



Lethbridge
Public Library | CONNECTING
YOU

Plan of Service 2022–2026

PLAN OF SERVICE 2022–2026

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

This new Plan of Service will serve as our roadmap for the delivery of services over the next five years. The Plan will guide all of our decisions with a focus on how best to serve our community.

This plan was not possible without the involvement of the Board, managers, staff, and stakeholders and I thank them all for their time, commitment and input. ~ Craig Brown

2021 CITY OF LETHBRIDGE LIBRARY BOARD



Top Row (L–R): Terra Plato (CEO), Craig Brown (Board Chair), Sean Hubbell (Vice Chair), Allan Quinton, Heather Woodruff, Jennifer Gullage-Payne

Bottom Row (L–R): Angela Viola, Carol Koran, Mike Maguire, James Chymboryk, Wendy Kalkan

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MISSION

Lethbridge Public Library is a welcoming, inclusive space that connects and strengthens community through equitable access to learning and leisure.

VISION

Lethbridge Public Library is the community's choice for the pursuit of literacy, leisure, learning and innovation.

VALUES

- We value universal access to ideas for education and enjoyment through language in all its forms.
- We value the customer and community we serve.
- We value a supportive, positive, fair, team based culture that values everyone's passions and talents.
- We value accountability through fiscal responsibility.
- We value actions, results and continuous improvement.
- We value the diversity of our community and strive to reflect that diversity through inclusive planning and services.



THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Lethbridge Public Library conducted a comprehensive strategic planning process from May to December 2021 using the Transformational Strategic planning process facilitated by a third party facilitator, Barbara Pedersen Facilitation Services Inc.

The 2022-2026 Plan of Service is a comprehensive and forward-looking document that recognizes and builds upon the values and strengths of Lethbridge Public Library and the Lethbridge community. It responds to the current and emerging environmental factors and best practices and trends in library services. The Plan of Service lays out the broad picture of the services and operations for the Library over the next five years and will guide Library staff in their work and in the development of operational plans.

The planning process consisted of four phases:

1. Clarity: creating the process and gathering information
2. Analysis: analyzing relevant materials, conducting an Environmental and Trends Scan
3. Engagement: engaging the community to find needs and desired outcomes
4. Strategic planning and writing: facilitating planning sessions and writing the Plan of Service

Lethbridge Public Library used a strategic planning approach based on the Transformational Strategy planning process of the Technology of Participation®, a highly collaborative and participatory process that achieves consensus and moves goals to action.

Adapted from the ToP Participatory Strategic Planning Process Model: ICA Associates.



ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN AND TRENDS OVERVIEW

What we did ...

Lethbridge Public Library conducted an environmental scan and examined library and community trends to identify the factors that were relevant and important for the strategic planning process. Information about trends, strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats were gathered from various sources.

Highlights from the current state report

The **excellence of Lethbridge Public Library's staff** is a strength recognized and appreciated by the community. Staff are seen as adaptable, responsive, welcoming, friendly, experienced, and knowledgeable.

The **COVID-19 pandemic** will continue to impact programs and services provided by the Library. Lethbridge Public Library has effectively provided its services throughout the pandemic to benefit the community.

Libraries throughout North America continue to position themselves as **community connectors and agents for change**. Lethbridge Public Library is recognized and appreciated within the community as a strong connector and collaborative partner.

Diversity, inclusion, and equity are core responsibilities of libraries, and their importance will increase over the coming years. Libraries serve all of the community; mainstream, marginalized and underrepresented populations and seek to provide a **welcoming and inclusive space for all**. Lethbridge Public Library is recognized as being in the forefront of diversity, inclusion, and equity work.

Libraries across North America have moved towards **equitable and affordable access** by removing financial barriers such as membership fees and fines, implementing new models of remote delivery, and reaching out into the community through outreach services.

Lethbridge Public Library's **collections** are viewed as a strength with specific recognition of Indigenous and international collections. The collections at Lethbridge Public Library, in keeping with best practices, are community-driven; using requests, demographics, and circulation evaluation to inform purchases. Trends that may affect Lethbridge Public Library are the growing demand for audiobooks and eBooks although print books are still the most popular book format; merger of publishing houses; and the costs and non-ownership of digital subscriptions and e-content.



