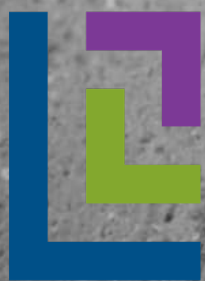


Management Discussion and Analysis 2020



REGINA
PUBLIC
LIBRARY



From the Library Director and CEO

Like many organizations, 2020 was a uniquely challenging year for Regina Public Library.

Our start to the year, always a time of new plans and new ideas, took a turn as we moved into spring and the world responded to the realities of the pandemic.

We were forced to close our branches and turn our attention to providing services to a community largely separate and apart from each other. For this we took advantage of our wide array of online offerings and further enhanced them to support the wellbeing of our citizens.



Our branches re-opened in early July, and our focus expanded to include the provision of some physical library assets, as well as new lines of business such as curbside pickup and an expanded library hotline. Re-opening also brought with it a more rigorous and comprehensive approach to staff and customer safety.

As we responded to change throughout 2020, we kept in mind three strategic objectives: an ongoing commitment to our customers; effective planning, project, and change management; and advanced technologies to support customer service.

I often wonder how my predecessors in 1918 responded to community need when the Spanish Flu gripped the world. I am proud to say that our team in 2020 continually sought ways to inspire our community to discover, learn, and connect. Examples of how we did this are contained in this document, and I invite you to browse its pages.

I am particularly proud of our staff and their willingness to be flexible and adapt to this challenging and ever-changing situation. Although our plans for 2020 changed, our commitment to our customers, and to the provision of library services, did not.

Jeff Barber
Library Director and CEO



Management Discussion and Analysis

The Management Discussion and Analysis (MD&A) is intended to provide an explanation of Regina Public Library's (RPL's, the Library's) core business and strategy and explain the financial position and results of operations for the year ended December 31, 2020. The MD&A is the responsibility of management and represents management's expectations as of March 2021.

The MD&A should be read in conjunction with the financial statements and notes to the financial statements as they complement and supplement these documents.

The MD&A contains forward-looking statements based on RPL's estimates and assumptions concerning future results and events. Due to the risks and uncertainties inherent in any forecast outlook, the actual results may differ from those noted in this discussion.

Who we are

Regina Public Library (RPL) is an urban library system committed to delivering the highest level of service to meet the ever-evolving needs of the people of Regina. Since its inception in 1908, it continues to play an integral role in the social and economic vibrancy of the city.

The library is an integrated cultural institution with a commitment to literacy in all forms. It provides community members with opportunities to learn and empower themselves, and guidance toward personal fulfillment and success.

This commitment to literacy in all forms is delivered through a range of tools for customers to use and enjoy:

- Eight branches throughout the city, and a Central Library downtown that offer welcoming, and inclusive spaces where people and ideas meet;
- An extensive collection from which to borrow books, DVDs, children's toys, musical instruments, and access to province-wide library resources through the Saskatchewan Information and Library Services Consortium (SILS);
- Online collections featuring eBooks, eAudiobooks, streaming movies and music, extensive databases, newspapers, magazines, courses and workshops, live homework support, and more;
- Dunlop Art Gallery, a nationally ranked gallery offering the best in Canadian contemporary art, with locations at Central Library and Sherwood Village Branch,

and providing customers with access to an art rental service and arts and cultural programming;

- RPL Film Theatre, showcasing the best in world and alternative cinema, with ties to, and support for, local filmmakers and artists;
- Access to new technologies including a professional-grade recording and film production studio; 3D printers, and gaming devices including virtual reality stations;
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) services and literacy supports from volunteers trained through a nationally-recognized training program developed by RPL;
- Programs, speakers, and events for all ages and interests that support reading, curiosity and discovery;
- Outreach services for homebound customers and those living with physical impairments;
- Community engagement offering citizens opportunities to explore literacy and learning through venues other than library branches; and
- Partnerships with other community stakeholders and services to provide shared learning opportunities.

We are committed to enhancing the quality of life in Regina. Through our collections, programs, and services, RPL promotes and supports cultural, economic, educational, and recreational development in the city.

Governance

RPL exists through a bylaw of the City of Regina, and is continued under *The Public Libraries Act, 1996*. The general management, regulation, and control of the library is vested in the Regina Public Library Board. The Board consists of the Mayor, one City Councillor, and seven members of the public appointed by the City Council for two-year terms.

RPL adheres to the provisions of *The Public Libraries Act, 1996*, which provides for the establishment, development, and maintenance of public libraries in the province of Saskatchewan. The Act mandates all public libraries to be part of a provincial library system and ensures equitable access to basic library services by all residents of Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan Information and Library Services (SILS) Consortium

RPL is a partner in the Saskatchewan Information and Library Services (SILS) Consortium. Formed in 2009, SILS brings together 11 public library systems in the province plus the Provincial Library and Literacy Office, a branch of the Ministry of Education, to provide

customers with access to library collections materials across the province. The consortium also enables members to collaborate on joint digital projects and purchases that benefit everyone in the province.

A library card provides all residents of Saskatchewan easy access to materials in over 300 public library branches across the province. The cooperation of public library systems, and a province-wide catalogue, enables citizens to borrow items anytime, anywhere in the province.



Our corporate strategy

In 2016, the Board adopted new vision, mission, and values statements for the Library which articulates our strategic direction.

Our Community Vision

An inclusive community of discovery and learning.

Our Vision for RPL

We are a dynamic hub of literacy, lifelong learning, curiosity, and new ideas, integral to the social and economic vibrancy of Regina. We inspire individuality, connection, and diversity.

Our Mission

RPL is a board governed, integrated cultural organization that exists to provide opportunities for discovery and learning in an inclusive, customer-centred, and safe environment. Specifically, RPL offers:

- Free and open access to resources
- Community space where people and ideas meet
- Programs and services that support reading, curiosity, and discovery
- Community opportunities that complement and strengthen the public library offering

Our Values

- Inspiration
- Inclusion
- Service
- Leadership
- Intellectual Freedom
- Accountability and Sustainability



RPL Strategic Plan, 2016–2021

The RPL Strategic Plan, 2016-2021, outlines a set of high-level imperatives necessary for the organization to meet its mission and continue toward its vision. It provides direction for the organization's priorities, envisions a desired future, and defines actions required to achieve that future.

Our strategic imperatives are our highest priority business goals and put into practice RPL's mission, vision, and values via a specific set of objectives. These imperatives provide the foundation for our work, frame our priorities, and focus our efforts:

- To achieve excellence in library governance;
- To maintain a high level of customer-focused library services resulting in public awareness and support for RPL; and
- To vitalize RPL's infrastructure through Central Library development and Branch renewal.

Our strategy encompasses four key areas: Community, Financial, Internal Operations, and Learning and Growth. Each area, in turn, outlines several goals that will form the basis of operational planning.

Community – Our success comes from contributing to our community through:

1. Stakeholders – Valued community partner in social and economic development
2. Customers – Valued community service provider and resource
3. Citizens – A community hub of which our community is proud

Financial – Ensuring accountability and sustainability by:

1. Sound fiscal management, accountable use of resources
2. Enhance operations through appropriate resource allocation to projects
3. Fund physical infrastructure projects through adequate resource allocation (Central Library development and Branch renewal)

Internal Operations – Excelling at those competencies and processes that drive our strategic imperative:

1. Advance technologies to support customer-centred service
2. Public relations, communications, and service consistent with brand
3. Funds development to support capital and operational projects

Learning and Growth – Fostering an environment of organizational learning and personal growth through:

1. Effective planning, project, and change management
2. A customer-centred culture in all we do
3. Stable and effective corporate leadership
4. Effective board governance providing clear definition

RPL's Strategic Plan will be revisited in 2021 and updated accordingly.



Core business

Regina Public Library provides a range of services to the public, the majority of which are free. While many of our offerings are available in our nine locations, we also provide digital materials and services via our website, as well as several community outreach programs and external offerings. We work closely with partners throughout the city to support local social and economic development.

RPL branches

RPL branches are community gathering places where the joy of reading, discovery and lifelong learning is respected and encouraged.

Branches offer positive, dynamic meeting places in which people can interact and share ideas. RPL assesses the priorities of customers and citizens and provides resources to support the offerings deemed most important by these groups. Expectations of library offerings vary across the city, and each branch provides its own unique set of services consistent with the needs and wishes of local neighbourhoods.

The following table provides information about the neighbourhoods each of our branches serve. We have also noted, based on review of our customer's postal codes, that many customers are willing to travel elsewhere in the city for library programs and services.

RPL Branches

Branch	Local neighbourhoods
Central Library	Downtown, Central Square
Central Children's 2311 – 12 th Ave.	Downtown, Central Square, Cathedral, Heritage
Albert Branch (at māmawêyatitân centre), 3355 – 6 th Ave.	North Central
Connaught Branch 3435 – 13 th Ave.	Cathedral
George Bothwell Branch (at Southland Mall), 2965 Gordon Road	Albert Park, Harbour Landing, Whitmore Park, Lakeview, Hillsdale
Glen Elm Branch 1601 Dewdney Ave. E	Dewdney East, Eastview
Prince of Wales Branch (at Core Ritchie Centre), 445 – 14 th Ave.	Al Ritchie, Gladmer Park, Boothill, Heritage
Regent Place Branch 331 Albert Street	Uplands, Northeast, Coronation Park, Regent Park
Sherwood Village Branch 6121 Rochdale Blvd.	Twin Lakes, Sherwood McCarthy, Lakeridge/Walsh Acres, Normanview, Prairie View, Argyle Park
Sunrise Branch (at Sandra Schmirler Leisure Centre) 3130 E. Woodhams Dr.	Arcola East

The RPL collection

The RPL collection is the set of materials made available for customers to borrow or use and offers both physical and digital resources. RPL's collection includes items such as books, eBooks, musical instruments, audiobooks, streaming movies, and access to online learning products such as CreativeBug, BrainFuse, Lynda.com, and Gale Courses.

