
PLAN OF SERVICE

2021-2025



parkland
county
libraries

DUFFIELD ENTWISTLE KEEPHILLS TOMAHAWK WABAMUN

APPROVED BY THE PARKLAND COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
LIBRARY PROFILE	3
PLAN OF SERVICE	6
SERVICE RESPONSE: EXPRESS CREATIVITY.....	7
SERVICE RESPONSE: SATISFY CURIOSITY	8
SERVICE RESPONSE: KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY	9
SERVICE RESPONSE: VISIT A COMFORTABLE SPACE.....	11
CONCLUSION.....	12

INTRODUCTION

An exciting path forward

The 2021-2025 Plan of Service for Parkland County Libraries provides an exciting path forward as we look to provide new and innovative services and programs at our five libraries as well as through our regional partnerships, outreach, and community events to residents and visitors of Parkland County. The following plan outlines our focus on four priorities that will guide us through the next five years: **Express Creativity**, by engaging with people and nurturing the creators in our communities, **Satisfy Curiosity**, by providing tools and resources for all age groups to learn and develop life skills to contribute to society, **Know Your Community**, by utilizing our community-led philosophy to build relationships within our communities, and **Visit a Comfortable Space** by endeavouring to make Parkland County Libraries a safe space for everyone. These four service responses will be our guide for the next five years as we move forward with instilling an integral presence within our communities.

The Parkland County Library Board's mission and vision statement defines the important role that our communities play in providing library services and, too, acts as a guide for programs and service delivery at our libraries.

MISSION:

The Parkland County Library Board exists to promote and provide, through regional partnerships, effective, affordable and accessible library services to the residents of Parkland County by actively responding to community needs.

VISION:

The Libraries, under the jurisdiction of the Parkland County Library Board, will provide resources in print, non-print, electronic reference resources that cover a wide array of topics. The libraries will provide staff that is skilled in helping all library customers.

LIBRARY PROFILE

Expanding and enhancing library service

We are beginning this new Plan of Service with five libraries. We were fortunate to gain Wabamun Library and its community at the start of 2021 and we look forward to providing excellent services to those residents and visitors. With the addition of Wabamun, Parkland County Library Board now has five service point libraries that work together to meet the needs of county residents; these five libraries are in the hamlets of: Duffield, Entwistle, Keephills, Tomahawk and Wabamun. While each library is used by residents in these communities, they serve a greater population that expands throughout the province by way of interlibrary loaning. Parkland County Libraries pride themselves as being ‘lenders’ of their materials which is a direct testament to the popularity and relevancy of their collections that are sought after by other patrons across the province. Duffield Library and Tomahawk Library are housed in schools, Keephills Library and Wabamun Library are situated in county facilities, and our brand new Entwistle Library is housed within the newly built Entwistle Community Recreation Centre. The population of Parkland County is 32,097 residents with a land area of 2,390km. Parkland County Libraries belong to the Yellowhead Regional Library and are part of The Regional Automated Consortium (TRAC), which facilitates cooperation and sharing between libraries in several different library systems.

The Parkland County Library Board exists to promote and provide, through regional partnerships, effective, affordable, and accessible library services to the residents of Parkland County by actively responding to community needs. It is this mission of listening and actively responding to community needs that has made our libraries the heart of each community and is what we believe is the focal point for success in rural libraries. The Parkland County Library Board is committed to providing services beyond just their service point libraries. Five years ago, the board approved of a new Community Services Librarian position for our team. Having this position has raised library awareness throughout Parkland County and has more recently begun an influx of outreach programs that we look forward to expanding on within these next five years.

“The library not only gives me a way to watch, read, and listen to resources for free, but I love being in the library”.

Programming

As demand for library services and access to services have increased, we have adapted our service delivery to meet these demands and to reduce barriers to access. Over the past five years, programs focused on a variety of topics that fostered lifelong learning and provided educational as well as fun experiences for all ages. Some topics included: STEAM, Early Literacy, Sensory Play, Career Building, Digital Literacy, and Escape Rooms.

“The library promotes literacy, fun and wellness, and a sense of belonging”.



A service priority response in the previous Plan of Service was to support all types of literacies including digital literacy and as a result, we were able to implement a Hotspots Borrowing Program that won the Ministers Award of Excellence in

Library Services in 2017. We extend a huge thank you to our partnership with Parkland County and Telus for sustaining this important program for our residents of Parkland County.

In addition, we were successful in gaining funds through the Digital Literacy Exchange Program Federal Grant where we offer digital literacy training to underrepresented Canadians. This is a four year fully funded grant that has allowed us to offer computer fundamental courses, online business workshops and one-on-one tech sessions to many rural residents. For our rural communities, this is essential in order to alleviate the digital divide and help residents contribute in society today.



