



# Inspiring Community Connection: Okotoks Public Library Plan of Service 2017-2019



Tessa Nettleton  
Okotoks Public Library  
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## **Introduction**

### **A message from the Chair of the Town of Okotoks Library Board.**

Times are difficult for many Albertan families. They, and many others, have been directly affected by the current down-turn in the economy through unemployment or reduction in family revenue, and the consequent adaptation to their life-style.

It is at times like these that the community library comes into its own. The library is there to serve and support every member of the family, from the tiniest tot to the elderly grandparent, and every other community member.

The Board, the Director and the staff at the Okotoks Public Library (OPL) are committed to providing the best possible service to the community. By providing relevant and useful information, inspiring community connection, providing the space and resources to stimulate curiosity and innovation and promoting life-long learning, the OPL will stand by hard-pressed families and other residents as we all work towards a brighter future.

This Plan of Service, which was developed through direct consultation with the community and approved by the Library Board on 9 June 2016, is a roadmap of the services and programmes that the OPL will provide and undertake over the period 2017 to 2019. It is our fervent hope that, by the end of this Plan of Service, conditions will be much improved throughout our Province, and that the OPL will have played its own small part in the recovery ... to the benefit of our patrons.

Lorena Engen

For and on behalf of

The Town of Okotoks Library Board

## **Plan of Service purpose and planning process followed.**

**The purpose** of the Plan of Service 2017-2019 is to give effect to the needs and expectations as determined by community leaders, the general public of the Town of Okotoks, and those residents in the surrounding district making use of the services provided by the Okotoks Public Library (OPL).

**The strategic planning process followed** can best be explained by the following extract taken from the proposed planning process approved by the Library Board at their meeting of 12 January 2016:

*"General outline. The Library Board will meet to determine their Vision and Mission for the Okotoks Public Library (OPL). This meeting will be facilitated by the Planning Committee. Once the Vision and Mission have been approved by the Board, a series of public meetings will be held in order to obtain input from community leaders and the residents of Okotoks/patrons of the library with respect to their needs and expectations. These will be analysed by the Library Board in terms of appropriate library service responses. The relevant library service responses will be selected, after which the Director and her staff will draw up service objectives and appropriate programmes aimed at achieving such objectives. Once these have been considered and approved by the Library Board, the Plan of Service will be compiled."*

The following pages are the direct result of the planning process, explaining in great detail how the OPL will strive to satisfy the needs and expectations through library service responses selected by the community that we serve.

## Library Profile

The Okotoks Public Library first opened in 1979 in a very small room on Elizabeth Street. As the Town's population increased over the years, the Library moved twice more to increasingly larger facilities until finding its present home right next to the Sheep River. This building underwent an expansion from 8000 sq.ft. to 15000sq.ft. in 2005. 11 years on, and the facility is still managing to provide excellent service, collections and programs to its 30,000 population and to 4000 MD of Foothills members.

**Statistics:** The collection presently stands at 55676 items, the circulation for 2016 to the end of May is 176,101, library membership is 16100 active members, and there have been 51,200 visits to the library to date (from weekly counts).

**Current services:** These include everything that is a core service for public libraries including service to Seniors' Homes and examination invigilation. Please see our website link <http://okotokslibrary.ca/content/services-5>

**Programs:** Our website and social media sites market all our programs for all ages. Please see [www.okotokslibrary.ca](http://www.okotokslibrary.ca) or <http://okotokslibrary.ca/programming> for a peek at the programs that are coming up and those that have been run during this year. The calendar link <http://okotokslibrary.ca/calendar> gives a complete overview of the 2016 programs to date.

There are no changes expected to the building during this year beyond regular maintenance issues. Over the past two years, we have refurbished the public wash rooms, the staff workroom and staff lounge, maintained and developed our technology and collections, and painted the inside of the library. This has allowed us to remain relevant, capable and dynamic, and to present a fresh and welcoming appearance to our community. The next important period for this library will include maintaining and increasing the awareness of the library's special and integral place in the community. We will unquestionably need to either expand or move in the next few years as the community grows and needs change, and will require the community's understanding and support for this crucial step.

Vision:

Heart of the Community,  
Key to the World

Mission:

To enrich, inspire and empower  
the community by providing  
space and resources to stimulate  
curiosity and innovation, life-long  
learning, community connection  
and leisure pursuits in a safe,  
welcoming environment.

## Our Values

The Library Board and staff are committed to:

### **Accessibility**

We provide facilities, resources and programmes that are readily, equally and equitably accessible.

