



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 17, 2018
Author: Carol Nelson, Director Planning & Communications
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Meeting Date: July 25, 2018
TO: Library Board
FROM: Carol Nelson
SUBJECT: VPL Central Library Expansion Opening Plans

SUMMARY

The expansion of levels 8 and 9 of VPL's central library are targeted for public opening in fall 2018. Launch plans are in development as outlined in this report.

PURPOSE

This report is for information.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive this report for information.

BOARD POLICY

There is no applicable Board Policy.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The overarching goal of the expansion is to provide community spaces for Vancouver residents, creating a feeling of connectedness and belonging, which is increasingly important as more residents live in smaller and denser surroundings.

We will measure progress toward this goal through our KPIs, which track the % of public who agree VPL is very/somewhat important to the larger community; a go-to venue for learning, creativity and innovation; that VPL is accessible and inviting; and that VPL connects people to

ideas and information to be inspired and thrive. Specific targets and objectives for the new spaces include:

- Increase physical visits to the central library to 5% over pre-flood/construction levels (target of approx 2M visits to central in one year)
- Maximize use of new and existing meeting spaces at central library (75-80% utilization)
- Increase room revenues from rentals (\$x net revenue to be determined)

While not primary objectives, other desired benefits of the expansion include: increase in number of cardholders; increased user satisfaction with programs; and heightened awareness of the breadth of services offered by VPL.

BACKGROUND

The central library expansion is scheduled to open in late September or October 2018. The top two floors (levels 8 and 9) of the iconic central library have been transformed into a collection of community spaces which will enhance our ability to contribute to making Vancouver an informed, engaged, and connected city:

- Rooftop Garden: VPL's rooftop garden will provide Vancouver a long awaited publicly accessible outdoor green space within the downtown core.
- Theatre: The 80 seat theatre will host a variety of events, including author readings, documentary film screenings, lectures, and performances. It will also be available to rent.
- Bookable Meeting Rooms: Featuring natural light, garden and city views, the rooms will accommodate meetings and events of all sizes, from 15 to 90 people. They will be used for VPL/partner programs and will also be available for rent for public and private events.
- Exhibit/ Gallery: A dedicated VPL space to showcase topics of local interest. *Morph*, our first exhibition, will be an interactive exploration of change.
- Reading Room: The glass walled reading room, with garden and city views, will provide space for quiet reading and reflection.

DISCUSSION

To generate increased awareness and use of the new spaces, a number of activities will be undertaken to support the opening and ensure ongoing visitation:

- Generate unpaid media coverage by creating unique story angles for different outlets
- Update VPL and Library Square Conference Centre websites to showcase the new spaces
- Utilize a combination of low cost social media, email marketing and paid media
 - develop email campaign to existing e-news subscribers
 - utilize City of Vancouver transit and electronic billboards

- create staff 'toolkits' to encourage word of mouth
- conduct outreach via partner organizations and other VPL branches
- paid social posts
- Offer compelling programming to create a vibrant space which encourages repeat visitation
 - develop curated tours of the expansion and the *Morph* exhibit
 - offer staff ambassadors to welcome and answer questions
 - seek high profile partnerships which enable VPL to bring in new audiences /deliver turnkey offerings (such as CBC radio)
- Host grand opening event(s) – date TBD
 - VIP donor reception hosted by VPL Foundation followed by official opening ceremony open to donors, trustees, media, public
 - Short speeches by C. de Castell, K. Epstein, J. Montalbano, Mayor
 - Ribbon cutting by Mayor
 - offer on site library card, e-news sign up
 - provide first 100/500 new people who sign up for library card with book bag or similar
- Proactively reach out to current (especially repeat) rental clients to promote new meeting spaces
- Identify meeting planners and influencers (e.g. Tourism Vancouver); invite key individuals on early tour of new facilities

Managed separately, the VPL Foundation is planning a fundraising gala for Sept 27, 2018 in the new spaces.

NEXT STEPS

Internal staff working groups are assigned to each aspect of the opening, and are developing detailed action plans.

Once the public opening date is confirmed, workback schedules will be adjusted accordingly, with 'save the date' invitations to key stakeholders (Mayor, Board, VPL Foundation).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Cost of the launch/opening is estimated to be \$50,000. This will be funded from VPL's 2018 operating budget.