

Attachment 7

*2025 Budget Departmental Memo -
New Westminster Public Library*

Memorandum

To: Lisa Spitale
Chief Administrative Officer

Date: November 25, 2024

From: Carolyn Casenas
Chief Librarian

File:

Subject: New Westminster Public Library 2024 Accomplishments and Highlights, and 2025 Corporate Priorities

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Entering the penultimate year of its current strategic plan, New Westminster Public Library continues to engage, strengthen and connect the community by inspiring exploration, imagination, creativity, and lifelong learning. Highlights include work to create welcoming spaces, offer engaging programs and services, support literacy and foster organizational excellence. These efforts also align with the Council's current strategic plan, e.g. supporting community belonging and connectedness and organizational effectiveness.

The successful recruitment of a new Chief Librarian, with Carolyn Caseñas starting in February, brought a fresh and positive start to the year. This was followed by the successful launch of the Bridges Literary Festival. With the support of 9 local businesses and community-based partners, a variety of events for different ages were offered in celebration of the literary arts.

The Library formed new partnerships to bring additional programs to the Main Branch and enliven our spaces. These included:

- Storytimes in Tigrinya, Ukrainian and Cantonese.
- English classes for newcomers in partnership with Pearson Adult Learning Centre
- *Our Community, Our Way* by Rain Pierre. This public art piece consists of 19 concrete pillars wrapped with vinyl graphics and a maple wood panel with epoxy resin fill. Pierre's work is intended as a welcome to all and to emphasize belonging in the Library and community.



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Children's literacy support programming is increasing in participation and popularity. Outreach to the schools was a highlight. Key accomplishments include:

- Record number of children from 6 schools participating in Reading Link Challenge.
- Over 1,500 Summer Reading Club (SRC) registrants
- Double the typical attendance at the wrap-up SRC celebration held at the Anvil Centre

2025 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The Library's key 2025 departmental priorities are part of broader City corporate priorities. Below outlines high impact, urgent projects that require significant support from City departments.

Special Projects: Main Branch 2nd Floor Redesign and Future Needs Analysis

Using provincial enhancement grant funding, New Westminster Public Library has undertaken 2 projects engaging residents to determine current usage and needs. Results will inform decision making and lay the groundwork for planning in 2025 and beyond. All grant monies must be spent by December 31, 2025.

- **Main Branch 2nd Floor Redesign**
The goal of this project is to optimize the footprint of public spaces to meet emergent and dynamic needs of library users. Staff and public consultation were completed in Q4 of 2024. Broad themes pertain to floor layout, flexible furniture and study spaces, and technology access, including digital literacy assistance.

In 2025, this project will have entered the design and implementation phases. While no major structural changes are anticipated, this project relies on significant support from relevant city departments (e.g. Facilities, Purchasing, IT and Communications), such as expertise or other assistance.

- **Future Needs Analysis**
This project aims to revive and update the Library's previous practice of biennial user surveys. These surveys engage the community and provide the Library with information and perspectives that inform all areas of operations, including programs and services. Reconnecting with the community in this way is essential to inform post-Pandemic recovery efforts and the Library's understanding of shifting community needs.



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People and Culture

It is anticipated that staffing levels will stabilize in Q1 2025. Retirements of long-servicing staff in Q4 2024 and Q1 2025 have generated a new round of recruitment. In addition to filling vacancies, the Library continues to revise its structures and processes to respond to user needs as identified through the special projects noted above.

Revised practices will also reflect the changing nature of workplace expectations and understandings of safety. Pertinent initiatives rely on significant support from Human Resources and IT, including expertise and other assistance. While people and culture work is ongoing, these initial efforts form the foundation for the Library to become more agile and responsive to foster a modern and robust workplace culture.