



Winnipeg Public Library Board Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Annual Strategic Plan Review – 2020

Introduction

The Board had a productive year and was able to complete or make substantial progress on all of its stated goals for the year. This was aided by implementing a new concise and instructive strategic plan and organizing goals into annual chunks instead of five-year terms. Goals are more timely and attainable on an annual cycle. The following document will outline the goals the Board undertook in 2020 and progress attained, as well as suggest new and updated goals for the Board to consider for 2021.

2020 Strategic Plan Goals

1. Complete Winnipeg Public Library Board (WPLB) Strategic Planning Document

The Board formed a subcommittee and was able to create a five-year strategic plan covering 2020-2025. The new strategic plan has guiding principles and focuses on the advocacy and advisory roles of the Board. The Board agreed that a limited number of annual goals would be easier to take on, track, and achieve, and set four goals for 2020. Going forward, the responsibility for tracking strategic plan progress, writing the annual report, and recommending goals for the following year will fall to the Vice-Chair.

Goal progress: Complete

2. Determine how WPLB can incorporate and adhere to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action for Libraries

The Board formed a small subcommittee part-way through the year to consider the TRC Calls to Action that apply to libraries and how the Board might incorporate them into our practices and projects. The committee has begun researching various topics that the Board may want to target as goals. The committee has also reached out to Kathleen Williams, who chairs the Indigenous Working Group at Winnipeg Public Library (WPL), and is awaiting a response regarding their goals and how the Board can help fulfill some of them. The committee chair will soon set 2 to 3 more goals that the Board can implement over the course of the next 12 months. The temporary (and possibly permanent) removal of library fines, as discussed below, is a positive step towards implementing the TRC Calls to Action as it makes the library more accessible for Indigenous patrons from disadvantaged backgrounds. The TRC Calls to Action are available here:

http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Goal progress: Started

3. Advocate to Winnipeg City Council for the permanent removal of all library fines

With the support of the Board, Councillor Rollins drafted and presented a motion to Council on October 29, 2020, calling for a suspension of all library fines to the end of 2020 and to refer the permanent removal of all library fines to the 2021 City budget process. Two Board members spoke persuasively to Council as a delegation on the topic, and with the support of Councillors Rollins and Schreyer (both WPLB members), the motion passed in a 10-5 vote. Further support and advocacy of this motion will be necessary from the Board in the City budget process for 2021.

Goal progress: Halfway

4. Support WPL with funding and Board involvement as they work with a consultant to explore the possibilities around changing or removing the Millennium Library security screening process

The Library Board screening review was launched at Millennium Library on August 5, 2020, at a community get-together attended by a facilitator, library staff, community stakeholders and Board representatives. While individual viewpoints varied on the details of a new approach, there was consensus on the following key points:

- The group assessed security screening as an oppressive and harmful barrier that must not be reinstated.
- The Library must reach out to the communities most impacted by screening to acknowledge the harm it has caused over the past year and a half and learn from this feedback.
- While the Library is responsible to do the work to develop an inclusive, accessible environment at Millennium Library, community feedback on this direction must be heard and applied to an alternate approach.
- Comprehensive staff training on anti-racism, anti-oppression, harm reduction and working with the homeless community and accountability for applying these lenses moving forward were strongly supported.
- The group discussed the success that other organizations have had with replacing security with community hosts with lived experience and relevant training.
- Most of the community attendees at this meeting expressed their willingness to continue their involvement in this process.

Next, the library team will work with the Board to select a community/library/board working group and schedule the next set of meetings. The goal of the working group is to develop a consensus plan for a new approach to making Millennium Library a safe, welcoming and accessible space for everyone.

Goal progress: Underway, stalled due to COVID restrictions and the inability to meet in person

5. Update the WPLB Regulations document (bonus goal)

Although this project was not originally on the 2020 goals list, the Board was able to tackle updating the Board Regulations document. This document had not been updated in collective memory and was well overdue for a major overhaul. The Board assistant collected feedback from Board and Library Advisory Committee (LAC) members, synthesized it into the document, and prepared a survey for all Board and LAC members to submit further feedback and vote on important decisions and updates. This is a large goal and although the initial review and update will be completed in 2020, the current Board recommends that the 2021 Board consider reopening the Regulations to further update content, decide on any suggestions made in 2020 that could not be acted on, and further correct spelling and grammar errors. The Regulations are meant to be a living document that changes and grows as the role of the Board changes.

Goal progress: Will be complete by December 2020

2021 Recommended Goals

Goals to Consider Carrying Forward:

1. Determine how WPLB can incorporate and adhere to the TRC Calls to Action for Libraries.
2. Advocate to Winnipeg City Council for the permanent removal of all library fines. (In particular, look into adding the link to the Oct 29 council meeting video to our website to cross promote our advocacy efforts. As well, be sure to send delegations to the Budget process deliberations. Perhaps the Board can suggest places Library Management could find the money in the library budget to cover the lost revenue. Consider how to publicize this success if it is passed).
3. Support WPL with funding and Board involvement as they work with a consultant to explore the possibilities around changing or removing the Millennium Library security screening process.
4. Update the WPLB Regulations document (reopen).

New Goals to Consider:

1. Explore ways to improve communication between WPLB and the public to keep all involved apprised of WPLB projects, advocacy, and progress. (Possible avenues of communication to be explored may include WPLB website, WPL website, WPL social media, LAC meetings, WPL newsletter, public meetings, etc. The Manager of Library Services could arrange a presentation from WPL marketing staff, including website statistics, to assist in assessing this goal).
2. Indigenous cultural competency training for Board members, possibly in tandem with WPL staff.
3. Consider applying to Welcoming Winnipeg for a name change to Cornish Library.