

Strategic Plan 2019-2021

Parkland Regional Library provides leadership for our members to achieve excellence in service.

About Us:

- Parkland Regional Library (PRL) was formed in 1959 to provide service to libraries across rural central Alberta. We are the province's oldest regional library system.
- We serve 218,595 residents (2019 population) including 10,695 First Nations Reserve residents across an area of 24,153 square kilometers
- We are a cooperative network of 64 member municipalities and 45 library boards offering access in 49 public libraries (including 4 service points governed by the PRL Board) in central Alberta.

Our Mission:

Expanding opportunities for discovery, growth, and imagination for all Central Albertans.

Our Goals:

We support our members and the residents of central Alberta through four goals and targeted measurable outcomes (objectives) that demonstrate progress towards meeting the region's identified needs.

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 (outcomes) demonstrating progress towards the goal:

- a) Municipal councils will provide ongoing, additional funding to support public library service in sufficient amounts to keep pace with inflation and operating cost increases, including wages.
- b) Member library boards will develop advocacy plans and will be effective advocates for public library service.
- c) The PRL board, its member councils, and local library boards will co-operate and collaborate to provide collectively the best possible library service to our communities. This might include initiatives such as the creation of inter-municipal library boards, staff sharing between libraries, remote library service in smaller communities, via unstaffed kiosks.

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

Objectives (outcomes) demonstrating progress towards the goal:

- a) Staff throughout the region will develop and demonstrate the competencies required to deliver effective and responsive library service.
- b) PRL will foster a collegial environment that results in innovative service models and increased cooperation between libraries.
- c) Member libraries are able to offer increased public library programming options through the initiatives and resources developed at the regional level.

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

Objectives (outcomes) demonstrating progress towards the goal:

- a) PRL Board members will be effective as a governing board and regional library advocates with the knowledge to explain their role, the purpose of the regional system, and the relationship between the system, municipalities, and local libraries.
- b) The PRL board will investigate and consider innovative approaches to system services in pursuit of enhanced service to the public. This could include an expanded role in governing/operating library service points, reviewing the member agreement with municipalities, or exploring greater co-operation with Red Deer Public Library or The Regional Automation Consortium (TRAC).

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 (outcomes) demonstrating progress towards the goal:

- a) Member libraries will develop and implement marketing plans with resources and support from Parkland Regional Library.
- b) PRL will develop and implement a marketing plan for regional public library service.
- c) PRL will build a unified/cohesive system identity.

Select Activities that Support the Strategic Plan

According to Part 4, 18(3) of the Alberta Libraries Regulation, in developing a plan of service or strategic plan, a library system board shall establish and include procedures to address five functional requirements. The Parkland Board has the following procedures to address these points:

(a) *Co-operation with municipal boards and intermunicipal library boards to assemble, make available, promote, preserve and dispose of organized collections of library resources to meet the needs and interests of the communities served;*

Parkland Regional Library:

- Provides materials allotment (set annually as part of Parkland's budget) for the purchase of materials by member libraries.
- Catalogues, orders, and processes library materials for the system's member libraries.
- Provides an integrated library system for the entire system.
- Makes accessible to patrons of all member libraries collections that are challenging for small libraries to purchase independently, including large print, audio books, and digital content.
- Provides access to a centralized collection of print-disabled materials.

(b) *Employment of suitably qualified staff, with the knowledge and ability to help municipal boards and intermunicipal library boards and their employees to provide comprehensive and efficient library service as well as to operate the library system;*

The Parkland Library Board:

- Ensures that sufficiently qualified staff are employed to comply with legislative requirements and meet the needs of the system.
- Creates and passes a budget that ensures adequate funding to meet operational and staffing requirements.
- Ensures a robust continuing education program is available to Parkland staff and board members guaranteeing their ongoing professional development.

(c) *Co-operation with municipal boards, intermunicipal library boards and other groups in the communities that it serves in the initiation and provision of information services, program events and other activities related to its goals and objectives;*

Parkland Regional Library:

- Provides reference and research service to support the information needs of members and their patrons.
- Provides support to libraries through access to program kits, gaming and virtual reality kits, and professional knowledge to assist member library staff.

- Offers library services to First Nations Reserves within our region and works with member libraries to provide programming and education related to Alberta's First Nations populations.
- Coordinates summer reading club programming across the region.