### **Quality**

We strive for excellence in our customer service, collections and programmes through the on-going development of our organisation.

### **Accountability**

We are responsible to our community for the sound stewardship of the resources we receive and services we provide.

### **Connection**

We support and facilitate a collaborative effect greater than what we achieve individually.

### **Literacy**

We nurture the joy of reading and life-long learning for community members.

### **Intellectual Freedom**

We uphold the principles that respect individuals' rights to privacy and choice.

### **Diversity**

We celebrate our unique perspectives, beliefs and cultures by acknowledging one another with dignity and respect.

### **Innovation**

We foster creativity, curiosity and imagination to spark discovery.

This Plan of Service explains the goals, objectives and activities that we foresee will render successful results to our community with the selected library service responses in mind. This document is dynamic in nature as it is dependent upon number of staff, level of training and competence, fiscal constraints, and the limitations of our library building. If it is found that a determinant for success already in place cannot be met, then changes will be made to find a benchmark that is reasonable and achievable. The library is cognizant of the fact that, while serving all sectors of our community to the best of our ability, many intangible benefits cannot be measured, and thus the library's true impact will be difficult to assess in these cases.

*“Books may be what people tend to think of when one mentions a public library, but it is the community that drives this facility, and is the crux of our focus. The Library is an essential local service that strives hard to improve residents’ lives through the provision of core services that are focused on leisure, learning and community life. Community and connection are the two main components that we wish to embrace and ameliorate going forward.”*

*Tessa Nettleton, Director of Library Services.*

## **Priority Service Responses as identified by the community committees and focus groups.**

The four service responses below were selected by community leaders and the general public via a process of public consultation. Our focus will be on these four areas with some integration between the responses.

- Create a literate community and society: Supporting the development of literacy in individuals.
- Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong learning.
- Stimulate Imagination: Reading, viewing and listening for pleasure.
- Visit a comfortable space: Physical and virtual spaces.



## **Create a literate community and society: Supporting the development of literacy in individuals.**

Residents will have the encouragement, material and programs that will help to develop and enhance their literacy skills.

***Goal 1: The library will deliver services and programs that enable users to learn and/or teach more effectively thus increasing their literacy skills.***

**Objective:** From 2017, the library will continue to provide a variety of youth, juvenile and early literacy programs. These will be measured annually by the number of participants, number of programs, circulation increase of relevant material, or percentage of children or their parents/caregivers who indicate increased usage of their library membership.

**Activity:** Create and implement at least 6 new quality literacy and literature based juvenile programs that target members of the community aged 6-12. These will help children to socialize, learn how to use their creativity and imagination, and further their literacy.

**Activity:** Create and maintain an interactive online early literacy program for parents and caregivers who may use the literacy based themes and projects to develop and improve children's literacy skills.

**Activity:** Ensure continued weekly implementation of at least 5 early and pre-school literacy based story times that inform and excite the participants.

**Activity:** Regularly produce displays of materials for young adults exposing them to new books and creative displays that will educate and inspire them to read and create.

**Activity:** Outreach to the schools to motivate and enthuse young adults to contribute and compete in twice yearly reading and writing challenges.

**Objective:** Annually promote and provide regular technology training avenues for individuals for e-resources and devices. The evaluation of achievement of this objective will be how many people participate and how many indicate through mini-interviews or surveys that they have expanded their knowledge and/or have developed their ability to use technology.

**Activity:** Research grants that enable the library to deliver literacy services that promote technology training. Funds will be used for staff and volunteer training, updated technology (devices and software), and for external tutors.

**Activity:** Partner further with Marigold to effectively avail the library of the System's excellent training opportunities - both in-house and online.

**Objective:** By 2019, the library will be offering 10% more literacy based service and program opportunities that provide access to training, tutoring and knowledge for adults. The evaluation of achievement will be through the number of classes/sessions held, attendance, and mini-interviews conducted to gather information on knowledge gleaned.

**Activity:** Actively search for partnerships in the community to assist us to offer these opportunities.

**Activity:** Support more literacy groups and partners to function from our facility by supplying space, services (i.e. photocopying and printing, laptops), technology, strong internet connectivity and materials.

***Goal 2: Increase partnerships with early learning facilities and literacy driven organizations within the community served.***

**Objective:** By 2018 the library will have increased its existing list of partners by 20%. The evaluation of achievement will be the total number of partnerships that the Library manages to establish from year to year.

