

Vancouver Public Library

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY | JUNE 2018

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

The purpose of the Facilities Master Plan is to provide the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) with a long-term strategic framework to guide the planning and decision-making for its physical facilities over the next 25 years.

Public libraries are undergoing transformational change. The ways in which people access information, use public space, and therefore use public libraries are rapidly evolving. In 2017 we launched our new 3-year strategic plan, VPL 2020, to address these societal shifts. One of the strategic initiatives that emerged from the 3-year plan was the development of a plan to guide future management of Vancouver's libraries as public assets: the Facilities Master Plan. Through extensive research, analysis and consultation, VPL developed a plan to ensure that it is optimally positioned to meet the space needs of Vancouver's growing and shifting population in the long-term.

The objectives of the Facilities Master Plan are to:

1. Articulate guiding principles that express VPL's strategic intent for long-term facility planning;
2. Define a model outlining facility types and parameters for VPL's future branch network;
3. Provide a set of criteria to guide decision-making on the development of future branch locations;
4. Identify strategic priorities for investment in VPL facilities over the next 25 years; and
5. Outline the total space requirements over the next 25 years.

This document focuses on long-term planning for specific aspects of VPL's facilities, namely, facility types, sizes, locations, and long-term investment priorities. This plan should be considered in conjunction with VPL's Facilities Refurbishment Plan, completed in February 2018, which focuses on existing library facilities, providing an assessment of their condition and prioritizing future refurbishments and other space-related projects.

Beyond the scope of both these documents, further work will be needed to plan for the future of library interior spaces and the services VPL delivers – evolving the space inside branch walls to create the optimal experience for library users. Public consultation will continue to play an important role in identifying the services and resources most needed by the communities we serve.

The Facilities Master Plan contains five sections that together describe the desired future state of VPL's facilities and support decision-making that will move VPL towards that future. The first section contains Guiding Principles that outline the strategic intent of VPL's long-term facility planning. The next two sections, the Facility Model and Branch Location Decision Framework, are to be referenced and applied during ongoing facilities planning. They have been developed to support the assessment of individual facilities and to guide decision-making on facility location. The fourth section titled *The Next 25 Years* is a long-term plan for investment in library facilities. As this plan will need to be applied consistently, and reviewed and updated with each 4-year capital planning cycle, the last section presents a system for using and evolving it over time.

Context & Assessment

Trends in library facilities as well as trends in the City of Vancouver’s population form important external context to VPL and its Facilities Master Plan. The plan needs to address not only the library’s current context but also key changes that are underway or are likely to occur in the future. This section outlines trends that are of particular relevance to the Facilities Master Plan, and also provides an assessment of how well VPL is meeting current and future needs through its facilities.

Library Facility Planning Trends

A scan of library facilities planning documents has identified several important trends amongst North American public libraries. While these may not all be equally applicable to Vancouver, they provide important context for planning for VPL’s facilities.

Library usage and space needs are changing.

We have seen, and will continue to see, changes in how patrons are using public libraries. Libraries around the world are reimagining their roles so that they remain relevant and continually meet the evolving needs of their communities. Although books still represent a large part of their core service, more libraries are finding creative ways to use space for other forms of inspiration, learning, sharing, and community engagement.¹

The continuing increase in the use of digital resources has resulted in decreased demand for physical materials. At the same time, there is a growing need for different uses of library spaces – spaces for technology and creation, spaces suitable for the delivery of programs, structured meeting rooms, quiet spaces for individual study or work, comfortable spaces for reading and relaxation, and communal spaces for conversation and social interaction². Much has been written about the growing use of public libraries as a “third place” – a place other than home or work, that is free, highly accessible, welcoming and comfortable, and where old and new friends can be found.³

“The primary characteristic of a third place is the idea of the level playing field. This is not a place where one group is prioritised over another. In your third place, you’re not the boss or the employee, the parent or the child: all are welcome without prejudice. This is, of course, the very definition of a library.”⁴

Branches are becoming larger and more flexible.

Given the range and diversity of uses of public libraries, it is not surprising that the average size of a full-service branch library is increasing, and in some communities, smaller branches are being succeeded by

¹ Brampton Public Library. (2011). *Brampton Library: Facilities Master Plan Update*; pp. 12.

² Giles, David, et al., (2014). *Re-Envisioning New York’s Branch Libraries*. Center for an Urban Future; pp. 19.

³ Oldenburg, R. (1999). *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community*. 3rd ed. New York: Da Capo Press.

⁴ Bruxvoort, D. (2017). *Library as Third Place: A Strategic Framework*. The Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL), Issue 68.

larger branches in more prominent locations.⁵ This increase in size is needed to accommodate the greater range of space demands mentioned above. Originally designed around book collections, many libraries had devoted a majority of their layouts to shelves and rooms for book processing. These older branches are simply too small to accommodate the range of onsite activities now demanded by the public⁶. New branch footprints are increasingly larger and designed to be more flexible, to accommodate changing needs.

Branch locations are more visible and accessible.

Libraries are also targeting more strategic locations to maximize access and visibility for all residents⁷. As the pace of life quickens, being close to and visible in areas of retail business, high pedestrian traffic, and transportation centres increases awareness and ease of use. Some libraries have set targets for distance or time to travel to a branch – 2.5 km (Edmonton Public Library⁸ and Greater Victoria Public Library⁹), 1.5 km (Mississauga Public Library), 15 minutes by transit or car (Hamilton Public Library)¹⁰. There is also a trend toward co-location, particularly with recreational, cultural and civic destinations, noting that shared use not only improves convenience and access, but can also be more financially sustainable.¹¹

Libraries are playing a more important role in economic development.

Local economic development practices have broadened to include strategies for building human, social, institutional and physical resources. This has created an opportunity for public library services to contribute to building a stronger economy¹². For example, researchers have identified early child development investments (including early literacy) as one of the most cost effective strategies for long-term economic development¹³. In addition, libraries build employment knowledge and technical skills of residents, and provide resources necessary for small businesses to succeed in an increasingly competitive sector, supporting the local economy.¹⁴

City of Vancouver Trends

The City of Vancouver's Planning Department has identified emerging trends that are high-level forecasts to 2050 based on implementation of existing plans. These are important considerations for VPL's long-term strategic and facilities planning:

- The City's population will continue to grow, and is forecast to reach 765,000 people (+21%) by 2041.

⁵ Brampton Public Library. (2011). *Brampton Library: Facilities Master Plan Update*; pp. 13.

⁶ Giles, David, et al., (2014). *Re-Envisioning New York's Branch Libraries*. Center for an Urban Future; pp. 19.

⁷ King Township Public Library. (2014). *King Township Public Library Facilities Master Plan*; pp. 20.

⁸ Government of Alberta, Municipal Affairs. *Standards & Best Practices for Public Libraries in Alberta*; pp. 65-66.

⁹ Greater Victoria Public Library Board. (2006). *GVPL Guidelines for Service/Facility Standards*; pp.6.

¹⁰ City of Mississauga. (2014). *Master Plan for Library Services*; pp. 51.

¹¹ Greater Victoria Public Library. (2010). *Making Space for the Future*. GVPL Facilities Plan; pp. 15.