The RPL collection is the backbone of our services, and library staff work hard to ensure we offer customers, and our community, items that are of interest to them. Selection of materials is based on many factors, including neighbourhood profiles from data collected by both the City of Regina and the Library; assessment of the Library's "holds" lists – books that customers have requested that are currently out, but for which they are willing to wait; and trends, popular culture, and timely events that affect customer interest.

Programming

RPL programming is as diverse as its customers. We typically offer over 7,000 programs per year to families, children, adults, and teens. Program content and subject matter is continuously evaluated to ensure it is relevant to the community, aligns with strategic priorities, and provides opportunity for all Reginaans to discover, learn, and connect.

A particular focus of programming that continues to grow and expand is our business offerings. We provide a range of business programming for small (and potential) business owners and individuals.

Community engagement

RPL's Community Engagement plan supports relationships with community partners that help ensure the library is relevant and helpful to the community. We recognize the importance of these partnerships, and of working collaboratively with our community partners. RPL has centralized its approach to partnership development and takes a proactive approach to seeking out and establishing community partnerships at all levels.

Literacy

The Library provides literacy assistance for English as an Additional Language (EAL) participants and other learners through one-to-one tutors, group tutoring sessions, book clubs, and special programs. Programs are supported by a highly committed group of volunteer tutors. RPL's commitment to our volunteers includes a comprehensive onboarding and training process, ongoing professional development, and opportunities to engage, share and learn with other volunteer tutors as well as a collection of teaching materials.

Digital innovation and services

RPL offers a range of innovative digital products and services to customers and the community. Led by its eServices Unit, the library seeks to eliminate barriers to accessing relevant and useful technology and offering the public access to current and emerging digital tools.

RPL continually assesses its digital assets to ensure web services and digital products and services are being integrated and designed for ease of use and convenience for customers. This includes the integration of the Library's provincial catalogue, RPLs' programs, films, exhibitions, and many third-party digital services platforms available from the Library's public website.

Public offerings include a Digital Media Studio (with professional sound recording studio, green screen, and multimedia production workstations), public computer workstations and WiFi, 3D printers, self-checkout stations for physical material borrowing, virtual reality discovery stations, gaming stations, and a self-serve digitization station for converting historical media formats such as VHS tapes into digital files to preserve precious memories.

Dunlop Art Gallery

Dunlop Art Gallery is dedicated to researching, engaging, and presenting a diverse range of visual artwork with a focus on contemporary Canadian culture. With its two locations, one at Central Library and one at Sherwood Village Branch, the Dunlop seeks to inform the practices and understanding of visual art through activities that include exhibitions, programs, publishing and collecting.

RPL Film Theatre

In the mid-60s, interest in a permanent venue for film enthusiasts grew into a program at the Library – a co-operative effort between the local Film Council and the National Film Board of Canada. In 1975, the RPL Film Theatre was officially launched. The mandate of the RPL Film Theatre is to screen the best in world and independent cinema. It presents critically acclaimed, contemporary, and alternative cinema through the screening of Canadian, foreign, and independent films and documentaries.

Outreach Services

The Library provides special services to people who are homebound and/or cannot read printed material due to physical impairment. Outreach Services staff conduct consultations with customers to determine both their needs and interests so they can then make recommendations as to the most appropriate items to borrow from the Library. Materials can be delivered to customer homes, as well as institutions and private care homes.



2020 actions and outcomes

Information about RPL's actions and outcomes in 2020 appears below in three sections:

Section One provides a narrative description about the library in 2020, in particular our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Information in this section also demonstrates some of the effects the pandemic had – both negative and positive – on our ongoing work.

Section Two provides a list of long-reaching and high-level projects we undertook throughout the year to advance the goals and objectives of our strategic plan.

Section Three fleshes out operational work that addresses goals and objectives outlined in our *Service Plan, 2019-2021*. These service plan goals and objectives have been organized to align with the four key pillars of our mission statement.

Section One: 2020 year in review/response to the pandemic

When the pandemic first hit the country in spring 2020, RPL was on the leading edge of public library response. Our decisions, processes, and guidelines were shared with libraries in Canada and the US who appreciated our response to community need. In turn, we benefited from the leadership of other libraries and sought information and support from our peers in other urban centres.

Back home, we engaged in discussions with our counterparts in the Saskatchewan Information Library Services Consortium (SILS) about how best to provide consortium-based library services, and the overall response of libraries to customers in the province.

Our focus has been, and continues to be, meeting the needs of Regina citizens as quickly and effectively as we can, and to make iterative improvements based on customer feedback: from families that are schooling children at home, to socially isolated older adults, to people working from home to those who simply need entertainment and a break from the world. We were, are, and will continue to be here for our community.

Initial response

On March 16, RPL informed the public we would be closing our branches. We encouraged customers to stock up on materials and had a surge of people stockpiling books and other materials, demonstrating the community's appreciation for our collections.

RPL hotline

Following closure, RPL quickly introduced a hotline (phone, email, and online chat) to help customers and the public with questions about library services, and to register people for new library cards or renew old cards. The new service allowed us to track customer concerns and questions, which in turn helped us to adapt and modify our service offerings based in part on that input.

The hotline has been well used: there were over 15,000 calls from closure in mid-March to the end of December. An additional 1,700 requests for information were received using other methods such as email and our website chat bot. Staff who support these modes of communication remaining busy with a range of questions from RPL customers and the public. These questions are documented and carefully monitored to assess need and uncover common issues to be addressed and opportunities to pursue.

RPL is pleased with the decentralized model of the hotline – frontline staff in all branches are scheduled to answer calls, which helps to disperse the workload and increase staff knowledge. By working the hotline, staff get more practice and experience that will also support in-person customer service. As COVID becomes less of an issue and branches again fill with customers, use of the hotline will be reevaluated, however the positive response suggests that the service may remain indefinitely.

Support through technology

In early April, we used our powerful computer equipment to help with the fight against COVID-19 by sharing five computers, two public workstations, and one computer server with the *folding@home* project, which provided technical resources to scientists to crunch data in the fight against the virus. RPL was one of the top contributors of processing power, on par with universities and research institutions.

We expanded the reach of our WiFi – while we have always had WiFi access along the exterior of library branches, we expanded that area to further support those without

Internet access at home. While it is difficult to measure success, it is not uncommon to see many people gathered around library branches using the WiFi on their personal devices.

Providing support for *folding@home*, and the work undertaken to expand our WiFi, addressed a goal listed in the *RPL Service Plan, 2019-2021: Customers benefit from access to technology and digital services, designed to address social and economic inequality*. Further results arising from the Service Plan are listed below.

Access to digital services

We knew at the outset of COVID that Reginaans would be looking for access to digital collections as they remained at home. With that in mind, we focused our energies on providing access to digital services and expanding those services to offer a robust menu of offerings.

RPL created a special library card for non-customers that provided access to online services including eBooks, eAudiobooks, streaming services, etc. Through this offer, we registered 1,150 new cards, and updated 2,929 cards for customers that had let their membership lapse.

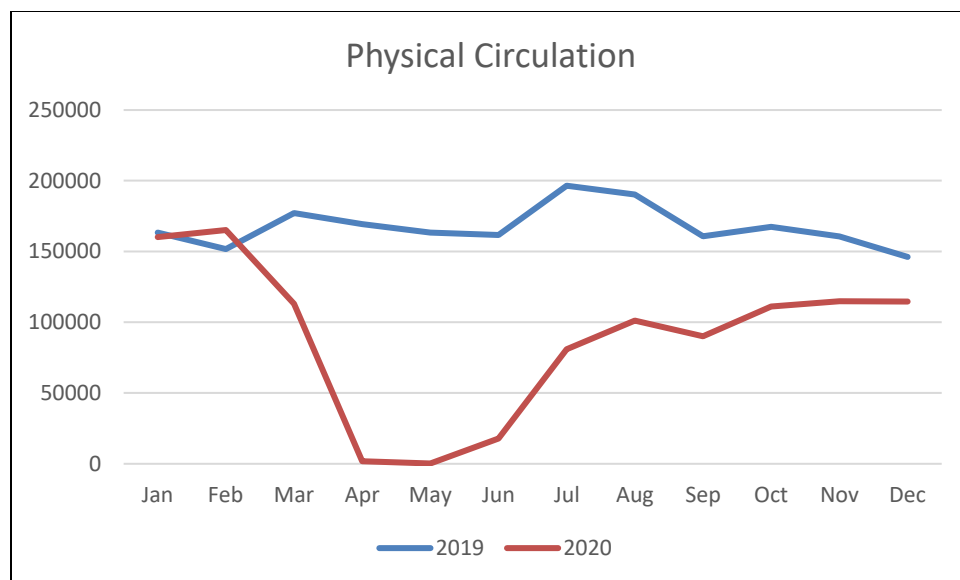
Despite the initial wave of interest in our digital collections, the pandemic took its toll and the total number of new cards issued was down from 11,410 in 2019 to 7,284 in 2020.