**Activity:** Outreach to the day homes, day care centres, schools and interagency groups, to provide information on our services and collections, will be increased.

**Activity:** Extend social media presence to advertise and demonstrate our willingness to find and work with other educational and social groups.

**Activity:** Facilitate and support groups that develop programs for certain demographics in our community (i.e. Foothills Children's Network: Grandparent's Work Group), by participating in the programs and supplying resources (e.g. space) for the programs.

***Goal 3: Partnering with social community groups who support the homebound and isolated residents in the community by supplying donated reading and listening material.***

**Objective:** During 2017, contact the social wellness groups in Okotoks and the MD of Foothills to determine how the library can help to enrich the lives of home-bound and isolated residents in the community. The evaluation of achievement of this objective would be how many people we manage to assist, how many items we donate to the cause, and how many people let us know through surveys or mini-interviews that they have received material that has allowed them to develop, maintain or increase their level of literacy.

**Activity:** Outreach to local groups such as the Newcomers, the Foothills Senior Interagency and the Senior Centre - to determine where and how we can assist in improving the life of individuals. Establish a committee to develop and manage this activity on a regular basis.

**Activity:** Stocking and maintaining the library project's seven Little Free Libraries in the Town of Okotoks in the hope that they prove to be beneficial to isolated individuals in the community. This is a "Take One Leave One" initiative started in 2016, but will probably require monitoring throughout 2017 in order to gather relevant data.

## **Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong learning**

Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

***Goal 1: Community-centred, customer-focused service culture is fully embraced.***

**Objective:** By 2019, circulation of inventory will have increased by 10% as the library staff becomes more responsive to awareness of local interests, community events, and customer centred material and program selection. The determination of achievement of this objective will be the increase in use and circulation of the inventory, the increase in number of community related programs, the increase in knowledge of Town events and local organizations, and the number of patrons interviewed who say that they are very satisfied with collections, programs, staff and services that have helped them to achieve their lifelong learning endeavours.

**Activity:** Ensure that all staff focus on excellent customer service in every aspect of their daily work, and have ongoing access to opportunities for training in customer servicing and other related competencies. This excellence in customer

servicing will allow staff to seamlessly assist patrons with any questions they may have in order to explore topics of interest.

**Activity:** Ensure a constant supply of local information pamphlets, maps and events. Maintain a good symbiotic relationship with the Town of Okotoks, the recreation and arts and culture centres.

**Activity:** Provide ready access to material in all formats that are pertinent to current programs running in the library, displaying these in or near the meeting rooms.

**Objective:** Each year, the collection development team will focus at least 15% of their annual allocation towards acquiring new and gap material that relates to the community's wants and needs with regards to recreation, relaxation and research. Evaluation of achievement of this objective will be that customer-driven selection will increase every year as will user statistics. Surveys will further indicate that residents are satisfied with materials that are readily available.

**Activity:** Suggestions and requests will be solicited through our social media sites, and directly from users.

**Activity:** Staff will remain vigilant of holds coming in from other TRAC sources to note the nature of material we may consider purchasing to fill gaps, or replace older or outdated material.

***Goal 2: Research and develop programs, collections and services that give residents the opportunity to be aware of, learn and master new skills and knowledge.***

**Objective:** Each year, the library will provide adult education programs that satisfy curiosity and offer lifelong learning opportunities. The evaluation of achievement of this objective will be the number of adult education opportunities provided, the number of people attending and the feedback from the participants with regards to their satisfaction with the program and its resulting increase of their knowledge.

**Activity:** Through partnership and attendance at various committees and groups in Okotoks and the MD of Foothills, the library will have access to ideas and opportunities to facilitate new lifelong learning workshops, sessions and programs. Examples of such groups are the Okotoks Interagency and the Seniors Interagency.

**Activity:** Research current trends and new ideas that will produce educative workshops and information sessions for all ages. Such workshops and sessions will be implemented, where possible.

**Objective:** Promote all avenues of learning and knowledge within the library that will inform residents. The evaluation of the achievement of this objective will be the increased usage of collections, larger social media interaction and presence, and number of residents who will state through surveys and mini-interviews that they have learnt more about the library and its contents and services (both in-house and online).

**Activity:** Create, implement and maintain monthly electronic newsletters to educate the community on upcoming programs, new materials and news from the Library.

**Activity:** Maintain existing social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and our website), and integrate other social media sites that become invaluable for our marketing strategy.