The worldwide move towards **technology and digitization** will impact most aspects of Lethbridge Public Library's operations including online collections, programming, events, acquisition of digital materials, finances, and access by the community. Technology has the potential of increasing access to a diverse mix of materials and programs. On the flip side, it can create a digital divide between people with their own access to technology and those without.

Programming and events remain some of Lethbridge Public Library's greatest strengths. Based on a community-led service model, Lethbridge Public Library seeks input and collaboration from the community and plans and delivers library services and spaces based on that input. The Library's capacity to provide online and in-person programs and events in the future is a factor to address.

The impact of **central libraries in urban downtown cores** has been explored and proven. An opportunity exists for Lethbridge Public Library to be part of a revitalized downtown core in Lethbridge through connections with other capital projects, wayfinding between cultural buildings, and enhancing the interior and exterior spaces of its downtown branch for more welcoming and inclusive spaces.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

What we did ...

Lethbridge Public Library asked the community four questions:

1. What kind of community do you want Lethbridge and area to be?
2. What specific community needs could Lethbridge Public Library address?
3. What do you think Lethbridge Public Library is doing really well?
4. What would you like to see the Lethbridge Public Library do in the next five years?

Lethbridge Public Library engaged residents, users, members, staff, agency representatives, municipal leaders, and other stakeholders through individual interviews, focus groups, input sessions, surveys at outreach events, online, and through the Library newsletter.

What the community said they wanted ...

The Lethbridge community is inclusive, welcoming, and safe.

People living in the Lethbridge community overwhelmingly want it to be inclusive, welcoming, and safe. The community sees Lethbridge Public Library as a leader in these areas. The community wants Lethbridge Public Library to continue its work related to truth and reconciliation and they want users and visitors at all Library branches to feel included and safe. They want Lethbridge Public Library to provide education on a community level about inclusion, diversity, and racism.

Library collections and programs meet the needs of the community and reflect the diversity of individuals in the community.

People in the community value books and programs and see them as highly important for the Library to continue to provide. The community wants Lethbridge Public Library collections and programs to respond to and meet the diverse needs and interests of the population and to reflect the diversity of individuals in the community. They want collections and programs provided physically and digitally.

Lethbridge Public Library is a community connection and learning place.

The community wants Lethbridge Public Library to be a community connection and learning centre, sometimes referred to as a *hub* or a *third space*. Lethbridge Public Library would continue to provide activities which draw people to it and to serve all individuals: mainstream, under-represented, and marginalized. Lethbridge Public Library would continue to be involved with collectively addressing social issues. The community sees the Library having a role in increasing education and literacy levels in the community. The Library would continue to offer different educational opportunities about a variety of community topics and give people a platform on which to speak and share information.

People value equitable and affordable access to library services.

The community wants increased access to library services throughout the city and expanded outreach services for isolated individuals and underserved areas. They want the Library to be affordable for low-income individuals and families.

The community enjoys library spaces that are welcoming, accessible, and evoke creativity.

The community wants library spaces and locations that provide equitable access, are inclusive and welcoming, and offer resources for knowledge and creativity. An enhanced or new centralized library in a revitalized downtown area is a desirable goal.

People know where and how to find information about Lethbridge Public Library's programs, events, and services.

The community wants improved communication and promotion from Lethbridge Public Library to easily and quickly find accurate and timely information about its programs, events, and services. Some community members want the Library to be the centralized location to find out *what's happening* in the Lethbridge community.

Collaboration and partnership remain very important.

The community wants the Library to continue to partner with organizations in the community and work together to meet needs such as literacy, education about diversity, equity, and inclusion, truth and reconciliation, and social services.



FIVE-YEAR GOALS

1. The community experiences Lethbridge Public Library as a gathering place and hub.

Residents of the community appreciate and use the Library as a community hub. Individuals use the Library as a connection, learning, and resource centre. Lethbridge Public Library is the place to browse, research, learn, play, connect, socialize, and connect to social and community supports.