The work undertaken to move library card registrations online addressed a goal listed in the *RPL Service Plan, 2019-2021: Customers benefit from access to technology and digital services, designed to address social and economic inequality*.

Library collections

While 2020 got off to a typical start, the branch closures brought the circulation of physical materials to a halt. Not only was customer access to our physical collections impeded for a good part of the year, many publishers and vendors were unable to produce or supply the library with new titles. As a result, the number of new titles and materials quickly diminished in physical formats.

Circulation figures rose steadily once the branches reopened, but the public's general anxiety about heading out to public spaces meant that by December 2020, the circulation level had returned to a rate that was just 22 per cent lower than December of 2019.



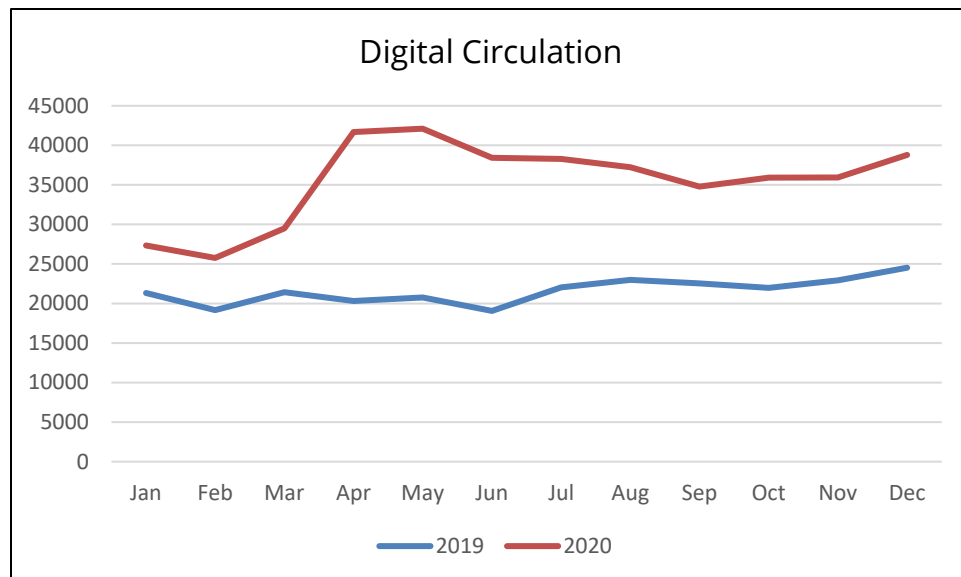
Enhanced digital services

The experience RPL had with its digital offering was entirely different. The popularity of the library's digital collections continues to increase year over year, and we saw an average 33 per cent increase in circulation for the first quarter of 2020. In the second quarter, while the branches were closed, the increase in use jumped to over 100 per cent or double the use of 2019. As the branches opened again, the demand for digital resources declined slightly but remained at an average of 60 per cent increase for the last half of the year.

At the outset of the closure, we:

- increased the number of downloads on platforms like hoopla from six to 10 loans per month for every customer;
- increased the number of eBook/eAudiobook requests customers could make on Overdrive;
- introduced new digital platforms such as Brainfuse (children and young adult learning support), Leader-Post online, and enhanced RBDigital magazines;
- added home access to some online services that were previously only accessible from computers within the library; and
- re-allocated budget to our digital collections, increasing the purchasing of eBook and eAudiobook titles by 35 per cent.

By carefully curating these digital products and rebuilding our website to highlight the materials available, we were able to help customers entertain and educate themselves during the closure and throughout 2020.



Overall, circulation of physical items dropped last year by 47 per cent, but because of the huge increase in digital circulation, our overall circulation (print and digital) was only down 22 per cent from the previous year.

Digital programming

Online programs were a priority for 2020, and the COVID closures only served to accelerate this work. Within a very short time window, we planned and developed an approach to offer live, online programs to support citizens during lockdown.

Programs were proposed based on community wants and need. We worked with our community partners, monitored trends, anticipated interest, and listened to our community to respond with an accelerated design/present/evaluate model of iterative improvement. This resulted in high-quality programs that satisfied a full spectrum and ever-changing range of interests in our community.

For example, RPL identified a need for science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) programming for school-age children. We developed and ran six programs per week: five after school and one on Saturdays. Average attendance was about 20 participants, adding up to a typical total of attendance of about 120 attendees per week.

A significant outcome of digital programming, as noted by participants, has been the important connections that they make with each other, and the reduction of feelings of isolation. RPL has seen more and broader participation by diverse community members in our book talks, learning programs, author visits, and events than we did with similar in-person programming.

An example of this is our online Indigenous traditional craft programs, which were also popular. Starting in June 2020 RPL's Indigenous services advisor coordinated 23 craft programs through a system whereby registrants picked up craft kits and then connected online to participate with others. Some participants who preferred not to attend our in-person crafts programs were able to connect with others in the community during these online programs to learn about the cultural significance of these projects. In 2020, there was a total of 766 participants in online Indigenous crafts programs.

Business programs that are usually very well attended saw a decrease in popularity during the COVID closure. Business programs typically attract people interested in starting a small business, including those who have entered start-up planning stages. Attendees often express the dream of owning their own business. Given the uncertainty of the small business environment due to the impact of COVID-19, customers who might normally attend were not as interested in learning about small business ownership and expressed their desire, when possible, to continue working for someone else.

Conversely, we saw uptake in the number of attendees at personal finance programs, particularly those with a focus on investing. The volatility of markets in 2020, news stories about short selling, and a rapidly changing economy attracted customers wanting to learn more about the stock market, trading, and investing. These programs were well attended and attracted a primary audience of 45- to 65-year-olds.

In total, RPL offered 875 online programs in 2020 with 8,606 participants – down from our typical number of in-person programs and attendance, but a positive start to this new line of business. We are encouraged by the numbers we've seen at our online programs, and from the glowing comments we have received from participants and their family members. We will use these metrics as a baseline to measure effectiveness of this format in years to come.

The work undertaken to increase digital programming, and digital opportunities for community members to gather, addresses two goals listed in the *RPL Service Plan, 2019-2021: Customers use the library to connect with others who share their interests, by participating in free, fun, and convenient activities that require low commitment, and Customers participate in library programs that reflect Regina's growing diversity.*

Curbside pickup and materials return

After establishing rigorous staff and customer safety protocols, RPL offered customers the opportunity to return materials to four library branch locations starting on June 8, and at all branches on July 9. Returned materials were quarantined before staff sorted them and returned them to their places.

Curbside pickup of materials began in four locations on June 15 and was made available at all locations on July 9. During this time, there were 28,617 checkouts via curbside pickup – a significant amount considering branches were not open.

After the library reopened to the public on July 13, we had a total of 5,463 curbside checkouts to year end, which represented about one per cent of all checkouts at the library. While curbside wasn't as well used once the branches re-opened, we knew it was an important service to continue for those people who did not feel comfortable going into an enclosed library branch space.

Curbside service will continue in the months ahead, as we work our way through the pandemic, and as our customers become more comfortable coming into branch spaces. Uptake has been high at some of our suburban branches, and there is a convenience factor that has to be considered.

Fines free

RPL has waived fines on overdue materials since mid March, in keeping with a province-wide halt on fines during the COVID situation. SILS Libraries agreed at the end of September to continue waiving fines until the end of the year. This was also consistent with national practice during COVID.

In October 2020, RPL announced it was eliminating fines on overdue materials altogether. This change is consistent with trends to remove late charges at libraries across North America. Eliminating late fees removes a barrier to ensure everyone in the community can access library services. Due dates, however, will remain in place, and customers are encouraged to abide by them so others can take advantage of items available to borrow.

Dunlop Art Gallery and RPL Film Theatre

Dunlop and Film Theatre rapidly adapted to the new challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both used iterative processes to determine the best approach for reaching existing and new customers, resulting in a combination of delivering programs through online platforms, as well as through in-person experiences in a safe and socially distanced manner.

Like other online RPL programming, Dunlop and Film Theatre programming received a considerable amount of uptake. Customers from across Regina attended online art-making workshops, artist and curator talks, performances, and online film screenings while still benefitting from Dunlop and Film Theatre's in-person offerings such as daily tours and in-person conversations with gallery facilitators. Dunlop and Film Theatre also initiated new partnerships during the pandemic and reimaged annual events for a first-time online experience.

We are pleased with the level of interest in Dunlop and Film Theatre programming and, as with other RPL programming, will continue to pursue the online option alongside in-person opportunities.

Outreach services

Outreach homebound deliveries stopped in early 2020 as care homes and families worked to eliminate potential exposure to residents and older adults.

In July 2020, Outreach services were once again providing customers with services, programs, equipment, and collections. The library made improvements to its provision of Outreach services by relocating collections and assistive technology from the Outreach office at Central Library to branches and in main areas at Central. Supports were put in place to ensure frontline staff, including those working on the RPL Hotline, were better equipped to serve customers who might benefit from Outreach services.

In December 2020, RPL received a grant from the United Way to distribute iPads to homebound older adults. The iPads allow users to access digital library resources, and a video chat function to connect with family and friends. RPL will distribute the iPads in early 2021.