¹² Urban Libraries Council. (2007). *Making Cities Stronger: Public Library Contributions to Local Economic Development*; pp. 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*,17.

- The population will be older.
- Families in need of more affordable housing may continue to leave Vancouver.
- More new residents will arrive from interprovincial and global migration.
- Up to one in five Vancouverites may experience poverty and struggle with affordability and basic needs. The number of homeless individuals may continue to increase, growing from 2,100 to over 5,700 people if trends continue.
- Densification of certain neighbourhoods (Downtown/West End, Cambie Corridor, East Fraser Lands and some parts of the Downtown East Side) will continue if current development patterns are maintained.

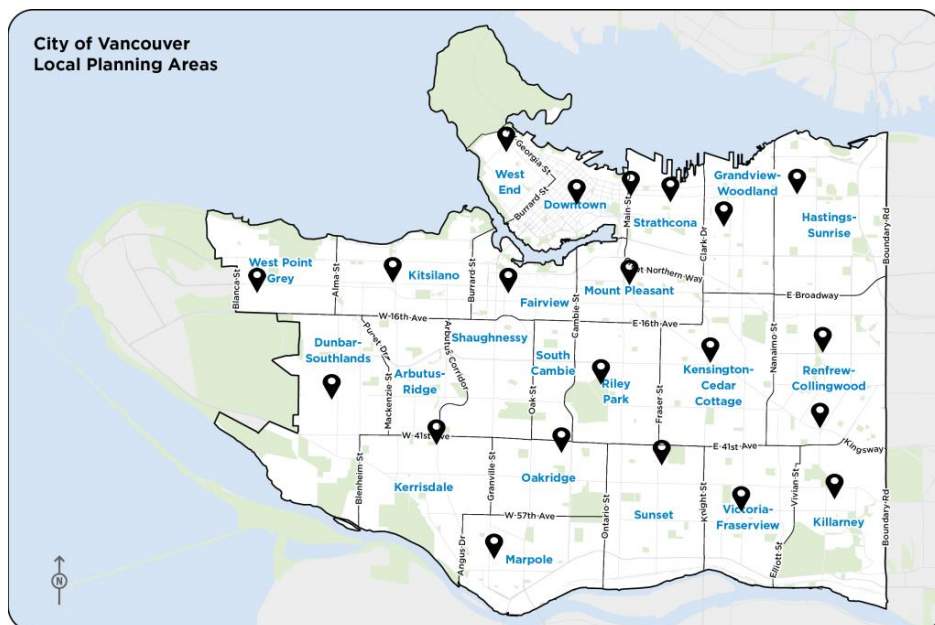
Given the changes underway in library usage and facilities, as well as those foreseen in Vancouver’s population over the next 25+ years, it is clear that VPL will also need to evolve if it is to continue meeting the needs of the communities it serves. The next section assesses VPL’s facilities in light of these changes.

Assessment of VPL’s Facilities

This assessment of VPL’s facilities aims to answer two questions:

1. How well are VPL’s facilities serving Vancouver’s population today?
2. How well prepared are VPL’s facilities to serve the population’s future needs?

VPL’s facility network is made up of the Central Library and 20 neighbourhood branches. In 2017, the network comprised 507,630 square feet, serving a City population of 631,486. Our branches are dispersed across the City, with 21 facilities serving 22 Vancouver neighbourhoods. With a few exceptions, there is one VPL branch per neighbourhood aligned with the City of Vancouver Local Planning Areas (see Map 1).



Map 1

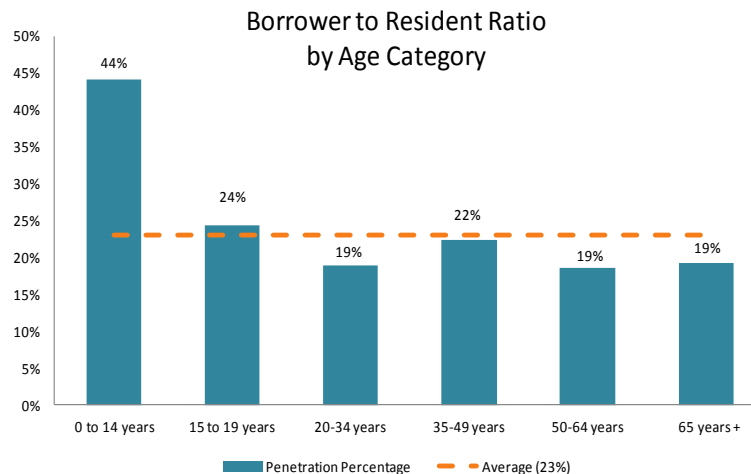
Strengths: Substantial space, active use, high user satisfaction

On certain fronts, VPL is doing well at meeting the needs of Vancouverites through its facilities. We have an iconic Central Library with a brand new expansion, including a theatre, exhibit hall, and outdoor garden, planned to open in 2018. We have the highest space per capita ratio amongst the large urban public libraries in Canada, at 0.80 sq. ft. per Vancouver resident (see Table 1)¹⁵.

Library System	Total Space per Capita (sq. ft.)
Vancouver	0.80
Toronto	0.67
Hamilton	0.58
Edmonton	0.54
Winnipeg	0.49
Ottawa	0.47
Mississauga	0.45
Greater Victoria	0.42
Calgary	0.41
Surrey	0.36

Table 1

Our facilities are well-used by the Vancouver population: nearly 1 of every 4 residents (23%) is an active physical borrower¹⁶ at our Central Library or one of the branches, including almost 1 of every 2 children/young teens (44%) in Vancouver (see Graph 1).



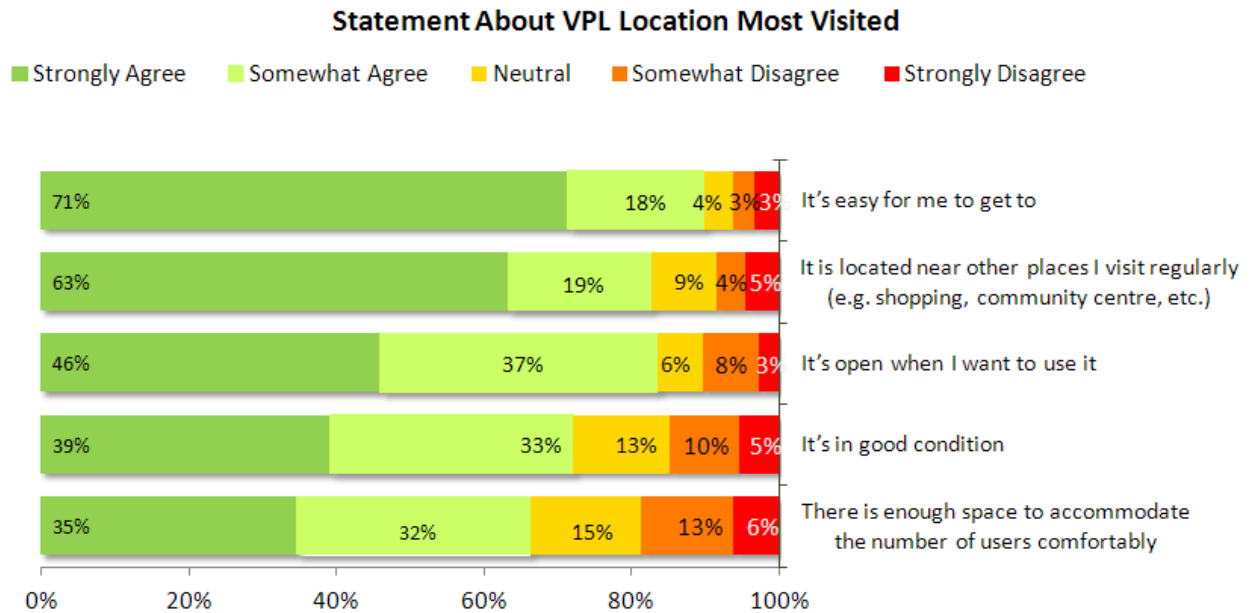
Graph 1

¹⁵ Library size and population data from 2015 Canadian Public Library Statistics, published by Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC). VPL’s total space per capita remained at 0.80 from 2015 to 2017.

