



PARKLAND REGIONAL LIBRARY

Strategic Plan 2016-2018

Abstract

Parkland is setting the tone for the future with a new strategic plan that focuses on advocacy, marketing, and sustainability.

Parkland Regional Library Board

Strategic Plan: 2016 - 2018

Parkland Regional Library (PRL) was formed in 1959 to provide service to libraries across rural central Alberta. As the province's oldest regional library system, it supports libraries by providing human and material support and acting as a focus for leadership, training, and communication on library issues.

Vision Statement

Parkland Regional Library is a leader for its member libraries to achieve excellence in service.

Mission Statement

Parkland Regional Library supports its members through cooperation, innovation, and service by:

- providing human and material support services as needed by the libraries,
- acting as a focus for leadership and library advocacy,
- being effectively and efficiently governed and financially sustainable.

Key Facts

- Area serviced: 24,153 sq. kilometers.
- Population served: 207,861 (2014).
- Public libraries: 49 (including 4 service points for which the PRL Board is board of record).
- Number of participating library boards: 45.
- Number of member municipalities: 64.

Abstract

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Needs Assessment Process Overview

For the 2016 – 2018 strategic plan, library staff and trustees imagined different possible futures for library service within the Parkland Regional Library system. Scenarios were created based on extreme possibilities to engage stakeholders in vigorous conversations. These conversations challenged people's ideas and stimulated deeper thinking about library service in the region and what Parkland's future role might be. The initial scenario planning session took place on March 26, 2015 and included members from Parkland's Executive Committee and regional library staff. We created eight possible futures for rural libraries, which became the basis of stories that reflected the unique characteristics of each scenario.

In April 2015, the stories were discussed, debated, championed, or defeated by attendees of stakeholder meetings at four libraries throughout Parkland's geographical area: Olds, Lacombe, Galahad, and Camrose. Each half-day session attracted representatives from area library boards, staff and municipal councils. Although the same process was used for each meeting, the dialogues were quite different.

During the consultation process, participants were asked to reflect on the ideal future for library service in central Alberta, to describe their current circumstances and challenges, and to identify what would be necessary to achieve their ideal future. Feedback from all four sessions was collected and synthesized into a thematic analysis. This analysis was presented to the Executive Committee prior to their strategic planning session which was held on June 25th.

Four strategic goals emerged from the needs assessment and consultation process. These results identified some significantly different priorities from previous plans.

The priorities that will be addressed in the 2016 – 2018 strategic plan are:

1. Libraries will have a strong and supportive relationship with local and provincial governments that recognize the value of public libraries and prioritize public library service.
2. Municipalities will have sustainable and effective library service.
3. Parkland Regional Library member municipalities will have an effective and responsive system board.
4. Parkland residents will have a greater awareness of the public library and regard public libraries as an essential part of their communities.

Goals

Goal 1. Libraries will have a strong and supportive relationship with local and provincial governments that recognize the value of public libraries and prioritize public library service.

Objectives:

- a) Municipal councils will be supportive of public library service in a tangible way.
- b) Local library boards will be advocates for public library service at the municipal and provincial levels.
- c) Parkland Regional Library system will be an environment in which member councils, PRL Board, and local library boards will work collectively to provide the best possible public library service.
- d) Explore opportunities for the provision of equitable access to public library service on First Nations Reserves.

Outcomes:

- a) By 2019, each municipal library board will experience a 20% increase in funding from their municipalities over 2015 levels.
- b) By 2018, 100% of library boards that have developed and implemented advocacy plans will feel the level of municipal support is stronger than it was in the preceding years through financial and political support.
- c) By 2018, regional systems will receive infrastructure funding for renovations and upgrades to their headquarters facilities.
- d) By November 2018, at least 80% of member councils and member library trustees surveyed will report that they feel Parkland Regional Library operates as a cooperative and collaborative network.

Goal 2. Municipalities will have sustainable and effective library service.

Objectives:

- a) PRL will look for regional efficiencies through centralization of processes and implement where appropriate.
- b) PRL will create a supportive learning environment for library staff to develop the competencies required for the provision of library service in the 21st Century.
- c) PRL will support the development and delivery of local library programming including through initiatives at the regional level.
- d) PRL will foster a collegial environment that facilitates innovation and increased cooperation between libraries.

Outcomes:

- a) The workload for routine tasks required of member library staff will be reduced through centralizing tasks that can be accomplished or managed at PRL headquarters.

- b) Processes throughout the region will be streamlined, modified, or eliminated where possible so that the resulting savings in staff time or financial resources, whether at headquarters or local libraries, can be reallocated to achieving identified goals and objectives.
- c) By 2018, 80% of staff surveyed will report that they have had reasonable opportunities to develop the skills needed to effectively operate a library service point within PRL.
- d) There will be an increase in programs and activities shared across multiple libraries (e.g. three or more libraries within a 50 km radius).
- e) Library staff will help each other reach a standard level of training and practices by sharing ideas, knowledge, and expertise with each other.

Goal 3. Parkland Regional Library member municipalities will have an effective and responsive system board.

Objectives:

- a) The PRL Board will be effective as a governing board for the regional system.
- b) The PRL Board will explore opportunities for an expanded role in governing library service points.
- c) The PRL Board will investigate and consider innovative approaches to system services.

Outcomes:

- a) By 2018, PRL Board members will be able to explain their role, the purpose of regional systems, and the relationship between the system, municipalities, and local libraries within one year of appointment.
- b) Member councils will report that the PRL Board meets or exceeds expectations in its ability to make decisions in the best interest of members, communicate those decisions effectively, and respond to change in the provision of library service.

Goal 4. Parkland residents will have a greater awareness of the public library and regard public libraries as an essential part of their communities.

Objectives:

- a) Member library boards and staff will have the knowledge and tools to market their services.
- b) PRL will support local marketing and library branding efforts by building a unified/cohesive Parkland Regional Library system identity.
- c) PRL will inspire member libraries to offer innovative services and programming that are responsive to local needs.

Outcomes:

- a) Cardholder numbers will increase by 20% across the region each year.
- b) By 2018, 80% of library users surveyed will recognize the PRL brand and that their local public library is part of this regional network.

- c) By 2018, 65% of PRL member libraries will have a plan of service that is based on, and responds to, community needs as identified by community stakeholders.

Specific actions to achieve the goals of the strategic plan are contained in Parkland's companion Work Plan.