Literacy services

Library closures also required a re-imagining of Literacy Services. Shortly after closure, a phone survey of library volunteers was undertaken to inquire about interest in a pilot program to deliver group learner support in a digital environment. The response was positive, and volunteers were grateful for our interest in them and their learner.

From April onwards, RPL supported six newcomer/volunteer conversation groups per week, weekly International English Language Testing System (ILETS) programs, and a weekly literacy book club. Many participants indicated their growing preference for services on the digital platform.

Digital Media Studio

The Digital Media Studio was unavailable during the branch closures but re-opened in July 2020 with the rest of Central. Always well-used, the DMS has seen a significant amount of activity since re-opening, and the Whisper Studio (audio recording studio) is continuously booked solid.

Sample projects created in the DMS since re-opening include:

- Recording sessions by professional musicians and music teachers;
- Former musicians transferring early works to digital files;
- Local organizations designing and editing video productions; and
- Local young artists recording music and producing accompanying digital videos.

The DMS continues to attract a range of people from across the City who express delight in its offerings. We are pleased with its popularity and the significant impact it has made to so many of our customers.

Re-opening

Libraries were identified in Phase 4 Step 2 of the Province of Saskatchewan's *Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan*, and RPL developed an unveiling strategy to re-open in mid-July.

A significant amount of effort went into ensuring staff and the public would be safe at the library. RPL reviewed safety and social distancing protocols outlined in the Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan's workplace guidelines for libraries, museums and art galleries that was released on June 23, along with requirements from the Saskatchewan Health Authority and

recommendations from other Canadian Urban Libraries Council members and made necessary changes to its facilities and operating procedures.

Glen Elm, Regent Place, Albert, Connaught, and Prince of Wales Branches re-opened on July 9. Central Library, George Bothwell Branch, Sherwood Village Branch, and Sunrise Branch re-opened on July 13.

The experience in library branches differed from what it was pre-COVID: hours were reduced, and there were stricter limits to the number of people allowed in library spaces. One-way traffic routes were established, plexiglass installed on desks, and hand sanitizer stations were dotted throughout our spaces.

Prior to the lockdown, RPL branches had 321,395 visits (Jan 1 – Mar 18). From re-opening until year end, RPL branches operated at limited capacity and received an additional 293,664 visits (July 9 – Dec 31). This is down significantly from 2019 when RPL had approximately 1.6 million visits to branches.

Going forward

COVID-19 has provided both the requirement and opportunity for adaptation to meet community needs within the limitations it has created. We are proud of the leadership that has been demonstrated by managers and staff: ideas, insights, and suggestions were solicited and reviewed to best inform our approach, and the level of employee engagement has been high.

What's been most outstanding is the level of support and response from the community for our efforts. The library continues to receive glowing responses about its commitment to the community, and to the individual services it offers. The pandemic has demonstrated that the library remains a strong and steadfast pillar in Regina, and that the people of Regina continue to love their library.

Section Two: 2020 activity highlights

RPL also achieved success in the actions it had originally planned for 2020. Our key actions and accomplishments for the year to date are outlined below.

- RPL contracted the services of Colliers Project Leaders and KPMG to develop a needs assessment and project plan for the future of Central Library. Research for the plan started with a public needs survey. This was followed by a community open house on February 5.

While the Board had expected the needs assessment and project plan to be ready in spring 2020, the onset of the pandemic forced a temporary delay. Work has since continued, slowly, on the needs assessment and project plan, however a firm date for the board to complete and address the plan has not been set.

- RPL began work to assess its customer-centred culture through deployment of an internal survey for staff to provide feedback on the commitment of the workplace to maintain a customer-centred culture. Work is expected to begin in early 2021, and the 2020 survey will act as a baseline to measure against in years ahead.
- In 2020, RPL successfully recruited for each of the following hard-to-recruit positions: Department Head, Branch Services; Department Head, Central Library; Director Curator, Dunlop Art Gallery; Manager, Human Resources; and Branch Managers at Connaught, George Bothwell, and Regent Place Branches.
- In 2019, RPL undertook an inclusive staff and management process to complete the standardized assessment protocols for Edge Benchmarking. Further work was done in 2020 to identify measurable objectives and establish plans for organizational improvement, however this work was interrupted by the response to the pandemic.

Edge is a management tool that helps libraries of all sizes align their technology resources to community priorities. Overall, we are doing well in the products and services we offer but will work to focus on our leadership outreach and technology planning. The Benchmark objectives will take a series of budget operational planning cycles to achieve demonstrable results.

The assessment work undertaken through Edge addresses a goal listed in the *RPL Service Plan, 2019-2021, Customers benefit from access to technology and digital services, designed to address social and economic inequality.*

- RPL was pleased to roll out its new brand in fall 2020. Primarily an internal call to action, the brand unites the library's vision, values, and aspirations and condenses them into one brand promise for employees to deliver: inspiring everyone to discover, learn, and connect. Managers came together at a two-day in-service to identify ways to embed the brand into the workplace, including updating job descriptions and employee performance plans. A new logo that reflects the brand promise was introduced publicly, and work began to update signage at branches and online.
- RPL contracted the services of ViTreo, a full-service fundraising and development firm, to assess and review our fundraising and development work. Work began on a fund development plan to:
 - Increase awareness of RPL as a charitable investment;
 - Further integrate fund development messaging and initiatives throughout our operations, and aggressively and methodically solicit philanthropic support; and
 - Focus development goals on literacy and technology.
- Updates were made to air conditioning systems at Connaught and Glen Elm Branches, and a new cooling system for the server and network room at Central Library. Glen Elm Branch also had work done on its mechanical systems.

Section Three: Service Plan outcomes

The *RPL Service Plan, 2019-2021* seeks to satisfy Objective 4.2 of the *RPL Strategic Plan, 2016-2021*, which calls for a focus on meeting customer needs to remain an integral part of the community. Service plan outcomes and goals were categorized according to the four pillars of the RPL mission (see p. 5). 2020 service plan activities, below, are organized according to those four pillars and the specific outcome statements they fall within.

Several actions arising from, or coinciding with, the goals listed in the Service Plan have been identified above. Further actions in 2020 are described below.

Free and open access to resources

- *Customers benefit from access to technology and digital services, designed to address social and economic inequality.*

The groundwork for this strategic action was laid in 2019, and very fast progress was made in 2020 due to the increased demand for digital resources and services (see above for more detail, starting on p. 14.) RPL has gained significant understanding and adjusted collections purchasing plans quickly to address growing needs.

- In addition to those successes listed above, RPL renegotiated licensing agreements with high-demand products like Ancestry Library Edition to allow at-home access by our customers during COVID. Usage spiked in late spring and the number of users doubled before returning to normal in the summer months.
 - RPL also expanded the number of online services offered, including a new learning resource called Creativebug. Creativebug is a hub for do-it-yourself hobbyists, crafters and makers that offers thousands of instructional videos offered by artists and creators.
- *Customers enjoy enhanced service, delivered by knowledgeable and welcoming staff throughout the organization.*
 - All suitable branch and hotline staff were trained in readers' advisory techniques. The popular Books4Me service where staff help customers find their next great read has been successfully transferred to hotline staff so that they can effectively respond to customer requests and help guide our customers towards the numerous online resources available to them.

- *Customers browse and find library materials of interest.*
 - The entire collection of print materials at Central Library was moved into a new and more intuitive arrangement, making it easier to browse items on the shelves. New signs were designed to help our customers find items of interest to them.
 - Several audience pages were developed on our website to point customers to resources, programs, and events based on specific needs and interests. This work was especially helpful to learners and educators who struggled to adapt to online and at-home learning in the early period of school closures.

Community space where people and ideas meet

- *Customers participate in library programs that reflect Regina's growing diversity.*
 - Originally slated for 2021, the Library and the Dunlop Art Gallery adopted “low tech” solutions to support families with limited access to technology by providing learning and reading activity kits containing books, games, and activities for children. With these tools, children could read, explore, and discover which keeps their thinking skills active over the spring and summer months. This initiative helped ensure all children in the community benefitted from fun learning activities.
 - Literacy program delivery was changed to better support the inclusion of newcomers. This initiative was originally slated for 2021. Needs were high in 2020, and online delivery approaches were added to address some of the barriers and challenges perceived and experienced by our newcomers. A phone survey of library volunteers was undertaken to inquire about interest in a pilot program to deliver group learner support in the digital environment. The response was positive, and volunteers were grateful for RPL’s interest in them and their learner. Many customers expressed appreciation for the contact, and some registered for training to support online learning.
 - RPL supported up to five newcomer/volunteer conversation groups per week to meet demand. Many participants indicated their growing preference for service on the digital platform for the same reasons as other participants in our digital program delivery environment. We will continue to evaluate the needs and expectations of this important user community.
 - RPL leapt at the opportunity to bring valued library programming to those without access to technology by adding library resource bags to the City of

Regina's food distribution program at mâmawêyatitân centre. RPL was ready to deliver high quality, high interest library activity kits to over 500 families accessing emerging food distribution centres throughout the city.

The library partnered with the City of Regina's *PlayEscapes* summer camp to provide programming and activity kits to over 500 appreciative campers through the summer months. Activity kits were also distributed to families through library partners including Ranch Erhlo, North Central Family Centre, Four Directions Community Health Centre, and the Regina Open Door Society.