Strategy alignment: 1, 4, 8, 9

2. More users enjoy the benefits of Lethbridge Public Library and become members.

More individuals in the community belong to and use the Library's physical and virtual spaces, programs, services, and resources. Lethbridge Public Library's value to the community is demonstrated through increased library membership and increased usage of the Library's physical and virtual spaces, programs, services and resources. Individuals enjoy equitable and affordable access to the Library's services.

Strategy alignment: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9

3. Lethbridge Public Library is a model of welcoming and inclusive spaces.

Residents and visitors of the community enjoy Lethbridge Public Library's inclusive and welcoming spaces and services. Individuals feel that they belong when they use a Lethbridge Public Library space. Individuals participate in programs and services that promote appreciation and understanding of the diverse populations in the community. Through Lethbridge Public Library's inclusive services, programs and collections we help individuals build empathy, respect, and acceptance for all community members.

Strategy alignment: 1, 4, 5

4. The community has improved access to Lethbridge Public Library's physical and virtual spaces.

Community residents and visitors access Lethbridge Public Library through its expanded physical locations and robust virtual spaces. Existing spaces are best utilized to meet changing community needs and to increase sense of belonging.

Strategy alignment: 2, 4, 6, 7, 8

5. The community discovers and uses spaces at Lethbridge Public Library that inspire creativity.

Within Library spaces, users experiment, create, and play to expand their imaginations, knowledge, and abilities.

Strategy alignment: 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9

6. The community has opportunities to build multiple literacy skills

Residents of the community increase their literacy skills through the programs and services of the Library. Adults and youth in the community have the resources and support they need to improve multiple literacy skills to meet their personal and professional goals and become lifelong learners. Children from birth to five years have programs and services designed to develop early literacy skills: sing, talk, read, write, and play and promote school readiness. Multiple literacies include reading, writing, numeracy, financial, digital, information, media, physical, civic, and cultural.

Strategy alignment: 2, 6, 8

STRATEGIES

Strategies are long-term actions, typically taking two to five years to complete which set the direction for Lethbridge Public Library. Each and all of the strategies help to achieve the five-year goals, and thus, align with more than one goal.

Over the next five years, Lethbridge Public Library will:

1. Function as a gathering place in the community and as a connector to fulfill community needs
2. Deepen our knowledge and understanding of the community to effectively deliver library services and spaces
3. Demonstrate the value of a membership
4. Attract people into our spaces
5. Incorporate a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens into all aspects of library operations
6. Evolve and expand Lethbridge Public Library's technological, digital, and virtual services and spaces
7. Develop an expanded facilities strategy
8. Secure funds for project specific initiatives
9. Generate ongoing, stable, and strong community support through community advocacy



STRATEGIES, OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES

1 FUNCTION AS A GATHERING PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY AND AS A CONNECTOR TO FULFILL COMMUNITY NEEDS

Objectives:

- Promote Lethbridge Public Library as the gathering place for the community
- Evolve Lethbridge Public Library's role as a community resource connector through beneficial partnerships and relationships
- Provide ongoing services and programs relevant to a wider portion of the community
- Provide space for community organizations to connect with the community

Measures:

- Positive growth in annual number of in person visitors to Lethbridge Public Library
- Positive growth in annual number of attendees at programs and events
- Positive growth in annual number of visitors attracted through partnered events and services
- Percentage of people who say they visit Lethbridge Public Library to connect with community resources increases by 2024

2 DEEPEN OUR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMUNITY TO EFFECTIVELY DELIVER LIBRARY SERVICES AND SPACES

Objectives:

- Determine priority needs of the community through inclusive consultation
- Build community profiles to show who and where our users are
- Identify and understand barriers to use of Lethbridge Public Library
- Identify emerging and underserved community literacy needs
- Develop outreach plan and position(s)

Measures:

- Formal community needs assessment activities occur every two years
- Ongoing, informal needs assessment activities occur
- Positive growth in annual library visitors (in person) and membership numbers
- New or re-allocated resources to outreach