¹⁶ Active physical borrower is defined as all VPL patrons who borrowed physical materials in the last 12 months. The 12-month period ending July 31, 2017 was used for the purpose of this analysis. This analysis matched age and postal code data from VPL patrons to that of the City of Vancouver population.

Usage of our facilities is even higher when taking into account residents who come to our facilities for activities other than borrowing materials, such as studying and reading, using computers or WiFi, attending programs, and participating in community meetings.

Through a public survey on VPL locations¹⁷ conducted in 2017 as part of the project’s consultation plan, we also learned that the majority of Vancouver residents are satisfied with key aspects of VPL facilities. The majority of respondents felt that their most visited VPL location was easy to get to, conveniently located, open when needed, in good condition, and large enough to comfortably accommodate the users (see Graph 2).



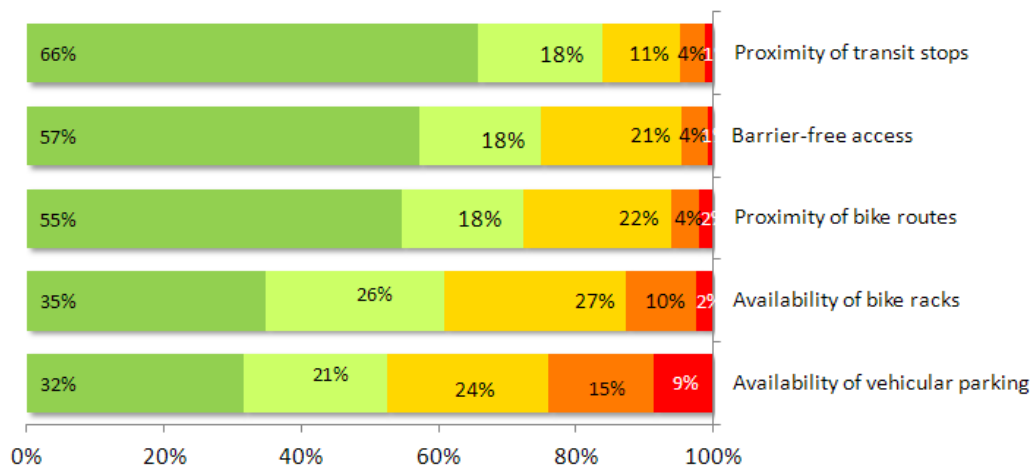
Graph 2

In terms of ease of transportation to the library, most respondents again ranked VPL highly, with the majority stating they are satisfied with the facilities’ proximity to transit stops and bike routes, barrier-free access, and availability of bike racks. Only the availability of vehicular parking appeared to be a concern with 24% dissatisfied (see Graph 3).

¹⁷ Talk Vancouver. (2017). Vancouver Public Library Locations Survey. Vancouver Public Library.

Statement About VPL Location Most Visited

■ 5 - Very Satisfied
 ■ 4 - Somewhat Satisfied
 ■ 3 - Neutral
 ■ 2 - Not very satisfied
 ■ 1 - Not at all satisfied



Graph 3

Overall, most Vancouver residents (91%) say they are satisfied with VPL’s services and 82% agree that VPL is accessible and inviting¹⁸. Our facilities play an important role in shaping this positive public feedback.

Challenges: Aging facilities, highly centralized space, small neighbourhood branches

In other ways, VPL is facing challenges with its facilities. Our network of facilities is aging, with the majority of branches well over 30 years old. The latest facility condition audits¹⁹ projected that twelve branches would be in poor or critical condition ten years following the assessment at assumed levels of annual capital funding.

Our total space per capita ratio, while relatively high at 0.80 sq. ft. per capita, still falls short of the Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario’s (ARUPLO) guideline of 1 sq. ft. per capita²⁰, and is even lower than Southern Ontario Library Service’s (SOLS) standard of 1.05 to 1.64 sq. ft. per capita²¹. Moreover, relative to other public library systems, our space is highly concentrated in the Central Library located in downtown Vancouver whereas the majority of the population lives in neighbourhoods outside of the downtown core. When comparing branch space per capita (square

¹⁸ Vancouver Public Library. (2016). *VPL 2020 Strategic Plan*.

¹⁹ Vancouver Public Library. (2018, Feb. 18). *VPL Facilities Refurbishment Plan Management Report*. Facilities Condition Audits (FCAs) conducted in 2011 and 2014.

²⁰ Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario. (2012). *Guidelines for Rural/Public Library Systems, 2nd Edition*; pp. 6.

²¹ Southern Ontario Library Service. (2010). *Making the Case for Your Library Project*; pp. 10.

footage excluding that of central libraries), we are second to last relative to large urban public libraries in Canada (See Table 2)²².

Library System	Branch space per Capita (sq. ft.)
Toronto	0.52
Ottawa	0.36
Hamilton	0.32
Edmonton	0.30
Mississauga	0.30
Greater Victoria	0.27
Winnipeg	0.26
Calgary	0.25
Vancouver	0.24
Surrey	0.21

Table 2

Despite positive general feedback, the patron survey revealed that some branch locations are not meeting expectations. Six of our branches (Collingwood, Carnegie, Marpole, South Hill, Fraserview and Joe Fortes) were identified by many respondents as having insufficient space to accommodate the current numbers of users – most of these represent the smaller branches in our network with 5,000 sq. ft. or less.

“Given the population growth in the area in the past few years, it is imperative you have a plan that grows with the community.” – Marpole patron, 60-69 years old

For three of our branches (Collingwood, Fraserview and náca?mat ct Strathcona) feedback from some patrons indicated that the branch is not close to places they frequently visit making it inconvenient to access. According to patron feedback, places most visited on a trip to the library are grocery stores (65%), restaurants (54%), and specialty stores (39%). A full 72% of patrons indicate that their typical mode of travel to the library is to walk.