OUTREACH

One of the major impacts of the past 5 years was the implementation of outreach services led by the Community Services Librarian. Outreach efforts have expanded to include programming outside the physical walls of our libraries. These efforts have been made successful by the many committees and partnerships that we have developed over the past five years. Committee's including: First Five Forever, Tri Region Bunch, Connecting with our Indigenous Neighbours, and then more recently COVID Action groups; these have formulated a new path for our rural libraries and hamlets to be noticed and more connected in the Tri-Region. As outreach demands grow, the more recent addition of a Roving Library Assistant was needed in order for us to meet the demands and keep us growing. With this additional position, we are able to implement more quality outreach programs and expand the outreach beyond Parkland County.

In our efforts to reduce barriers to access and expand outreach services, we have implemented little free libraries throughout Parkland County. Six Little Libraries are situated in the communities of: Moon Lake Community Hall, Chickakoo Recreation Area, Fallis, Glowing Embers RV Park, Carvel, and Spring Lake. In addition, we have a little library program established at the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre and Paul First Nation. We also donate books regularly to the Parkland Food Bank.

COVID-19

As libraries across the province closed their physical doors in March 2020, our staff immediately had to improvise their duties and tasks and adapt to new restrictions while continuing to serve their communities. Although these were challenging times, in collaboration with staff and Partnerships, we overcame service delivery challenges. Our residents specifically

indicated they missed coming into the library, missed communicating in person, and missed the social interaction that they were accustomed to at our libraries. We recognize the importance of our libraries being community gathering spaces and being a safe space for bringing people together. With help from colleagues at the Yellowhead Regional Library, Parkland County, Public Library Services Branch, we overcame as a team as we looked at implementing services and connecting with our community just in a different way. As we look forward to the next five year plan, there are services that resulted from the pandemic that we will continue based upon community responses such as curbside services and little libraries.

Parkland County Libraries continue to fill an important need in the community and are committed to maintaining each library as an important community resource and space. This Plan of Service will serve as the foundation for our activities moving forward to expand on this mission.

“The library is a friendly place to visit each week. We meet our friends and neighbors there. It provides free or low cost entertainment and learning opportunities. It provides resources that one person could not afford on their own”.

PLAN OF SERVICE

Determining service priorities

Parkland County Public Libraries adapted Sandra Nelson's *Strategic Planning for Results* process to identify the needs of the community and to develop resulting service responses for the 2021-2025 Plan of Service.

We collected community engagements at each of the libraries in the fall of 2019 with probing questions on a whiteboard for patrons to informally place their responses. The data collected from these engagements, will be used to implement particular activities for future programs at each of the libraries.

In February 2020, the Parkland County Library Board held their first Plan of Service workshop with facilitator Laina Kelly from YRL. She provided demographics, an Environics profile of Parkland County residents, and a summary of the Municipal Service Delivery plans for Parkland County. Information from here was important to ensure our services would align with patron needs and align with the vision of Parkland County.

In the fall of 2020, we developed a Community Survey that was available online or in paper format. Most of our surveys were submitted online with a total of 98 surveys completed. The survey was conducted to gather community input on activities and improvements for each of the libraries. We also created a survey of three questions that we used to interview our stakeholders. Prior to the development of the surveys, the library board established a list of community stakeholders that the library could partner with or provide resources to and support.

Once the information was collected, The Parkland County Library Board was led through a workshop facilitated by Jordan DeSousa, Library Consultant from Public Library Services Branch to interpret the survey responses and decide on their priorities for the next five years. In summarizing the results, some of the most common patron responses indicated: increased hours, increased access to services, an increased awareness of library programs, and an increased number of programs available in their community. Survey responses also acknowledged the library as an important community space for people to meet and come together. Based on these results, the board selected four service responses as the main areas of focus for the Plan of Service 2021-2025:

- **Express Creativity,**
- **Satisfy Curiosity,**
- **Know Your Community, and**
- **Visit a Comfortable Space**

The library board also wanted to ensure that the following service responses would be reflected in the activities and objectives of the above service priorities: Make Career Choices, Build Successful Enterprises, Connect to the Online World, and Make Informed Decisions.

EXPRESS CREATIVITY

Parkland County Libraries will recognize and nurture creators in our communities.

Parkland County Libraries will support and nurture local community creators, ensuring they have the spaces and resources needed to accomplish and share their creations.

Objective: Library staff will ensure that in all promotional materials for the libraries, as well as our website and social media, we advertise creative programs and creative kits that we offer

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Objective: The library will develop and implement a variety of programs, including passive programming, that highlight the creators in our community

Objective: The library will host a maker fair event annually in a variety of communities throughout Parkland County

Residents will have access to a variety of programs that foster creativity.

Objective: There will be one creative program for adults and youth at each of the libraries developed and implemented by 2022

Objective: A mini makerspace will be developed at each library

Objective: The library will engage community members and include them in the facilitation of various creative programs, such as a “Share Your Hobby” program

The library spaces will provide opportunities for interactive and creative play for all age groups.

Objective: The library will incorporate interactive elements, such as lego stations, board games, puzzles, and sensory play stations, throughout the library spaces to foster creativity

Objective: “Creative days” programs, such as acting out stories, talent shows, and puppet theatre will be implemented in all of the libraries by 2022

Objective: The library will apply for grants and host its first ever Alberta Culture Days to support interaction and creativeness throughout our communities

SATISFY CURIOSITY: LIFELONG LEARNING

Residents will have access to resources that promote lifelong learning and will have a variety of program options available to them on topics of personal interest.