3 DEMONSTRATE THE VALUE OF A MEMBERSHIP

Objectives:

- Get memberships into the hands of more Lethbridge residents
- Work towards establishing barrier free access through free library memberships where financially feasible
- Communicate the value of a library membership through targeted and strategic marketing
- Transform visitors into return users of our services

Measures:

- Library memberships are permanently free
- Positive growth in annual library memberships
- Increasing rates of satisfaction amongst library users on an annual basis
- Positive growth in annual circulation rates
- Positive growth in annual public computer usage rates

4 ATTRACT PEOPLE INTO OUR SPACES

Objectives:

- Communicate what Library spaces have to offer through targeted marketing
- Remain an accessible room booking option for community members and groups
- Explore the feasibility of and develop creative spaces based on community needs
- Assess and enhance virtual spaces for effectiveness and use
- Re-imagine and elevate existing physical spaces to meet community needs, inspire learning, and provide community gathering spaces

Measures:

- Positive growth in annual in person visitation
- Positive growth in annual program and event attendance
- Positive growth in annual number of website users
- Positive growth in annual social media engagement
- Positive growth in annual digital circulation and database usage
- Positive growth in in-house circulation stats



5 INCORPORATE A DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) LENS INTO ALL ASPECTS OF LIBRARY OPERATIONS

Objectives:

- Conduct a DEI audit of Library operation and current practices and implement workplan
- Review and establish recruitment practices that eliminate bias and reduce barriers to equity-deserving populations
- Establish a training and onboarding plan that prioritizes creating inclusive spaces, valuing diversity, and establishing equity
- Reflect the cultural diversity of our community in our programs, collections and spaces.
- Provide ongoing community education programs and resources related to diversity, equity and inclusion
- Lethbridge Public Library commits to understanding and continuous improvement of the work culture at the Library.
- Work to influence board recruitment practices to prioritize diversity of board members.

Measures:

- Annual employee engagement scores increase year over year
- Proportion of community/users who feel represented in Lethbridge Public Library spaces, programs and collections increases (annual library surveys; City conducted community satisfaction surveys)
- By the end of 2024, 25% of board members will reflect the diversity of the Lethbridge population
- By the end of 2025, 25% of staff will reflect the diversity of the Lethbridge population

6 EVOLVE AND EXPAND LETHBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY'S TECHNOLOGICAL, DIGITAL, AND VIRTUAL SERVICES AND SPACES

Objectives:

- Utilize virtual programming and services to meet community needs.
- Invest in new technologies to meet community need (onsite and loanable) and to realize efficiencies in workflows

Measures:

- Positive growth in attendance at virtual programming
- Positive growth in usage of Lethbridge Public Library technology services (onsite and loanable)
- Reallocation of staff resources to priority service areas



7 DEVELOP AN EXPANDED FACILITIES STRATEGY

Objectives:

- Plans for a reimagined downtown branch are in place
- Assess needs and strategize for new spaces outside of the downtown core
- Identify and establish new service alternatives within existing community and business spaces

Measures:

- Plans are in place that allow for uptake of funding opportunities for expanded service locations as they arise
- Physical service locations in community are expanded

8 SECURE FUNDS FOR PROJECT SPECIFIC INITIATIVES

Objectives:

- Identify priority projects and initiatives for funding
- Identify and acquire funding sources for priority projects

Measures:

- Priority projects and initiatives are funded (at least partially) through external funding sources

9 GENERATE ONGOING, STABLE, AND STRONG COMMUNITY SUPPORT THROUGH COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

Objectives:

- Increase the role of the Friends of the Lethbridge Public Library as an advocacy group
- Develop and implement a community advocacy plan

Measures:

- Community members/partners advocate for library funding and initiatives





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The Lethbridge Public Library acknowledges that we are gathered on the lands of the Blackfoot people of the Canadian Plains and pays respect to the Blackfoot people past, present and future while recognizing and respecting their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship to the land. The City of Lethbridge is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.