economic analysis across the global cultural, digital, creative, and communications industries, with offices in Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver and London, UK. Recent clients include the City of Vancouver, National Gallery of Canada, Toronto Public Library and the City of Edmonton Library Board.

Dysart and Jones Associates (D&J) is Canada's leading boutique management consulting firm for the library and information sectors, specializing in strategy design and implementation, planning and organizational effectiveness. Rebecca Jones, Managing Partner at D&J, is the consulting team's strategic planning lead and will be leading the Board engagement for VPL's strategic planning process.

The consultants have developed a draft Strategic Planning Project Roadmap, outlining the project team, roles and responsibilities, and a detailed work plan including activities,

deliverables and key dates. Following is a summary of the Project Roadmap and key engagements with the Board.

DISCUSSION

The project to develop VPL's strategic plan consists of three overlapping phases:

- Phase One: Strategic Assessment (June to August)
- Phase Two: Stakeholder Engagement (June to Sept)
- Phase Three: Strategic Planning and Reporting (Sept to Dec)

Within these phases, the roadmap identifies several interactions with the Board:

- Phase One: Project Introduction and Setting Decision Criteria – June 26
- Phase Two: Stakeholder Engagement: Informant Interviews – June/July
- Phase Three: Strategic Planning Session – September 25
Strategic Framework Validation – November 27

VPL will also be leading the parallel development of the 2020 to 2023 operating plan, identifying the key initiatives that VPL will undertake to achieve the strategic goals. Management will keep the Board informed of progress on VPL's operational planning and will seek Board feedback.

Phase One: Strategic Assessment (June to August)

This phase consists of an assessment of VPL's current state - a comprehensive review of the library's external and internal environments. Key deliverables will include:

- External Landscape Scan – a research document highlighting key external trends affecting public libraries and the people we serve.
- Library-wide Performance Assessment – a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of VPL's performance in relation to the goals and outcomes outlined in the current strategic plan.
- Service Area Assessment – an operational assessment focused on key metrics and providing analysis and implications for each service area of the library.

This phase also includes two sessions led by the consultants on June 26:

- A Decision Criteria session with the Board – setting key criteria for evaluating future strategic directions
- An Appreciate Inquiry workshop with VPL's Leadership Team – an approach used to co-create a deep understanding of VPL's current state and potential future directions.

The findings from the above research and input sessions will inform a comprehensive assessment of VPL's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis) as well as an assessment of the current strategic framework – evaluating the validity of the current strategic framework as a basis for the new plan.

The Board will receive a Strategic Framework Evaluation, including a summary of the research papers, the input session findings and the SWOT Analysis. This will be a critical foundation document for the Strategic Planning and Reporting Phase, including the strategic planning session with the Board on September 25. Board members will receive the Strategic Framework Evaluation in advance to prepare for the session.

Phase Two: Stakeholder Engagement (June to September)

This phase begins with the development of an engagement strategy and plan, outlining objectives, target audiences and outreach, engagement and communications methods for each audience type. A dynamic and inspiring engagement plan involving the public, staff, external stakeholders and Board members is key to understanding the needs and wants of our audiences, the value we currently provide, and potential future roles of the library.

The engagement plan will include:

- Engagement sessions for external stakeholders and VPL senior management.
- Key informant interviews, including identified Board members and key library partners.
- VPL-led engagement activities with the public and staff, to be delivered across VPL locations and at community events.
- A public survey to be deployed through Talk Vancouver, a City of Vancouver public engagement research tool.

The stakeholder engagement phase will culminate in the development of a Key Engagement Findings document that will inform the Strategic Planning and Reporting phase of the project. A summary of Preliminary Engagement Findings will be provided as an important input for the Board in advance of the September 25 Strategic Planning Session.

Phase Three: Strategic Planning and Reporting (September to December)

This phase comprises the following:

- Strategic Planning Session with the Board on September 25 - the project team will report on findings from the first two phases and facilitate conversation about the future direction for VPL.
- Development of a revised strategic framework – outlining the draft goals, expected outcomes and rationale to be tested with key stakeholders.

- Validation of the revised strategic framework – including an internal validation session with the VPL Board on November 27, and an external validation led by VPL with the public and stakeholders. The validation session with the Board will also be used to develop the types of indicators most appropriate for ongoing progress reporting on the final strategic plan.
- Development of the Strategic Plan – The plan will expand upon and refine components of the draft strategic framework (goals, outcomes, supporting rationale) and identify key initiatives and actions for VPL to pursue in accordance with each goal.
- Development of the VPL Operating Plan – VPL staff will lead the operating plan development, identifying key strategic initiatives and actions that the library will undertake to enable achievement of the strategic goals. Staff will bring the operating plan to the Board for approval in Q1 2020, following the approval of the Strategic Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2020 to 2023 Strategic Plan will be funded from the operating budget or a transfer from reserves.

FINAL REMARKS

The 2020 to 2023 Strategic Plan will build on the success of the current strategic plan, aspiring to further the existing vision, mission and values, and providing direction for VPL's continued and extended impact in Vancouver communities. The strategic planning process will be guided by the Project Roadmap described above, and will be driven by research, analysis and meaningful engagement with the Board, staff, key external stakeholders and the general public.