The library will support and contribute to the growth of literacies of all types and the growth of life skills.

Objective: The library will engage with educators in the community and will host, in partnership, one career fair each year at the libraries

Objective: The library will develop a digital literacy strategy and market the programming to ensure that residents are aware of technology borrowing programs, one-on-one digital supports, eResources, and computer courses available at the library

Objective: Our website, www.pclibraries.ca, will provide a source for entertainment resources and informational resources that will be more visible to users with features such as video galleries, scrolling carousels, and news items

Members of the community will have access to and will be made aware of resources, services, and programs of the library that enable lifelong learning.

Objective: The library staff will engage teens in their communities and create a Teen Advisory group for Parkland County Libraries

Objective: One educational program for adults, on such topics as career development, technology, entrepreneurship or health, will be hosted yearly at each library that will support literacy

Residents will have access to a diverse collection in a variety of formats that fosters lifelong learning.

Objective: Staff will acquire 20% more materials to their non print collection (audiobooks, ebooks, kits, board games) that reflect the interests in their communities

Objective: The library will implement a 'borrow a person' collection with individuals from Parkland County

Objective: Library staff will create a 'calendar of events' for rotating book displays each month and for current information boards at their libraries

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

The library will be the central source for information about services, programs and activities for their community and increase its visibility and activities in the community.

Parkland County Libraries will be recognized as a community leader, building relationships within each diverse community and encouraging greater participation in library activities and services.

Objective: The library will be prominent outside the physical building by conducting outreach programming, material pick up locations, and little libraries

Objective: Library staff will identify opportunities and attend events, meetings, and other activities, that are happening in each of the communities

Objective: Library board will review library policies to reduce any barriers to access

Members of the community will have access to and awareness of resources, services, and programs that are available to them by other agencies and organizations within their community.

Objective: Find inventive ways to promote agencies within our communities virtually and in person

Objective: Hand out or display promotional materials of other organizations when applicable

Objective: Create a community connection page on our website with links to other resources

The library will create an aggressive marketing strategy to ensure that library programs and services are being made aware of to community residents.

Objective: Identify creative ways to reach patrons and new members (example: podcasts, bookmobile, Remind app)

Objective: Utilize our community connections consistently with an established communications schedule with key partners including PSD, Parkland County, and Partner Libraries, to promote our services

Objective: Update our communications plan document to include a marketing strategy that outlines what vehicles we are going to use to promote our services

Objective: The library will offer a “meet the staff night” at each of the libraries to welcome new patrons and to promote library resources

Library users will more easily discover library materials that reflect their needs and interests

Objective: Library staff will keep patrons interests in mind in the creation of displays and will utilize variety of collection tools (LibraryAware and Novelist) to help build productive displays

Objective: Utilize creative methods, such as shelf talkers, to highlight our collections that go beyond our ‘new book display’

VISIT A COMFORTABLE SPACE

The library will be engaging and inspiring and a safe space

Parkland County Libraries will create a physical and virtual presence that is engaging, welcoming and inspiring.

Objective: An Online Presence (social media, website, podcast) Strategy will be developed and will address our diverse communities and will incorporate various media platforms

Objective: In our continued efforts to reduce barriers to access, the library will focus on delivering outreach services throughout all areas of Parkland County by means of the county vehicle, pop-up libraries, and expanding walking clubs and nature hikes

Objective: Increase library awareness throughout Parkland County by engaging individuals outside of our library members, collaborating with senior centres, and attending community events in each community. Social media numbers, patron memberships, and program attendance will increase

Our libraries will be safe spaces for meeting, gathering and collaborating

Objective: The library will promote and offer its meeting spaces for outside groups to host programs, events, meetings, etc.

Objective: All library staff will partake in safe space training quarterly and will learn from the lived experiences to create spaces

Objective: The library will market by way of social media, our website, and attending events, that it is a safe space for everyone

The library collection will reflect the people in the communities and their interests.

Objective: A collection audit will be conducted at each library to assess the gaps in the collection. Once gaps are identified a variety of selection tools will be used to develop the collection

CONCLUSION

Looking to the future

This Plan of Service will guide Parkland County Public Libraries' activities for the next five years, and will help us ensure we meet our goals to providing opportunities for residents to **Express [their] Creativity**, programming opportunities that **Satisfy Curiosity**, opportunities for residents **to Visit a Comfortable Place** to engage and interact in a safe environment in person and virtually, and play a key role in providing library and community information to residents, while also ensuring library staff, **Know Your Community**.

The Parkland County Library Board is excited for the next five years to really showcase and expand their services. The library board recognizes how far we have grown and therefore endeavours to update the library mission and vision statements to reflect who we are today, the priority responses we want to achieve, and the future we envision.

The library plays a vital role in Parkland County and we are committed to expanding this role by building relationships in the community. Overall, we are committed to improving the quality of life of Parkland County residents by satisfying their need for entertainment, learning, and connections with their neighbours.