**Activity:** Outreach opportunities will be increased for all ages, thus marketing and spreading awareness of the library and its place in the community.

**Activity:** Consistently promoting the e-resources especially those that are educational such as lynda.com and Solaro.

## **Stimulate Imagination: Reading, viewing, and listening for pleasure**

Residents will have access to materials, services and programs that can enrich their leisure time, and have the assistance that they need to make choices from among the options.

**Goal 1:** *The library will strive to increase awareness and usage of its collections, services, and programs within the community.*

**Objective:** By the end of 2017, the library will have implemented LEAP (off-site access to Polaris) as fully as possible. The evaluation of achievement of this objective will be the number of outreach opportunities where LEAP is utilized, or the number of new or renewing membership obtained during the events through the use of this software.



**Activity:** Incorporate LEAP into all outreach opportunities to day homes, daycare centres, schools, organizations and Town events or wherever a wireless signal can be obtained thus furthering awareness of the library and accessibility.

**Objective:** Annually evaluate and implement a schedule to maximize opportunities to promote and circulate materials, information and programs at events or businesses in the community. The determinant for success will be the % increase in visitors to the library, circulation of items, and new memberships. Membership coupons will be marked differently for each place/event.

**Activity:** Certain staff will attend street markets, festivals and other Town events with promotional material and free membership coupons to inform people about our library's services and programs.

**Activity:** Conduct informal information sessions to local businesses (i.e. McDonalds, FCIS, doctor's offices) requesting that brochures in English and Spanish on the e-resources and library information be posted on staff/office bulletin boards. We will include free membership coupons in the package of material to track usage counts

## ***Goal 2: Increase reader's advisory skills in all staff.***

**Objective:** Each year the library will knowledgeably assist patrons to read, listen and view material that they want, and to advise them about other authors, subjects and audio-visual material that they may like to try. The determinant for success will be the % increase of circulation of material, the number of users stating on surveys and in mini-interviews that they received excellent help from staff in order to make their choice for relaxation, recreation and research.

**Activity:** Staff will clearly be encouraged to avail themselves of any and all pertinent training to better assist users to locate material that will enrich their leisure time.

**Activity:** Staff will clearly be encouraged to practice regular "roving assistance" in the library during reference scheduling or while shelving material.

**Activity:** Provide an online reading club through social media where book reviews are easily accessible to members.

**Activity:** Develop and maintain a reader's advisory webpage. Print bookmarks with read-a-like authors' names and adult and juvenile non-fiction and fiction titles for quick reference.

**Goal 3: The library is seen as a valuable resource for the development of creative skills.**

**Objective:** By 2018, the library will be regularly providing opportunities for instruction and skill development in all fields of creative expression. The evaluation of achievement of this objective will be the number of people attending classes and how many opportunities/sessions were facilitated or implemented.

**Activity:** Search for grants so that further writing challenges and author talks, and writing instruction workshops can be held in the library - similar to the Seniors Writing workshops that were run in 2016. The grant was the New Horizons Grant for Seniors.

**Activity:** Develop and run a number of juvenile programs that are based on creative expression (i.e. drawing cartoons, juvenile book club), and that stimulate imagination.

**Activity:** Run seasonal adult, young adult and juvenile reading programs.

**Activity:** Provide a leisure interest for the P.D. Days in our community whether this be new movies to watch and listen to, a creative activity to be a part of, or a story time program.

**Activity:** Establish and maintain informal week - long makerspace tables for all children to express and use their creativity.

**Activity:** Collaborate with related organizations in the community to facilitate creative programs.

**Objective:** Every year the Collection Development team will ensure that the library has a well-developed collection of materials relating to any form of creative expression. The determination of success will be the usage and circulation of these materials every year.

**Activity:** Display and arrange collections to improve access to creative subjects and items while enhancing the browse-ability of the collection. Intergenerational (Y, J and Adult) and different formats of display of similar subjects will be introduced.

**Activity:** Ensure that displays of relevant material are placed into all programs housed in the library (i.e. Lego books and movies during a Lego program).

## **Visit a comfortable space: physical and virtual spaces.**

Residents will have safe, attractive and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others, or to sit quietly and read or study, and will have access to useful virtual spaces.

**Goal 1:** *Provide a well-managed, safe and welcoming gathering place - responsive to the community's needs and suggestions.*

**Objective:** The Library, including the building, will be efficiently and effectively managed and maintained. Achievement of this objective will be determined via customer surveys and mini-interviews regarding the dynamic and successful library service, and satisfaction with staff, the building's cleanliness, functionality and management.