- RPL hosted an online gathering of community partners and individual citizens to reflect on the lessons we have collectively learned during the pandemic. An enthusiastic group of 60+ attendees representing an array of social serving agencies including Reconciliation Regina, Regina Police Service, Regina school divisions, Regina Open Door Society, City of Regina, Economic Development Regina and others to discuss ideas and changes to improve our offerings to support our community. Building on the success of this event RPL worked with Regina Region Local Immigration Partnership to plan and present a Cultural Bridging Forum in 2021.
- *Customers have access to Indigenous programming tied to reconciliation at all library locations.*
 - RPL partnered with the City of Regina's Aboriginal City Employees Network to host a variety of online activities from June 1 to 30 to celebrate First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

Offering these activities online created opportunities to honour the rich heritage, diverse cultures, and outstanding achievement of Indigenous peoples to a wider audience. It also created opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect, experience, and learn about Indigenous culture, traditions, and art, in an online environment. RPL is pleased with the success of this event and the lessons learned in terms of how online events can sometimes attract new audiences because of the format itself.

Programs and services that support reading, curiosity, and discovery

- *Customers will benefit from programs and services that connect them with professional creators.*
 - Originally in the plan for 2021, the Dunlop developed a new approach to engage professional creators digitally. Several workshops and artist talks were held online and streamed live to Dunlop social media. Subject matter ranges from HTML and web development for emerging artists to discussions with local filmmakers about trending movies. Events were well-received by the local community.
 - Dunlop introduced safe and socially distanced noontime art tours at Central Library, as well as online studio visits art-making workshops, artist talks, studio visits, performances, and curator talks. A highlight of 2020 was the Creation Cube activities with local artist Lorne Beug at George Bothwell branch. In response to the COVID pandemic, Dunlop quickly developed safety protocols so that activities could take place in person, while adhering to provincial health and safety guidelines.
 - RPL's 2019/2020 Writer in Residence, David Gane, was very well-versed in delivering writing coaching and workshops in the digital environment, and his enthusiasm and confidence helped local writers to embrace this approach. In August 2020 we welcomed our new Writer in Residence, J. Jill Robinson, who continued to offer online services for writers.
- *Customers celebrate and share their love of books by accessing library reading programs, services, and collections.*
 - Many of the programming initiatives for children, families, and adults in 2020 centered on reading. As discussed above, the digital delivery during the COVID period was new to everyone and was very successful. We continued to promote and encourage use of our student, teacher, and parent resources to support student learning as we move through the fall.
 - Regina's first ever Winter Reading Challenge launched in pre-pandemic 2020 and was enthusiastically embraced by Regina audiences. Library closures resulted in a mid course correction and the initiative was repositioned as the Stay Home and Read Challenge and was extended into June. Several pop-up reading challenges over the summer months have provided a base of knowledge to leverage for audiences in summer of 2021.

- Monitoring of collections use is even more tenacious than our typical rigorous approach. Purchasing of physical materials was adjusted during the closure period to ensure that we purchased what was most needed when we re-opened for service delivery in July.
- RPL participated in numerous online reading clubs and programs including One Book: One Province (Saskatchewan), One eRead Canada, and three OverDrive Big Library Read initiatives. The programs allowed open access to eBooks for all, and connected readers with others in the province and across the country with shared activities and discussions, often featuring local Saskatchewan authors.
- *Customers use services, resources, and programs that support student success.*
 - In response to customer demand following school closures in Spring of 2020, RPL created both live and on-demand instruction for educators and students in library resources, including live homework help, available through the library's website. We continue to promote and encourage use of these resources to support student learning.
 - *Level Up!* is a summer learning program for children ages 12 and under. In 2020 it was delivered primarily online but also offered "low tech" activity kits with new books, pens, notepads, art supplies and other literacy supplies to specific Regina communities. In 2020, *Level Up!* did not generate the number of participants as it does typically. We attribute this change to our inability to interact directly with parents, students, and educators to encourage participation, and for students to engage in in-person pursuits such as library programming, visits to museums, and learning from subject matter experts.

Customers from all life stages will have access to digital, visual, media, musical, maker, and other cultural experiences.

- *Increase its exhibition of the public art collections throughout the system.*
 - In 2020, Dunlop Art Gallery made important strides in reflecting Regina's growing diversity by acquiring new artworks for RPL's Permanent Collection. New work included Métis artist David Garneau and Nigerian-Canadian artist Liz Ikiriko. Both artists are from Regina and are well-known and celebrated members of the Regina arts community.

The addition of Ikiriko's photographs marks the first collection of a black artist's work to the RPL Permanent Collection. Ikiriko's works were installed at Glen Elm branch, where there is a growing newcomer population, and at Connaught branch, which the artist visited often during her formative years and which played a pivotal role in her sense of community.

- *Offer an ongoing series that brings together musical performance and other cultural presentation, promoted as one program stream.*
 - In 2020, Dunlop and RPL Film Theatre played a significant role in strengthening the local arts sector and arts community. Dunlop and Film Theatre led partnerships with Neutral Ground Artist Run Centre, University of Regina, and Saskatchewan Film Pool; including working with local artists to reimagine the annual *Art's Birthday* event for a first ever online format.

Dunlop and Film Theatre also continued online local partnerships with Regina-based arts organizations and collectives, such as Nuit Blanche Regina, 48-Hour Filmmaking Challenge, One Take Super 8, Regina Selects, Adjust Tracking, and Cinema Politica. A highlight of 2020 partnerships was a new partnership with Sask Sports for the Hazel Meyer exhibition. Originally slated to take place in person, the partnership was reimaged as a series of online engagements with local LGBTQ2+ athletes and artist Hazel Meyer. Photographs from the online engagements will be part of a publication that will be released later this year.

- *Customers discover opportunities to learn about early literacy.*
 - Significant changes were made at the outset of the closure to our early literacy program delivery. Given the amount of free online story time resources from libraries and other entities, RPL determined that an alternative approach would work well to support families in greater need.

With that in mind, RPL accelerated development of a "DIY Family Storytime" video series to help caregivers learn and become comfortable with delivering this programming in their own homes with their children.

The program delivered theory and background about early literacy in a warm and engaging manner. About 400 viewers accessed the videos – equivalent to attendance at 40 in-person storytimes. We are pleased with the participation, given this comparison. The approach has also been replicated in a "low tech" edition for families who do not have access to the Internet.

- *Customers access history collections, services, and resources (including staff) to learn and understand local and regional histories*
 - We began to offer online access to our microfilm collection, including access to the Regina Leader-Post since its inception. This provides both professional and amateur historians, genealogists, writers, and others with a useful resource for their research.



Capability to deliver results

To execute on RPL's strategy and achieve planned results, supporting resources are essential. While many of these improvements are not directly visible to RPL's customers, they are critical to improve customer service and programs. This section outlines improvements and changes made throughout 2020 to advance the capability of RPL to deliver on its outcome targets.

Human capital and workforce management

RPL Staff

Our main priority with staff was to help them stay healthy and engaged. As the pandemic forced the closure of all libraries in March 2020, employees were sent home – some to work remotely, and others to remain on-call should they be needed. RPL ensured all staff who could work from home were enabled with the proper equipment and technology. This allowed vital functions such as communication with our customers to continue without pause. There were also no disruptions to our website services.

Mental health supports were offered to address fears and concerns associated with COVID and branch closures. A questions database with information on health and work procedures was developed, and an internal social network established to help employees at home feel connected.

As the length of the closure surpassed the Library's initial expectations, we signed a COVID-19 Pandemic Workforce Adjustments letter of understanding with CUPE 1594 in mid-May, which outlined a temporary layoff and recall process. We began to recall staff starting in early June to support our re-opening, and most staff were back at work by August.

Customer Service

RPL's customer service strategy remains an integral part of RPL's service promise. Provision of front-line service is an integral part of this strategy, and some front-line roles have been redefined in the past four years to accommodate this commitment.

This focus on our customer served us well as COVID-19 forced us to reconsider what customer service meant when our doors were closed to the public and, when opened, to limited capacity.

As soon as RPL was allowed by public health orders, customers were invited to pick up materials through curbside service, all the while maintaining required social distancing protocols. All library branches re-opened to the public almost immediately when public health orders were lifted to allow libraries to open. Customer service focused on keeping customers safe while visiting any library location. Cleaning protocols were enhanced and stringently adhered to. Social distancing protocols tested staff abilities to serve customers in a personal and meaningful way, but staff adapted and continued to provide excellent customer service.

Online programming was quickly introduced and adapted to the needs of customers. Online services were tailored so it was easy for groups such as students and educators to find resources quickly.

Staff Survey

A follow up to the 2016 Employee Engagement Survey was conducted in 2019. Overall, there was significant improvement in most of the dimensions measured in the first survey. In 2019, employees provided information on the areas where they would most like to see more engagement and support from the organization:

- Linkage to the organizational vision
- Strengthening our customer focus
- Increasing professional growth opportunities

In 2020, other challenges related to the pandemic presented themselves including fear and stress caused by the virus, limited library openings and ability to serve customers, and the move to remote work. Taking these additional challenges into consideration, RPL began to formulate goals to address areas that would ultimately serve to improve overall service including a commitment to providing quality service internally, better communication around the services offered by all units, a review of policies and procedure to ensure they enable quality customer services, and a consistent application of policies and procedures across the organization.