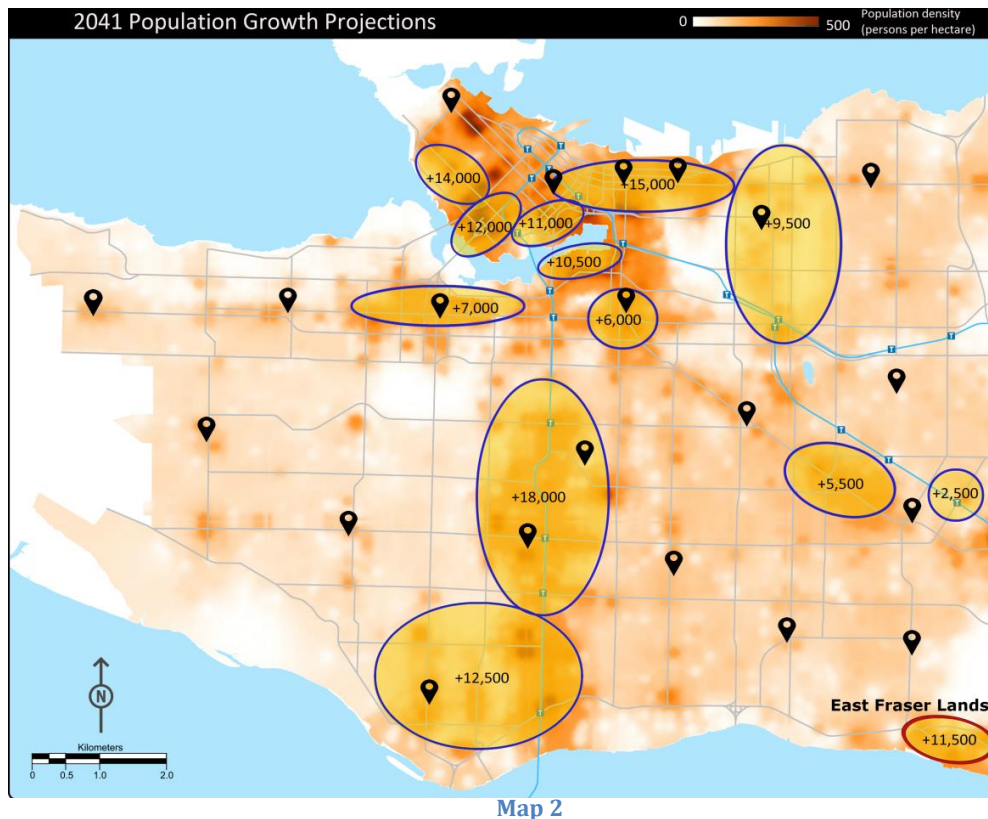
“I wish this library were more accessible – nearer to more transit options and things that I need (grocery stores, banks, etc). It feels like it’s located in the middle of nowhere and I don’t go as often as I’d like to.”-Collingwood patron, 20-29 years old

²² Library size and population data from 2015 Canadian Public Library Statistics, published by Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC). VPL’s total space per capita remained at 0.80 from 2015 to 2017.

VPL Facilities: Looking Ahead

Similar to the trends outlined for North American public libraries, VPL is also seeing a change in the way in which patrons use library spaces. Over the last five years, we have seen consistent declines in traditional branch activity such as physical circulation (-23%) and reference questions (-11%), while digital circulation (+372%) and visits to VPL's website and apps (+23%) have seen significant growth. At the same time, program attendance has increased (+22%) and branches are reporting more requests for meeting rooms and quiet study and reading spaces²³. The demands for larger and more flexible library spaces are evident at VPL, as they are in public libraries across North America.

A review of population growth areas in Vancouver shows that densification over the next 25 years is projected to be concentrated in specific areas of the City (see Map 2²⁴). These high-growth areas will help to determine where VPL should focus any future expansion; in the coming decades, some of these densifying areas will not be sufficiently served by existing facilities. An example is the former industrial area of East Fraser Lands (see Map 2, circled in red), which is now a developing community expected to house approximately 12,500 residents²⁵ who will be able to work, shop, and play locally²⁶. Beyond straight population growth, we will also need to ensure that VPL is meeting the needs of an aging population, an increasing number of newcomers, and a larger vulnerable population.



²³ Vancouver Public Library. (2017). *Annual Operating Report*. All 5 year changes are from 2012 to 2017, with the exception of Program Attendance which, due to a 2017 change in measurement methodology, is measured from 2011 to 2016.

²⁴ Note: Map 2 does not reflect development policy and plans approved since August 2016, e.g. Cambie Corridor Phase 3.

²⁵ City of Vancouver. (2018). *East Fraser Lands Open House Information Displays Presentation*; pp. 6.

²⁶ Pablo, Carlito. (2009). *Vancouver's East Fraser Lands Heats Up*. The Georgia Straight. Vancouver Free Press Publishing Corporation.

In summary, facility planning trends are highlighting significant changes in how library space is being used, leading to larger and more flexible facility spaces. Although VPL users are generally satisfied with the current state of library facilities, some neighbourhood residents are challenged with aging, insufficiently sized and/or poorly located branches. These challenges will be magnified in the future if our spaces do not keep pace – in size, location and condition - with the greater demands of an expanding population. VPL will need to increase its total space available to the public in response to shifts in space usage and local population growth, while also ensuring a continued presence in those communities with the greatest need for our services.

Guiding Principles

To provide context for the strategic direction of VPL's facility planning and management, guiding principles were developed. These principles were shaped by the mission, vision and values of VPL as well as input from VPL Board members, management and the City of Vancouver Planning department:

1. **VPL will continue to align its facility planning, including its facility model, with the City of Vancouver's medium to long-term plans.**

The City's forecasts of neighbourhood-level population growth, densification, and demographic changes, as well as the City's plans for community hubs, areas where they are undertaking community plans, and creation of new neighbourhoods, are key to determining priorities for library locations and range of services offered.

2. **VPL will aim to expand its total space in keeping with population growth.**

VPL's total space should increase proportionally to population growth in order to serve a greater number of users with shifting expectations for library service and space usage. At the same time, VPL will continue to seek opportunities to enhance the benefits per square foot to a growing population.

3. **VPL's facilities will reflect a range of location characteristics depending on the population's needs for service within the local area.**

While some users (for example, families with young children) may prefer libraries to be co-located with community centres, others find it most convenient to visit libraries located in the vicinity of retail shopping districts. In other cases, the library will be located where it can best serve to strengthen community health and well-being. We will not deploy a one-size-fits-all approach but will seek what best serves the local population.

4. **VPL's facilities will be built to house the breadth and depth of library services required by current and future populations who will live, work, and use services in the local area.**

The library space will be sufficiently sized to meet present needs and will allow for maximum flexibility in space usage to meet future needs and keep pace with library trends.

5. **VPL's facilities will be easily accessible to the neighbourhood populations they are intended to serve.**

Access will be optimized based on walking, cycling and the use of public transit – consistent with the City's goals on environmental sustainability.

These guidelines set the direction for decisions and actions to be taken on VPL's facilities. They frame VPL's intentions for future facility planning and shape the remaining sections of this plan.

Facility Model

Public Library Facility Models

A facility model is a framework that helps to understand and align a library system’s total available space with needs across the system. It indicates the size and type of facilities that constitute the library system. A scan of North American public libraries found that facility models typically comprise a combination of four facility types: a Central (or Reference) Library, Regional (or District) Branches, Neighbourhood (or Community) Branches, and non-traditional library facilities such as Express or Focused Service branches. Each type of facility is differentiated by a number of characteristics such as size of population served, size of facility, and range of services offered (see Table 3).