**Activity:** Maintain a good working relationship with Town departments who are instrumental in maintaining, inspecting and beautifying the building and its surrounding space.

**Activity:** Constantly monitor all areas of the building to ensure that health and safety measures are in place and functioning correctly. Emergency preparedness measures need to be up to date and staff trained on all aspects of these procedures.

**Activity:** Staff, Board and volunteers to be aware of negative impressions and comments on the facility, and make proactive responses when able.

**Objective:** The organizational structure will be assessed annually to ensure that it continues to function with maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Successful achievement of this objective will be based upon satisfaction ratings and favourable comments from both public and staff about the management and staffing of the library.

**Activity:** Plan for succession - particularly with senior positions - reviewing each position as they open up due to retirement or other changes.

**Activity:** Search for, and acknowledge strengths in the staff that will be beneficial to the organizational structure. Coach and train these staff towards more responsible roles.

**Objective:** The library will constantly monitor and improve customer servicing efficiencies that will support staff and minimize repetitive and labour intensive



tasks where possible, allowing for better use of time for other important library functions (readership, outreach, literacy programming). Evaluation of achievement of this objective will be the % of increased productivity through time saved, and job satisfaction ratings.

**Activity:** Develop training modules for the volunteers to assist with tasks that will alleviate staff (i.e. covering books, processing items, sorting donations).

**Activity:** Research new or other trends in library technology that will ease the labour intensity (e.g. RFID, sortation systems, etc.).

## ***Goal 2: The Library strives to promote a sense of belonging and community in both its physical and virtual spaces.***

**Objective:** Regularly monitor spaces, furnishings and technology to confirm that the library presents a comfortable, competent and welcoming face to the community. Determination of successful achievement of this objective will be the # of visits, satisfaction ratings from surveys or mini-interviews, meeting room income increase, etc.

**Activity:** Maintain customer focused areas that substantiate comfortable and welcoming areas considerate of socialization, studying and quiet space. Replace, repurpose and repair furnishings and outdated technology where necessary.

**Activity:** Constant insightful weeding of the collection to minimize shelving footprint, allowing for uncluttered space that can be used for exhibitions, performances and the like.

**Activity:** The library meeting rooms and spaces will remain a top choice as a venue for meetings, events and educational classes in the Town.

**Objective:** The library will endeavour to be mindful of technology upgrades and new trends that support our services and programs so that they continue to be relevant and appealing to the community. Success will be measured by the increase in wireless and public computer usage, satisfaction ratings with meeting room equipment (projectors, VC, laptops, etc).

**Activity:** The Library will be willing to test and give feedback to any new software, hardware or upgrades as requested by Marigold Library System's management. (e.g. LEAP, Polaris upgrades, routers).

**Activity:** Staff will attend training opportunities that are technology focused, or have relevant sessions on new library trends.

**Activity:** Co-operate with Marigold Library System's IT staff to ensure that the library keeps up to date with its Technology Replacement Plan thus providing competent and capable hardware for public and staff use.

**Activity:** Utilize Marigold Library System's expertise and documentation to educate staff on new e-resources thus ensuring competence to train/show users how to access and use the e-resources on the various devices.

**Goal 3:** *Maintain community and stakeholder focus on the essential and urgent requirement for an expanded or new library facility to better serve the constantly growing community and residents of the Town of Okotoks and environs.*

**Objective:** Each year there will be a number of events and/or open houses held at the library, and participation in Town events, to ensure that the public remains cognizant of the library and its invaluable place in the community. Achievement of this objective will be determined by the success of these events/open houses via the number of attendees and the number of events attended and scheduled.

**Activity:** The Board and staff will adopt a strong marketing stance to increase awareness of the library and its services. These will include in-house events and promotional opportunities.

**Activity:** Staff will participate in many of the local events, presenting information and membership incentives at these events.

**Objective:** There will be Library Board or staff attendance at any and all of the Town's visioning, planning or implementation workshops and public consultations. Successful achievement of this objective will be the number of sessions attended, the % of feedback comments from stakeholders, number of people noting on surveys or mini-interviews that they noted the Library presence at these meetings, etc.

**Activity:** The Board and senior staff are expected to attend and give feedback on the content of these meetings to keep the library informed.

**Activity:** The Board and staff will maintain focus on the Town of Okotoks' growth planning, incorporating our vision for the future on all our social media sites, articles in the local paper and print media.