Internal operations

Electronic Services (eServices) and Information Technology (IT)

In 2020 there were several updates in the eServices and IT areas to enhance RPL's ability to deliver results during COVID-19. Many of these updates and enhancements will serve RPL well into the future.

- Transition of video conferencing functionality to an online platform: This change eliminated the need for in-house programming software. It also provided the opportunity for RPL to offer the digital programming discussed above that was so appreciated by customers.
- Establishment and delivery of a mobile computing strategy: Many staff were sent home on short notice when library branches closed. Securing the necessary equipment such as additional laptops, headsets, and more, was a significant undertaking. Further effort was required to expand RPL's virtual private network (VPN) so staff could securely access RPL files and resources.
- Migration of the RPL website to a cloud provider: RPL relocated its website from an internal server to a cloud-based provider. This allowed us to improve our service to customers by ensuring that pages are served up quickly, even when the website is busy, and by providing enhanced security to better protect the website from malicious attack.
- Advancement of a Digital Workplace Project: This is a multi-year project designed to improve RPL's internal communications, collaboration, and document management. The Library confirmed Microsoft 365 as the recommended platform and is now working to build a document management and information architecture foundation which will serve as a strong base for future improvements.

RPL Brand

Following finalization of a brand framework in late 2019, planning and actions continued in early 2020 on brand management, development, and delivery. Rollout of the new brand began in early fall 2020 with two in-service sessions for the leadership team, held to develop an internal roll-out plan and identify ways to embed brand into decision making, actions, and activities at all levels of the organization.

In mid-November the brand was introduced to staff. RPL offered tools for its employees to understand brand, including two informational videos, and a brand guidebook for easy reference of brand component descriptions.

Employees expressed excitement about the new brand and their role in carrying it out. Many were pleased with the degree to which the brand promise resonated with them: inspiring everyone to discover, learn, and connect. Managers continue to work with employees (and their own managers) to explore how to keep brand top of mind in all they do.

Following the internal roll out, RPL introduced the logo publicly, which included updates to internal and external branch signage, RPL's website and social media platforms, and various templates. Public reaction to the change, particularly the new logo, has been overwhelmingly positive to date. A more formalized brand management plan including measurement tools will be developed in 2021.

Infrastructure

Minor upgrades and improvements to Central Library spaces and the branches are undertaken regularly. These upgrades and improvements are intended to improve the customer experience and enhance the safety and security of customers and staff.

In 2020, the major focus was on implementing measures to keep customers and staff safe in all our spaces.

- Traffic flow patterns were studied and designed to ensure the safe movement of customers and staff throughout both public and staff spaces;
- Plexiglass was installed where needed and appropriate; and
- High traffic areas such as those around computer workstations were redesigned to ensure social distancing.

In early 2020, the RPL Film Theatre underwent a fire inspection and capacity was reduced until an emergency exit could be added. With the space closed, we took the opportunity to significantly improve accessibility by adding four new accessible seating areas. Once the emergency exit was complete, the inspector restored Film Theatre capacity to former levels and it was well-positioned to re-open in July.

Systems maintenance through the year included major mechanical upgrades at Glen Elm, replacement of the aged air conditioning system in RPL's computer network and server room, and the installation of a new air conditioning system at Connaught.

Financial results

In addition to RPL's own financial results, approximately 22 per cent of the Saskatchewan Information and Library Services (SILS) Consortium's financial results are consolidated into those of RPL and are included in the financial statements. The SILS Consortium is owned by the 11 municipal, regional, and northern library systems in Saskatchewan and 22 per cent reflects RPL's ownership share in the consortium.

While COVID-19 dramatically impacted operations, both revenues and expenses were in line with both the 2020 budget and 2019 actual results.

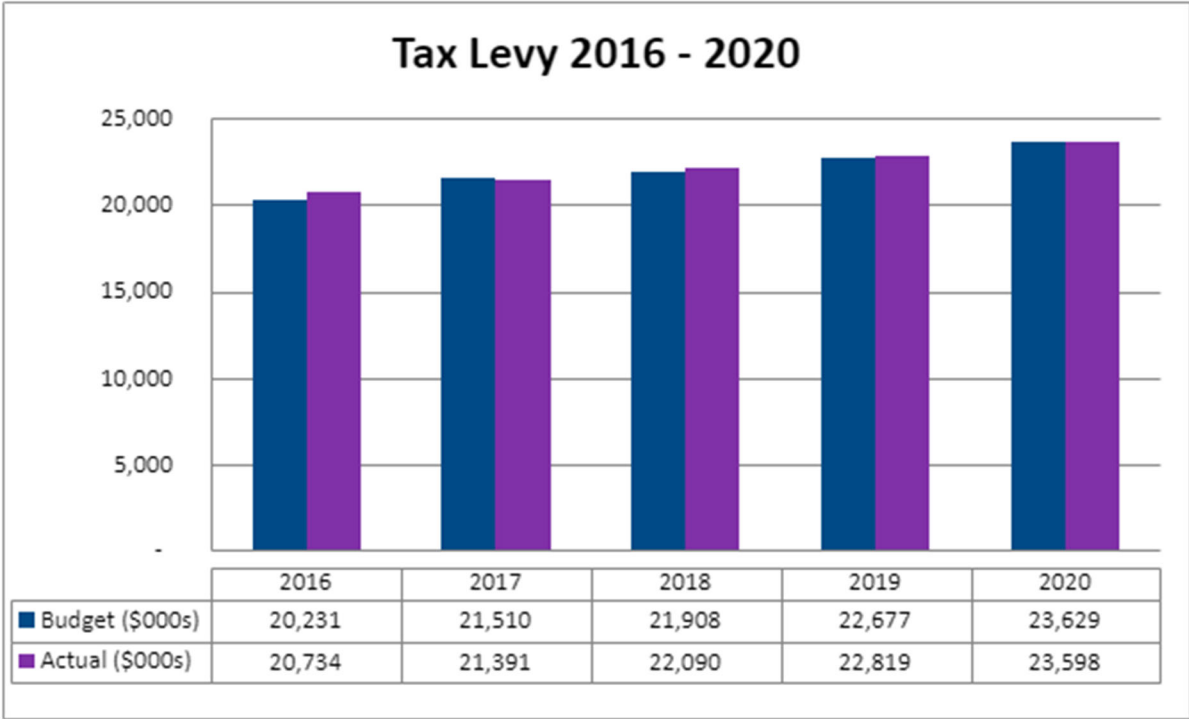
Revenues

Total revenues for the 2020 year were \$25,287,000 which is 1.1 per cent or \$277,000 less than budgeted.

The majority of RPL's revenues, 93.3 per cent or \$23,598,000, comes from a tax levy and grants-in-lieu. Each year, the RPL Board approves operational and capital budgets. The dollars required to fund these budgets, less revenues from other sources, are converted to a mill rate. The mill rate requested to fund RPL's operating and capital budgets is forwarded to Regina City Council who vote on the mill rate requested. The amount approved by City Council is known as the library mill rate and is levied and collected by the City, which charges RPL a 1.8 per cent administrative collection fee.

Amounts collected by the City are comprised of the tax levy, a supplementary tax levy, and grants-in-lieu. The tax levy is based on residential, commercial, and industrial property values in the City. The supplementary tax levy is applied to commercial and industrial properties which are not fully constructed and are therefore not on the City's tax roll. Because governments do not pay taxes to other levels of government, the provincial and federal governments pay grants-in-lieu of taxes through the City, to the library.

The following chart illustrates the budgeted tax levy and the actual tax levy received over the past five years.



In 2020, the actual tax levy and grants-in-lieu received were \$31,000 less than budgeted. A very slight decline in the tax roll beyond what was used for budget as well as some amendments and adjustments for revisions and exemptions yielded \$9,000 less in the tax levy. However, supplementary taxes, budgeted at \$100,000 for the year, came in at only \$48,000, resulting in lower revenue of \$52,000. Grants-in-lieu payments from the provincial and federal governments were higher by \$41,000 and lower by \$11,000 respectively for a total of \$30,000 more than budget.

Actual tax levy dollars received by RPL has grown by 14 per cent over the past five years even as mill rate increases have averaged only 1.8 per cent per year over the same period.

While the tax levy makes up the majority of RPL’s revenues, other sources of revenue include the provincial services agreement, capital donations, other grants, and other revenue. In 2020, the province increased its services agreement funding by one per cent over 2019. Most of the \$613,000 provincial services agreement funds resource sharing among the municipal, regional, and northern library systems in the province. Included in this amount is approximately \$30,000 to support services for Indigenous Peoples. \$4,000 of this amount from 2019 was deferred to 2020 while \$13,000 of the 2020 amount has been deferred to 2021. The \$604,000 noted on the financial statements is calculated by taking the \$613,000 from the province, adding in the deferred amount of \$4,000 from 2019, and subtracting the \$13,000 amount which is deferred into the 2021 year.

Donations for the year amounted to \$35,000. Capital donations amounted to \$32,000 and were allocated to the Capital Project Reserve. A further \$3,000 of donations were received for operating purposes including \$2,500 from Affinity Credit Union for the Cops and Readers program.

Interest revenue accounted for \$256,000 in 2020, much lower than the budgeted amount of \$373,000 and 2019's \$413,000. Interest earned is a percentage of the bank's monthly average prime rate, which is in turn based on the Bank of Canada rate. During 2020, the Bank of Canada rate fell dramatically in March in response to the pandemic. Other guaranteed investment opportunities also were impacted by very low interest rates and so the interest rate from RPL's bank account was still higher than instruments such as Guaranteed Investment Certificates.