	Population Served by Facility	Target Sq. Ft.	Services Offered
Central/Reference Library	Entire City	65K-350K	All Core + Special
Regional/District Branches	50,000+	20K-65K	All Core + Special
Neighbourhood Branches	10,000-50,000	5-20K	All Core
Non-traditional Library Facilities	<10,000	<5K	Some Core

Table 3

Non-traditional library facilities include a wide range of limited service outlets, designed to meet specific needs of a given population. Examples include: a free-standing kiosk in a high traffic mall or transit station to pick up or drop off material; a children’s computer resource room in a community centre; a seniors-focused programming area in a seniors’ centre, or an area housing an English-as-an-additional language collection in a school that targets international students²⁷.

Each library system must decide on the facility model that best suits the needs of the population served. The composition of a specific library’s facility model will be based on a number of considerations: population size, density and distribution; geography and topography; mobility, logistics, and City planning goals.

Following is a sample of public libraries and the Facility Model elements they employ (see Table 4):

²⁷ Sacramento Public Library Authority. (2007). *Facilities Master Plan 2007-2025*. 51.

	Toronto	Mississauga	Brampton	Surrey	Halifax	Greater Victoria
Population	2,800,000	757,000	510,000	509,900	403,131	304,000
Central/Reference Library	x	x	x	x	x	
Regional/District Branches	x		x	x		x
Neighbourhood Branches	x	x		x	x	x
Non-Traditional Library Facilities	x	x				x

Table 4

VPL’s Facility Model: Past, Current & Future

The last time VPL identified a facility model was in 1996. At the time, our facility model was made up of four elements:

- Central Library (350K sq ft)
- Area Branches (15 to 20K sq ft)
- Community Branches (8 to 12K sq ft) and
- Neighbourhood Branches (4 to 6K sq ft) ²⁸.

The 1996 model was discontinued in 2006 as the trend towards larger branch sizes and other changes driven by shifting user expectations rendered the model obsolete. Two storefront facilities were also deployed (Riley Park and Kensington²⁹), and were later re-developed into neighbourhood branches.

Applying the characteristics from Table 3 to VPL’s current facility network reveals that our current facility model consists of a Central Library, a network of neighbourhood branches, and one non-traditional library facility: a focused-service branch at Carnegie Centre.

Several anticipated changes are influencing VPL’s future facility model – our desired state for VPL’s facility network of the future. First, we note that Metro Vancouver has designated the Oakridge area as a Municipal Town Centre (MTC), a regionally significant urban centre that serves as an activity hub accommodating a range of job, retail, cultural, and public spaces, and a variety of housing options³⁰. The location of the Oakridge MTC at a major city intersection and on the Canada Line Skytrain will draw visitors from well beyond the local neighbourhood to include an area greater than 50,000 people. As a result, Oakridge Branch, once re-developed, will be expanded from its current 13,000 sq. ft. to near 25,000 sq. ft., the size of a regional branch, enabling it to offer a broader array of services than a typical neighbourhood branch.

Additionally, in order to meet the future needs of the changing Vancouver population, it will be important for VPL to explore more non-traditional library facilities - to test new and innovative ways to

²⁸ Vancouver Public Library. (1996). *Report: New Service Model for VPL- Area Services*.

²⁹ The storefront facilities in the Riley Park and Kensington neighbourhoods were 1,430 sq.ft. and 1,530 sq.ft., respectively. These facilities offered limited services and reduced service hours relative to neighbourhood branches.

³⁰ City of Vancouver. (2017). *Municipal Town Centre Overview, Cambie Corridor Planning Program*.

expand the library’s reach with potentially lower requirements for physical space and capital investment. As indicated in the scan of public library facility models, library trends are pointing to new models of providing library services to their communities, and the rapid densification and rising real estate costs in Vancouver make trying out new models a priority.

VPL’s future facility model, the desired state for VPL’s future branch network, reflects these anticipated changes to our network. It encompasses all four facility types identified in the scan of public libraries (see Table 5).

	Population Served by Facility	Target Sq. Ft.	Services Offered
Central Library	Entire City	390K	All Core + Special
Regional Branches	50,000+	25K -35K	All Core + Special
Neighbourhood Branches	10,000-50,000	10K-20K	All Core
Non-traditional Library Facilities	<10,000	<5K	Some Core

Table 5

While the four facility types in this model are identical to those in the public library scan, the size range of both the Regional and Neighbourhood branches has been narrowed to indicate anticipated space needs based on the assessment of our current facilities. The size of Central Library is larger than those in the public library scan, reflecting its current size and the planned expansion to be completed in 2018.

Branch Location Decision Framework

An important objective of this Facilities Master Plan is to provide a consistent set of guidelines that ensure that VPL’s future branches are located where they can best meet the needs of their respective communities. Public consultation highlighted that to meet the needs of library users, VPL must provide sufficient branch space, convenient and accessible library locations, and facilities at walkable distances from home and other neighbourhood services. The branch location decision framework was created to help VPL identify optimal locations when seeking to open new branches or relocate existing branches.

Starting with the public consultation findings and a scan of public library facility master plans, we built the decision framework by leveraging the collective knowledge of VPL management and Board members through a set of workshops and by gathering input from the City’s Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability department and Transportation Planning division. We then tested the criteria against a select set of VPL neighbourhoods and branches.

The decision framework is intended to apply to VPL’s future neighbourhood and regional branches, but not necessarily to non-traditional (express or focused-service) facilities. It encompasses two sections:

- Neighbourhood criteria – a series of requirements and preferences pertaining to the geographic neighbourhood for which we are considering a branch.
- Site criteria – a series of requirements and preferences relating to the specific site within the neighbourhood where we are considering locating a branch.

Work on identifying specific criteria for non-traditional facilities is outside of the scope of this plan.

Neighbourhood Criteria

Requirements

1. The library’s neighbourhood meets, or is forecast to meet in the next 10 years, the minimum population threshold - taking into account people who live, work, and use services in the neighbourhood, i.e. 10,000 population for a Neighbourhood Branch and 50,000 population for a Regional Branch, per the Facility Model.
2. There is no other branch to serve the neighbourhood within 2 km.

Preferences

1. The neighbourhood is forecast to experience above average population growth and/or job growth in the next 25 years.
2. The neighbourhood will reflect demographic groups that are priorities for library services – for example, families with young children, seniors, newcomers, economically vulnerable populations, etc.

3. The neighbourhood may not meet the population criteria but geographic and other physical barriers make it difficult to access the next closest library, i.e. highways, large hills.
4. The City of Vancouver has identified that the library can play a vital role in providing needed services to the neighbourhood's population and can serve to strengthen community health and well-being.

Site Criteria

Requirements

1. The branch site is highly visible or can otherwise be easily located by visitors, i.e. on a major pedestrian street, corner location, street level frontage with windows, ability to have prominent signage, etc.
2. The branch site is located in close proximity to retail services such as major grocery stores, i.e. approximately 5 min walk (400 m) to major services.
3. The branch site is easily accessible for most neighbourhood residents via public transit, walking and/or biking.
4. The branch is a sufficient size to deliver the full range of services needed by the current and future population who live, work and use services in the local area, i.e. 10K to 20K sq. ft. for a Neighbourhood Branch, 25K to 35K sq. ft. for a Regional Branch, per the Facility Model.