(d) *Provision of fixtures, furnishings and accommodation necessary for proper operation and maintenance of the library services and maintenance of the assets of the library system board in a proper state of preservation and repair;*

The Parkland Library Board:

- Addresses in its budget a suitable building with adequate furnishings and equipment and their maintenance/ replacement.
- Has established schedules for building maintenance, computer replacement, and vehicle replacement.
- Maintains financial reserves, backed by secure investments, to ensure ongoing funding for planned and unplanned expenses, including building, equipment/furnishings, technology and vehicle reserves.

(e) *The development, implementation and operation of a provincial resource sharing network in partnership with the Minister and other library system boards.*

Parkland Regional Library:

- Provides interlibrary loan service through mail and region-wide delivery services.
- Manages a centralized interlibrary lending service.
- Maintains and manages the system-wide integrated library system.
- Participates in The Alberta Library, TAL Online; and complies with all provincial and partnership agreements including the *Resource Sharing Operational Policy for Public Libraries*.

Needs Assessment & Strategic Priorities

In 2015, PRL undertook an extensive consultation process with our members. This process identified four themes that became the priorities underpinning Parkland's strategic plan beginning in 2016. Discussion by the PRL Board and a subsequent survey of members confirmed these needs remain relevant and that the 2019-2021 strategic plan should continue to address them.

The needs identified were as follows:

- Residents, elected officials, and decision makers need to be aware of public and regional library services, to hear the "library story" in a meaningful way that resonates with them, and understand the library's importance in and value to the community.
- Public library staff and trustees need affordable and accessible learning opportunities to gain the skills and knowledge needed to develop and operate modern, sustainable local library service that is responsive to community needs.
- While celebrating and capitalizing on commonalities across the system, the uniqueness and diversity of individual communities and libraries needs to be recognized and allowed to flourish.
- The differences among member communities and libraries, including the disparity in population and economic growth/stability, need to be recognized and accounted for in regional planning.

These strategic priorities were reviewed at the regular Board Meeting held February 22, 2018. The Board unanimously agreed that these needs still exist and remain relevant to the libraries and communities Parkland serves. Subsequent to the board's determination, a survey was developed and sent out in early October 2018 to ask Parkland stakeholders whether they believed:

- the needs identified in 2015 were still relevant,
- have already been met, or
- have since become irrelevant.

Respondents were also asked to identify any other local or regional needs not already addressed in the four previously identified strategic priorities. Open for nearly four weeks, the survey had 122 respondents. Audiences targeted by the survey included member municipalities, Parkland board members, board trustees and staff from member libraries, and staff from Parkland headquarters.

Based on the survey results, the needs identified in 2015 are still remarkably valid. Excluding sub-questions, six main questions were asked. The results were that:

1. Over **98%** of respondents believe: *Residents, elected officials, and decision makers need to be aware of public library services and understand the local library's value to the community.*
2. Almost **95%** of respondents believe: *Residents, elected officials, and decision makers need to be aware of regional library services and understand the regional library's value to our community.*
3. Over **97%** of respondents believe: *Public library staff and volunteers need affordable and accessible learning opportunities to gain the skills and knowledge they need to deliver effective library services.*
4. Over **98%** of respondents believe: *Library trustees need affordable and accessible learning opportunities to gain the skills and knowledge they need to effectively govern our public libraries.*
5. Over **95%** of respondents believe: *While celebrating and capitalizing on commonalities across the system, the uniqueness and diversity of individual communities and libraries needs to be recognized and allowed to flourish.*
6. Over **91%** of respondents believe: *Differences among members need to be recognized and accounted for in regional planning.*

The survey results clearly validate the continued relevance of the needs identified during the 2015 needs assessment process and did not yield any additional needs. Since the needs from 2015 have not changed, the goals set forth in the 2016 – 2018 strategic plan are also still legitimate.

PRL staff working in conjunction with Parkland's Executive Committee reviewed the objectives from the old strategic plan and made substantive revisions. Some objectives were no longer relevant, and some new objectives were developed. Finally the mission statement was reviewed by staff and the Executive Committee and a new one developed and approved by the board as part of the new 2019-2021 strategic plan.

The priorities that will be addressed in the 2019 – 2021 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.

Parkland's Strategic Plan Work Plan addresses the specific activities we undertake to achieve PRL's strategic goals.