Other grants for 2020 were \$465,000, made up of core funding of \$112,000 from the Saskatchewan Arts Board and \$120,000 from Canada Council for the Arts to support exhibitions for Dunlop Art Gallery. The Dunlop also received a \$95,000 grant from Canadian Heritage through the Museums Assistance Program and its COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund. Other smaller grants from the federal and provincial governments were received to help RPL in its response to the pandemic including a \$25,000 temporary wage subsidy for charities from Canada Revenue Agency.

RPL also successfully applied for other COVID-19 funding. A \$12,000 grant from the Emergency Community Foundation was received to provide kits to children with no computer/internet access so they could participate in the Library's annual Level Up reading challenge. A grant was also received from the United Way in the amount of \$14,000 to provide electronic resources to disabled and homebound customers of the Library's Outreach Services Unit, though it has been deferred to 2021 due to a delay in procuring the necessary technology.

A grant spanning 2020 and 2021 was also received from the Government of Canada through Computers for Success Canada to support youth in developing skills needed to participate in the digital economy. RPL successfully recruited three young people to participate in this program.

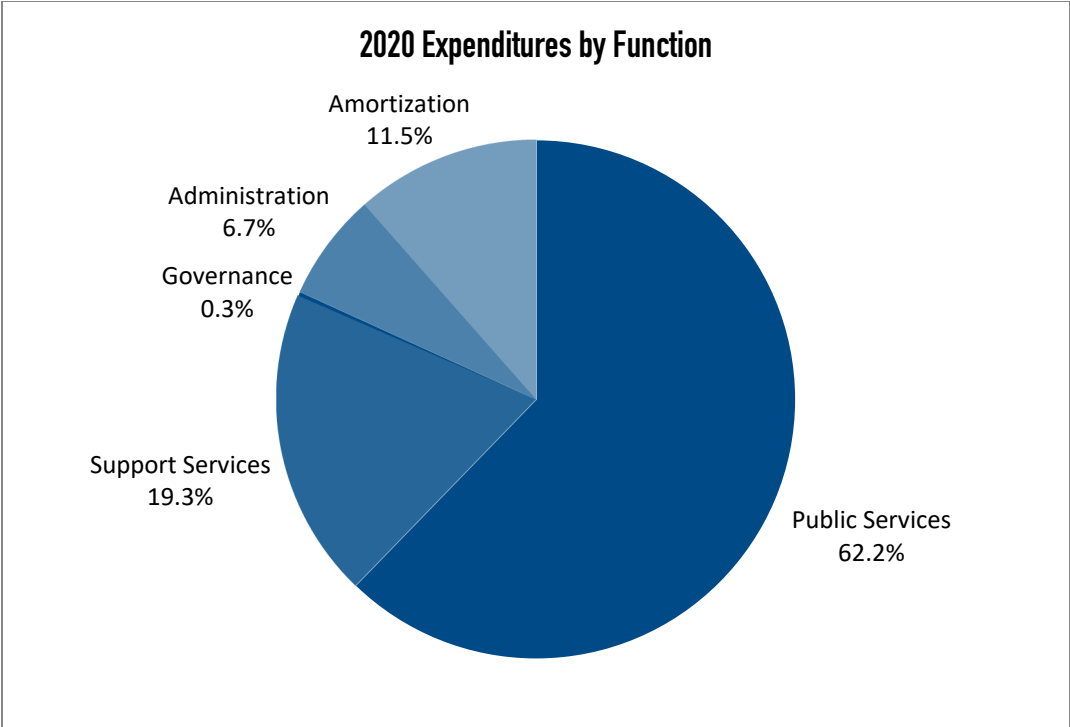
Other revenue of \$325,000 was far below the budget of \$528,000. Much of the shortfall is due to the pandemic which forced a temporary closure for several months. Even as reopening took place, the ability to offer programs and services was limited. Notably, RPL, along with all other public library systems in the province, suspended collection of overdue fines until the end of 2020. During this time, however, the Library decided to become fines free permanently and no longer collect overdue fines on most library materials.

The majority of other revenue is from SILS – an amount of \$180,000 – through the consolidation of 22 per cent of SILS operations into RPL’s financial statements. Other revenue comes from fees and fines on library materials of \$42,000, the majority being collected before the pandemic started. Other smaller amounts are photocopier and printing revenue, \$33,000; payment from the Regina Public School Board for a resource assistant, \$25,000; film theatre box office, \$5,000; sales of used books and merchandise, \$6,000; and miscellaneous other items of \$34,000.

A small gain of \$4,000 was recognized on the sale of a fully amortized vehicle.

Expenses

Total expenses for 2020 were \$23,473,000, which is 6.7 per cent less than budgeted expenses of \$25,167,000.



Most expenses, 62.2 per cent, \$14,608,000, are directly related to public services. Public Services include salaries and benefits for staff of the following units: Central Library and eight branches; Acquisitions, Collections, and Programming; Community Engagement and Programming; eServices; and Dunlop Art Gallery and RPL Film Theatre. Also included in Public Services expenses are periodicals, magazines, electronic information, programming, Dunlop exhibitions, SILS operating costs, information technology expenses related to

public services, marketing costs to promote RPL, and the building costs to operate public spaces.

A major change in 2020 was the decision to expense the purchase of eBooks and eAudiobooks rather than recording them as tangible capital assets. The companies that sell eBooks and eAudiobooks use various sales methods, but most often, the licenses to purchase a certain number of these electronic materials are used up within a year and no longer meet the definition of an asset.

Public Services was 4.6 per cent or \$712,000 under budget for the year, the biggest variance being in salaries and benefits. The pandemic resulted in the library closing its doors to the public for a period of four months in 2020 and once reopening occurred, there were reduced hours. While more resources were used to provide and produce electronic content, there was still a reduction in overall hours worked in Public Service. In person programming and events were also sharply curtailed during 2020, resulting in \$120,000 less being spent in those areas. Almost \$100,000 more was spent on digital resources including movies, TV shows, music, periodicals, newspapers, tutorials, and classes than in 2019, a direct result of the pandemic. A further \$517,000 was spent on eBooks and eAudiobooks in 2020, a \$100,000 increase from 2019, also a direct result of the pandemic.

The second largest category of expenses is for Support Services, and accounts for 19.3 per cent or \$4,535,000 of expenditures. Expenses included in this category are staff salaries and benefits for marketing and communications, human resources, information technology, finance, and physical plant staff. Other costs include insurance, audit, information technology costs associated with staff technology, legal, and other costs in support of RPL operations.

Support Services were 7.6 per cent or \$374,000 under budget for 2020. Like Public Services, the biggest under spending occurred in salaries and benefits. However, the variance was due more to vacant and delayed recruitment of positions, not as much due to library closures caused by the pandemic. The other major variance is in training and development, where \$126,000 less was spent than planned – largely an outcome of the curtailment of in person training opportunities caused by COVID-19.

Administration costs made up 6.7 per cent or \$1,572,000 of expenditures and include salaries and benefits for the CEO and administrative staff as well as the Development Office. Other than salaries, the single biggest expenditure in administration costs is the \$396,000 charged by the City of Regina for administering the collection of the tax levy. Administration costs also included legal fees, central library development, capital campaign, administrative consulting, and RPL's portion of SILS administrative costs.

Board governance represented 0.3 per cent or \$60,000 of expenditures. These include board honorariums, travel, and any other costs associated with the board.

Amortization of RPL's capital assets accounted for the third largest expenditure category at 11.5 per cent or \$2,698,000. Amortization is calculated on RPL's buildings and building improvements, library materials, vehicles, furniture and equipment, information technology, shelving, and landscaping.

Surplus and reserves

The surplus for 2020 is \$1,814,000, which is \$1,417,000 above the \$397,000 budgeted surplus from operations. Given that both operating and capital budgets are funded by the current year tax levy, a surplus in operations is budgeted to fulfill the capital budget requirements. As well, there are non-cash expenses in the operating budget, amortization, and interest/severance expenses to cover RPL's employee benefits obligation, that are added to the budgeted surplus in operations to fund the capital budget.

In 2019, the board adopted a new carry forward funding policy. This policy allows budgeted funds in a previous year to be carried forward to the next year of significant projects or equipment purchases that cannot be completed in the previous year. In 2019, the City's project to replace the roof at the Sandra Schmirler Leisure Centre, which is also home to RPL's Sunrise Branch, was not completed and \$219,000 was carried forward for the completion of the Sunrise roof. Also, renovations to the Glen Elm Branch front entrance area were not completed by the end of the year and \$219,000 was carried forward for the completion of this project. These projects were subsequently completed in 2020. At the end of 2020, \$63,000 of the library capital materials budget was carried forward to 2021. A major disruption in the publishing of books and the closure of library materials distribution companies due to the pandemic resulted in RPL not receiving its full complement of library materials, particularly children's materials.

As noted previously, the financial statements include SILS. In 2020, SILS recorded a surplus and RPL's 22 per cent share of the surplus was \$26,000. Not including the SILS surplus, the \$63,000 needed to complete the projects above, and the funneling of the Dunlop exhibition surplus to the Dunlop reserve, the board approved the allocation of the surplus in excess of the budgeted surplus, \$1,660,000, to the Capital project reserve.