Preferences

1. The branch site is physically co-located with, or in close proximity (1 to 2 blocks) to, partners who provide compatible services to the community. Examples may be: community centres, cultural or educational facilities, housing or social services.
2. The branch site is in a high pedestrian traffic area, with easy pedestrian access.
3. The entire branch space is on one level (ideally at street level) to facilitate visibility, patron circulation and library operations within the space.
4. The branch site has future expansion opportunities where the local area population is projected to grow substantially in the next 10 to 20 years.

How to Use the Framework

This framework is intended to be used whenever VPL is assessing locations for new or relocated branches. There are two typical applications:

- **“Reactive” use:** When VPL is offered a potential site (typically as part of the City's development review process for major real estate development proposals), use the framework to evaluate the proposal and support related negotiations;

- **“Proactive use”**: When VPL wants to assess possible new locations or prioritize existing locations for reinvestment as part of a facilities planning exercise (e.g. capital planning, see next section), use the framework to review and compare options.

Appendix A provides a “decision-support” tool that applies the decision framework to help users assess potential branch locations. For each criterion, it presents factors to consider and/or useful sources of data. It also determines a total score for the location - giving a higher weighting to requirements and a lower weighting to preferences.

The Next 25 Years: Strategic Priorities for Facility Investments

In this section, the tools presented in the previous two chapters are applied to identify long-term priorities for capital investment in VPL facilities. Every four years, as part of the City of Vancouver’s capital planning process, VPL is required to identify priority library facilities for capital investment, to be included in the City’s ten-year capital outlook. For the purposes of this document, facility investment priorities are identified for an even longer 25-year timeframe.

Priorities are expected to shift as circumstances change over the planning horizon due to changes in the external environment such as public library trends and Vancouver population trends, as well as in VPL’s internal requirements. The last section of this document, “Evolving the FMP Over Time,” outlines how we will maintain and update these plans. Nevertheless, having a 25-year plan provides VPL with a long-term roadmap of facility investments to contextualize shorter-term priorities.

This section encompasses priorities for major re-investment in existing branches, including branch expansions and relocations, as well as investment in new library facilities. It excludes facility refurbishments and other space-related projects covered in VPL’s Facilities Refurbishment Plan. We end this section with an assessment of VPL’s total space requirements over this 25-year period.

Re-investments in Existing Facilities

The strength of an existing branch’s location is necessary but insufficient to determine its relative priority for re-investment. Therefore, four factors were considered in setting priorities for re-investment in existing facilities:

- **Location:** Using the Branch Location Decision Framework, VPL’s current branches were ranked and prioritized.
- **Intensity of Use:** The current capacity of the branch relative to its foot traffic was used as a measure of relative “busy-ness”.
- **Condition:** Rated using the Facility Condition Index in the Facilities Refurbishment Plan.
- **Age:** Branches aged 30+ years were deemed a higher priority for reinvestment compared to younger branches.

Given the importance of location in driving the performance of a branch, the branch location score was given double the weight compared to the other three factors. See **Appendix B** for the tool created to prioritize the existing network of branches using quantitative inputs.

A final consideration in developing a branch prioritization was to allow for qualitative input from staff who have deep knowledge and experience with our branches – input beyond the measures we could readily include quantitatively. The qualitative input from branch experts included factors such as a

branch’s lease coming up for renewal, which often acts as a trigger to prioritize a branch reinvestment in terms of its timing; or critical branch condition or overcrowding circumstances, making the branch a relatively higher priority. The inclusion of qualitative factors will allow VPL to adapt the prioritization system over time as other factors are consistently highlighted by experts.

Through this analysis, we developed the final ranking of our existing branches for re-investment (see Table 6).

Priority	Needs Reinvestment Within	Branches
High	1 to 12 years	Collingwood, Joe Fortes, Marpole, Kerrisdale, West Point Grey
Medium	13 to 25 years	Britannia, Carnegie, Fraserview, Kitsilano, Oakridge
Low	25+ years	Champlain Heights, Dunbar, Firehall, Hastings, Kensington, Mount Pleasant, néca?mat ct Strathcona, Renfrew, South Hill, Terry Salman

Table 6

The list above makes up VPL’s priorities. These align quite well, though not perfectly, with City plans for redevelopment. Three of the five high priority branches are part of planned redevelopments: Collingwood, Joe Fortes, and Marpole. Two of the medium priority branches are also part of planned redevelopments: Britannia and Oakridge. While these two branches are considered medium priority for reinvestment, changes to these locations are being driven by larger developments which encompass the library branches.

To illustrate how each of the factors played a role in a branch’s overall ranking, we have provided an assessment summary for two branches – one high and one low priority (see Tables 7 & 8).

Collingwood Branch: High Priority for Re-investment		
Factor	Factor Ranking	Rationale for Ranking
Location	High	Collingwood’s location is more than 400 m (approximately a 5-minute walk) away from major retail services such as grocery stores, and situated in a low pedestrian traffic area, with no compatible community services in the nearby vicinity. It is far from the high-density developments and transit hub at Joyce-Collingwood skytrain station.
Intensity of Use	Low	Although one of VPL’s smaller branches, Collingwood’s total size (5,300 sq. ft.) is relatively spacious for its low annual number of visits (83K) due primarily to its poor location.
Condition	High	Branch was considered in poor condition according to its Facility Condition Index in the 2011 Facility Condition Audit.
Age	High	Originally built in 1951, Collingwood is well past the age where significant re-investment is due.

Table 7

Dunbar Branch: Low Priority for Re-investment		
Factor	Factor Ranking	Rationale for Ranking
Location	Low	Dunbar Branch is in a strong location: it is within 400 m (approximately a 5 minute walk) of major retail services along Dunbar Street; it is situated in a visible location on a busy pedestrian area of Dunbar, and it is 240 m away from compatible community services.
Intensity of Use	Medium	While the branch size is relatively small (6,400 sq. ft.) and should be increased, the amount of space relative to visits (152K) is not as critical as other VPL branches.
Condition	Medium	Branch is considered in fair condition following some major renovations in 2009 & 2014.
Age	High	Originally built in 1950, Dunbar is well past the age where significant re-investment is due.

Table 8

Investments in New Facilities

VPL used the branch location neighbourhood criteria to assess potential areas for new branches. We also used the site criteria to consider ideal branch locations within potential neighbourhoods and the type of branch (regional, neighbourhood, or non-traditional) best suited for the local population.

Two priorities were identified: a new neighbourhood branch in the rapidly expanding East Fraser Lands community of southeast Vancouver and potential non-traditional library facilities.

East Fraser Lands

VPL has identified that the newly developing community of East Fraser Lands in southeast Vancouver meets the criteria for a new neighbourhood branch. The plan calls for a complete, sustainable community including a variety of housing types, green spaces, community centre, elementary school, childcare facilities, retail services and a town square, to be fully developed in the coming ten years or so with a residential population of 12,500. The type and size of the facility, and the range of services offered, will depend on securing necessary investment to meet the competing needs of the new community.