The accumulated surplus for 2020 with comparatives for 2019 is broken down as follows:

	2020 (000's)	2019 (000's)
Appropriated surplus:		
Capital project reserve	\$ 11,387	\$ 9,727
Operating reserve	1,705	1,705
Technology reserve	950	950
Vehicle reserve	7	13
Dunlop art projects reserve	195	152
SILS	216	200
	14,460	12,747
Obligations to be funded from future revenues:		
Employee benefits obligations	(836)	(747)
Investment in tangible capital assets	15,491	16,034
Unappropriated surplus	3,809	3,076
Accumulated surplus	\$ 32,924	\$ 31,110

The mandate of the Capital project reserve is to fund the construction, expansion, or renovation of library facilities, and may be used to purchase major equipment. No projects were funded using this reserve in 2020. As well, no changes occurred during the year to the Operating and Technology reserves.

The Vehicle reserve allows for a steady allocation of \$30,000 of funds towards the purchase of replacement vehicles rather than one-time large outlays when vehicles need replacing. A truck was purchased in 2020 using funds allocated to this reserve. The reserve contained \$7,000 at the end of 2020.

The Dunlop art projects reserve is funded by grants from the Saskatchewan Arts Board and Canada Council for the Arts and is used to fund exhibitions at the Dunlop. Because the cost of exhibitions can vary over a period of years, this fund allows the Dunlop to use surplus funds in one year to fund more costly exhibitions in following years. In 2020, this reserve increased by \$43,000, largely because exhibition and related activities were curtailed by the pandemic.

RPL's portion of SILS' appropriated reserves is \$216,000 compared to \$200,000 in 2019. These reserves are for service development and personnel liabilities.

The employee benefits obligations are an accumulation of funds owed to eligible employees who are entitled to a lump sum payment of a portion of their accumulated sick days (in-scope employees) or to five days of severance pay per year of service (out-of-scope employees) when they retire or otherwise leave RPL. Employees must work for a minimum of 10 years before they are eligible for any payouts from these post-employment sick leave and severance pay plans.

Out-of-scope employees hired after July 1, 2012 and in-scope employees hired after December 31, 2012 are no longer eligible for post-employment payments from this plan. Since no new employees are allowed into this plan, this liability will decrease over time as payments are made to eligible employees. In 2020, the employee benefits obligations increased to \$836,000 from \$747,000 in 2019, largely because there were very few resignations or retirements during the year. As staff remain in these plans, the amount they are entitled to receive once they resign or retire accumulates as sick day credits grow or entitlement to severance increases with more years of service.

Investments in tangible capital assets of \$15,491,000 reflect a decrease of \$543,000 from 2019. This decrease is mostly due to the change in how eBooks and eAudiobooks are accounted for – starting in 2020, they are now expensed rather than capitalized. While new tangible capital assets of \$2,155,000, mostly library materials and technology assets, were added in 2019, there was \$2,698,000 of amortization.

The increase in the unappropriated surplus includes budgeted surplus funds, carryforward funding for projects, and the RPL portion of the SILS surplus. Overall, the accumulated surplus has increased by the amount of the recorded surplus for the year, \$1,814,000, leaving RPL with an overall accumulated surplus of \$32,924,000.

Future outlook

Working toward our community vision

RPL continually reviews the changing demographics and needs of the citizens of Regina to determine how best to serve these needs. The strategic planning process which resulted in a new vision, mission, and values was finalized at the end of 2016 with resulting strategic imperatives and measures and targets in four key areas: community, financial, internal operations, and learning and growth. Service planning was initiated in Fall 2017 and continued into 2018. The result is goals based on the four pillars of RPL's mission as described earlier.

The four key areas from the strategic plan and the goals based on the pillars of the mission statement have formed the basis of the *RPL Service Plan, 2019-2021* to focus public service actions over the next three years. It is anticipated there will be significant changes to public service programs and services based on the service plan.

Central Library

Central Library was opened in 1962 and does not serve the needs of a modern library from a functional perspective. As well, the physical infrastructure is in dire need of significant repair and renovation if the current building is to be kept. A 2014 study of Central Library showed that significant maintenance work must be completed within three to eight years. This work includes a new roof, a new building envelope, major upgrades to the ventilation system, and the re-posting of all the granite work on the exterior of the building. The Board is considering options such as renovating the current space, renovating and expanding the current space, and construction of a completely new library.

Starting in 2019, RPL engaged an owner's representative to conduct a comprehensive Needs Assessment and Project Plan for Central Library Renewal. Other components of the work include a Funding and Financing review and an Economic Impact Study. This work is looking at a variety of options for Central Library renewal and the various advantages and

disadvantages associated with each option. Additionally, the work encompasses broad stakeholder consultation and public surveying to assess the view of the Regina community. While the COVID-19 pandemic caused the work to slow as library administration focused on operations, the initial work is now being updated to include work on how the pandemic has impacted the need for Central Library renewal.

Branch renewal

Many branch spaces have been renovated, replaced, and/or expanded over the past eight years, including Prince of Wales (2011), Regent Place (2012), George Bothwell (2016) and Albert at māmawêyatitân centre (2017). In 2018, the roof at Sherwood Village was replaced. In 2019, smaller renovations continued at Sherwood Village (washrooms) and a project to replace the roof at Sunrise began as part of a city project to replace the roof of the entire Sandra Schmirler Leisure Centre. 2019 also saw the initiation of a project at Glen Elm to improve washroom accessibility and make meeting and program rooms accessible to the public when the branch itself is not open.

RPL will continue to review the physical infrastructure and functional programming requirements of its branches to ensure they meet community needs. The new service plan speaks to free and open access to resources which means ensuring branches are easily accessible and have programs and services available to a diverse community. It also speaks to being a community space where people and ideas meet which means flexible space to engage in quiet, interactive, and collaborative activities.

Risk

RPL operates in an environment subject to a variety of risks and uncertainties that could affect the achievement of our business objectives and financial and operating performance. Day-to-day risks within various operating units are the responsibility of unit managers. Project risks on a larger scale are the responsibility of senior management and the Board.

In Fall 2018, RPL began to look at risk from an enterprise perspective. A consultant was engaged to help RPL determine its enterprise risks and to narrow these risks down to those most important to address at the enterprise level. RPL's risk register identified twenty-one risks at an enterprise level. The key risks and actions to mitigate these risks are discussed below.

Financial risk

As economic and demographic growth slows in the City of Regina, RPL does not realize funding due to growth in the tax roll. Capital renewal requirements at RPL are considerable and there is a risk that RPL cannot raise sufficient funds to meet these requirements. If RPL wants to grow and expand its infrastructure and program offerings, a more diverse funding strategy may be required. As an annual process, the Library's ability to rely on any future mill rate is limited.

To mitigate this, RPL has spent considerable time in strategic and operational planning over the past several years. This way, infrastructure renewal and programs and services can be prioritized so citizens are getting the most for their tax dollar. At the end of 2019, RPL engaged a firm to lead RPL in a Central Library renewal project. One of the outcomes of this project was to examine various funding mechanisms RPL can use to fund significant infrastructure and renewal projects, most notably Central Library.

Infrastructure risk

Central Library needs significant renovation in the near future. While not meeting the functional needs of a modern library, the physical structure is in poor shape and funds will be required to replace significant building systems. This risk is compounded by the fact that a major replacement of a building system, such as the roof, may be needed before a plan to address the Central Library can be approved and put into place. While the Central Library building is in poor shape, RPL actively works to address the physical infrastructure risks by frequently inspecting areas at risk and making repairs as necessary.

Connaught Branch also has infrastructure issues which will need to be fixed in the next few years and plans are now starting to address these issues. Branches including Sherwood Village and Sunrise have seen a major growth in the populations they serve, and plans must be made to meet the needs of these expanding communities. RPL will need to address the growing city population on the west side where the travel distance to library services is greater than usual.

Human capital and workforce management

The recruitment of qualified candidates for professional positions continues to be a risk. As long-term Baby Boomer employees retire, RPL must compete with other employers to fill both professional librarian and non-librarian positions from a smaller pool of qualified candidates. To mitigate this risk, RPL is positioning itself as a forward-thinking, progressive workplace with a focus on the community.

Internal Operations

As RPL works to implement its ambitious strategic and operational plans, including the service plan, there is a risk that RPL does not have the human or resource capacity to achieve its plans. Additionally, the planning processes may not be sufficiently well defined to prioritize the multiple goals of the organization. There is also a risk that real or perceived safety and security concerns negatively impact organizational capacity, reputation, and community support.

To mitigate this, RPL has defined a system-wide planning process to best utilize the organization's resources. This process helps define and prioritize goals and allows system resources to be used to best meet RPL's strategic plan.

In terms of safety and security, especially at Central Library, RPL invested in staff training to recognize and diffuse safety and security concerns and engages a security company to provide ongoing support to staff in dealing with safety and security concerns. Additionally, a system-wide incident reporting system and a well-defined process for reviewing and dealing with these incidents has provided reassurance to both customers and staff.

Governance risk

The RPL Board of Directors has undergone significant change over the past five years. There is a risk that the lack of board continuity may lead the board to cover the same ground repeatedly and thereby slow decision making on key questions. To mitigate this, the board has participated in strategic planning discussions over the past two years so they understand the current environment and the critical importance of the major decisions they must make. New board members participate in an extensive orientation so they are knowledgeable and can contribute to ongoing board discussions on key items.