Using the branch location criteria, rationale for this new branch is as follows:

- The projected population of this new neighbourhood warrants a separate neighbourhood branch;
- The next closest branch is Champlain Heights at a distance of just over 2 km;
- The steep hill north of East Fraser Lands forms a significant barrier to access to the Champlain Heights branch;
- The civic centre site may offer a co-location opportunity that would be highly visible and easily accessible to East Fraser Land residents along the community's pedestrian walkway

Non-traditional Library Facilities

As identified in VPL's future facility model, it is important to experiment with non-traditional approaches to library facilities. Non-traditional library facilities allow for testing new and innovative ways to meet community needs with potentially lower requirements for physical space and capital investment.

Potential areas for this type of experimentation could include neighbourhoods where residents have a particularly greater need for library services - for example: newcomers, seniors, or more economically vulnerable populations. Similarly, we may test different models in areas where the City is anticipating higher population growth as a result of newly adopted development policy and regulation, such as Vancouver's Cambie Corridor. With the centralized transit hubs and possible commercial expansion planned for this corridor, a non-traditional facility could complement and support the new regional branch at Oakridge and surrounding neighbourhood branches. With long-term growth and evolution to occur across the neighbourhoods of Vancouver, we will work with the City to identify locations for the development of non-traditional facilities within the next 25 years.

Total Space Requirements

A common measure to determine the total space needs of a library system compares the library's total square footage to the size of the population it serves. As discussed in the Context & Assessment section, VPL had a ratio of 0.80 sq. ft. per capita in 2017 based on a total of 507,630 square feet across the Central Library and 20 branches, and a City population of 631,486. As discussed, this ratio is the highest of large urban public libraries in Canada, but still lower than the library standards recommended by two Ontario library service organizations.

Vancouver's population is forecast to grow 21% by 2041, reaching 765,000 residents in a rapidly densifying urban environment. In order to meet the needs of a growing population and support access and convenience for library users, the following requirements should be met:

- VPL's total space should increase proportionally to population growth, translating into an increase of 21% over the next 25 years, and
- The majority of additional space should be allocated to branches to re-balance the system across the City; the allocation of this additional space should be based on greatest need as determined through our analysis of VPL strategic priorities.

These requirements translate to a 107,000 sq. ft. targeted increase to VPL's total size over the next 25 years, with the majority of this increase enabling expansion of existing branches and/or development of new branches.

With the long-range plans for facility investment described earlier in this section, it appears that VPL is well positioned to meet the space requirements needed to serve Vancouver's growing population well into the future. We are likely to attain the 107,000 sq. ft. growth target through a combination of:

1. Planned facility re-investments – expanding existing branches, including potential re-locations to more optimal sites within current neighbourhoods;

2. New facility investments – establishing new branches in emerging neighbourhoods, areas of need, or along developing transit hubs/corridors; may take the form of non-traditional library facilities; and
3. The Central Library changes planned to take place from 2018 to 2020.

As demands for facilities and services increase across the city, in some neighbourhoods VPL may need to consider how to best deliver services that meet community needs through seeking greater efficiency in space use and further opportunities for co-location and shared use spaces.

Planned Facility Re-investments

The branches prioritized for re-investment in the next 25 years are summarized in Table 9 along with recommended branch sizes.

Branch	Current Size (sq.ft.)	Recommended Size (sq. ft.)	Additional Sq. Ft.
High Priority Re-investment			
Collingwood	5,300	10,000	4,700
Joe Fortes	4,300	20,000	15,700
Marpole	3,600	17,000	13,400
Kerrisdale	5,700	12,000	6,300
West Point Grey	5,100	12,000	6,900
Total	24,000	71,000	47,000
Medium Priority Re-investment			
Britannia	9,700	15,000	5,300
Carnegie	1,930	1,930	0
Fraserview	8,100	15,000	6,900
Kitsilano	9,500	20,000	10,500
Oakridge	13,000	25,000	12,000
Total	42,230	76,930	34,700

Table 9

Each branch re-investment identifies a meaningful increase in branch size to meet the square footage parameters outlined in VPL’s Facility Model. Based on the length of time typically required for branch capital investment projects, it is anticipated that the above list will take a minimum of 25 years to complete. **Meeting these size recommendations will result in VPL gaining 81,700 additional sq. ft. or 76% of the 107,000 sq. ft. growth target from branch re-investments.**

New Facility Investments

For the potential East Fraser Lands branch, we would propose a minimum branch size of 7,000 sq. ft.

The space requirements for non-traditional library facilities are highly dependent on the types of approaches chosen to best meet library patrons’ needs. For planning purposes, we foresee the potential development of two non-traditional facility locations at approximately 2,000 sq. ft. each. **Therefore, desired new branch investments would account for approximately 11,000 additional sq. ft. or 10% of the 107,000 sq. ft. targeted growth.**

Central Library Changes

Leading the new facility investments will be the 43,800 sq. ft. expansion planned for levels 8 and 9 of the Central Library, to be opened in the latter half of 2018. This expansion will further enhance the use of VPL’s Central Library, including new spaces for exhibits, a dedicated reading room, a theatre, additional meeting rooms and the highly anticipated rooftop garden.

Looking ahead to 2020, plans are in place for the City of Vancouver Archives to move into the Central Library, offering services to the public through a shared reading room with VPL Special Collections and Library and Archives Canada. The City of Vancouver Archives will use 29,900 sq. ft. on the Central Library’s level 7. **With both major changes at the Central Library, we will see a net growth in library space of 13,900 sq. ft. or 13% of the 107,000 sq. ft. growth target.**

Summary: 25-Year Total Space Requirements

Altogether, combined space requirements for the above plans are summarized in Table 10.

VPL Plans for Facility Investment	Additional Sq.Ft.	% of Targeted Growth (107,000 sq.ft.)
Planned branch re-investments	81,700	76%
New branch investments:		
• East Fraser Lands	7,000	10%
• Non-traditional facilities (2 @ approx. 2,000 sq. ft.)	approx. 4,000	
Central Library changes	13,900	13%
Total	106,600	100%

Table 10

Should VPL be able to fulfill its plans for facility investments over the next 25 years, we would see approximate growth in size of **106,600 sq. ft. or 100% of the targeted growth.** Based on past experience and assuming continued collaboration with the City, these plans are achievable in the 25-year time horizon and will position VPL to serve Vancouver’s growing population well into the future.

Evolving the Plan Over Time

There will undoubtedly be changes to VPL's external environment and internal priorities over the coming 25-year period. There may be, for example, changes to the city's projected population growth and demographic trends, or a shift in plans for development in Vancouver or in the overall real estate market. An evolution in the planning of library interior spaces could also necessitate a shift to certain parameters of this plan. To remain useful and relevant over the long-term, this plan will need to be reviewed and updated regularly.

Changes to the plan are the responsibility of the Manager, Policy and Planning. Employing the DARCI model, roles are as follows:

Decision-maker: VPL Board of Trustees

Accountable: Directors Group

Responsible: Manager, Policy & Planning

Consulted: Neighbourhood Services Managers; Manager, Facilities & Purchasing

Informed: Managers Group

In addition, library users and Vancouver residents in general will be consulted and informed as appropriate in order to understand their needs, gather ideas, and obtain feedback about system performance and potential plans. This consultation may be standalone (e.g. a survey supporting plan revision) or part of on-going VPL consultation and data/information gathering (e.g. regular user surveys).

The **Facility Model** and **Branch Location Decision Framework** are two sections of this plan that are to be referenced and applied as part of ongoing planning activities for new branch opportunities and potential branch expansions and/or relocations. As a result, the need to update these sections of the plan will become evident with ongoing use. Staff will conduct an annual review of the Facility Model and Branch Location Decision Framework at the end of each calendar year, incorporating any modifications identified during the year. The Manager, Policy and Planning will initiate this review in early Q4 for finalization by the Directors Group, and if changes are recommended, a report will be provided to the Board of Trustees by year-end. We will begin this annual review process in Q4 2019.

The **Strategic Priorities for Facility Investments**, including the identification and ranking of branch priorities and the assessment of total space requirements, will need to be reviewed and updated with each new capital plan. For each 4-year capital planning cycle led by the City of Vancouver, VPL is required to provide its priority facility investments along with proposed facility sizes to Real Estate and Facilities Management (REFM) to be included in the City's 10-year capital outlook. Included in the analysis of the prioritization of facility investments will be a review of the Development Category Indicator (DCI) with REFM. Therefore, every four years, the analysis in this section will need to be updated by September, 16 months in advance of the new capital plan. The Manager, Policy & Planning is

responsible to initiate the next analysis in time for finalization and approval by the Directors Group and Board of Trustees in September 2021, in time to inform the 2023 - 2026 capital planning process.

Appendix A: Branch Location Decision Framework – Assessment Tool

Neighbourhood	Criteria	Data Sources	Criterion Met?	Score
Requirements	The library's neighbourhood meets, or is forecast to meet in the next 10 years, the minimum population threshold - taking into account people who live, work and use services in the area, per the facility model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census data from Statistics Canada via the City of Vancouver website Data and maps on population growth projections, demographics, workforce size from City of Vancouver Planning Department 	Yes	3
	There is no other branch to serve the neighbourhood within 2 km.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine distance between branches using mapping software 	Yes	3
Preferences	The neighbourhood is forecast to experience above average (>25%) population growth in the next 25 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data and maps on population growth projections and workforce size from City of Vancouver Planning Department 	Yes	1
	The neighbourhood reflects demographic groups that are priorities for library services – for example, families with young children, seniors, newcomers, economically vulnerable populations, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic data from City of Vancouver Planning Department Census data from Statistics Canada via the City of Vancouver website 	Yes	1
	The neighbourhood may not meet the population criteria but geographic and other physical barriers make it difficult to access the next closest library, i.e. large hills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Vancouver topographic maps Branch staff knowledge on local area 	Yes	1
	The City of Vancouver has identified that the library can play a vital role in providing needed services to the neighbourhood's population and can serve to strengthen community health and well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Vancouver staff 	Yes	1
Site	Criteria	Supporting Data	Criterion Met?	Score
Requirements	The branch site is highly visible or can otherwise be easily located by visitors, i.e. on major pedestrian street, corner location, street level frontage with windows, ability to have prominent signage, etc.	Assess branch visibility factors via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branch site visits Mapping software Branch staff knowledge on local area 	Yes	3
	The branch site is located in close proximity to retail services such as major grocery stores, i.e. approximately 5 min walk (400 m) to major services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood exploration using mapping software Walk Score via walkscore.com 	Yes	3
	The branch site is easily accessible for most neighbourhood residents via public transit, walking and/or biking (specifics to come based on the City's advice on transportation planning).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cycling Network, Frequent Transit Network, Journey to Work data and maps from City of Vancouver Transportation Planning Department Transit Score and Bike Score via walkscore.com 	Yes	3
	The branch is a sufficient size to deliver the full range of services needed by the current and future population who live, work and use services in the local area, per the Facility Model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VPL Facilities Refurbishment Plan Site plans for potential branch Population growth projections, demographics, workforce size from City of Vancouver Planning Department 	Yes	3
Preferences	The branch site is physically co-located with, or in close proximity (1 to 2 blocks) to, partners who provide compatible services to the community. Examples may be: recreational, cultural, or educational facilities; housing or social services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Vancouver website Community service websites Mapping software to identify location of community organizations 	Yes	1
	The branch site is in a high pedestrian traffic area, with easy pedestrian access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Vancouver maps Branch staff knowledge on local area Mapping software 	Yes	1
	The entire branch space (excluding staff room) is on one level (ideally at street level) to facilitate visibility, patron circulation and library operations within the space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VPL Facilities Refurbishment Plan Site plans for potential branch 	Yes	1
	The branch site has future expansion opportunities where the local area population is projected to grow substantially in the next 10 to 20 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VPL Facilities Refurbishment Plan Site plans for potential branch 	Yes	1
Total Score				26

Appendix B: Branch Prioritization Tool

Branch	Location Requirements	Location Preferences	Location (Req+Pref)	Location Score	Intensity of Use	Intensity of Use Score	Condition	Condition Score	Age	Age Score	Total Score
Carnegie Reading Room	9	4	13	2.00	217	-9.03	Good	3	Yes	-3	-7.03
Kerrisdale (KER)	12	4	16	2.46	39	-1.64	Poor	-3	Yes	-3	-5.18
Marpole (MAR)	12	4	16	2.46	37	-1.56	Poor	-3	Yes	-3	-5.10
Collingwood (COL[cur])	9	4	13	2.00	16	-0.66	Poor	-3	Yes	-3	-4.66
West Point Grey (WPG)	15	2	17	2.62	26	-1.10	Poor	-3	Yes	-3	-4.48
Joe Fortes (JFS)	15	4	19	2.92	72	-3.00	Fair	0	Yes	-3	-3.08
Fraserview (FRV)	6	3	9	1.38	15	-0.63	Fair	0	Yes	-3	-2.24
Kitsilano (KIT)	12	2	14	2.15	33	-1.39	Fair	0	Yes	-3	-2.23
Britannia (BRI)	12	3	15	2.31	28	-1.17	Fair	0	Yes	-3	-1.86
Dunbar (DUN)	12	3	15	2.31	24	-0.99	Fair	0	Yes	-3	-1.68
Oakridge (OAK)	15	4	19	2.92	30	-1.24	Fair	0	Yes	-3	-1.31
South Hill (SHL)	12	3	15	2.31	32	-1.31	Good	3	Yes	-3	0.99
Kensington (KEN)	12	1	13	2.00	22	-0.92	Fair	0	No	3	4.08
Firehall (FHL)	12	2	14	2.15	24	-0.99	Fair	0	No	3	4.17
Renfrew (REN)	12	4	16	2.46	22	-0.93	Fair	0	No	3	4.54
Hastings (HAS)	12	4	16	2.46	17	-0.72	Fair	0	No	3	4.74
Terry Salman (TSN)	6	3	9	1.38	40	-1.66	Good	3	No	3	5.72
Champlain Heights (CHA)	9	5	14	2.15	23	-0.94	Good	3	No	3	7.21
néca?mat ct Strathcona	9	3	12	1.85	14	-0.57	Good	3	No	3	7.27
Mount Pleasant (MPL)	18	3	21	3.23	36	-1.50	Good	3	No	3	7.73

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