Library strategic plan successes are impressive

The North Bay Public Library Board of Directors is pleased with the progress the board and staff have made on the 2021-2025 strategic plan.

Strategic plan committee chair Melissa Sandford provided a written report at the board’s May meeting that fellow board member Krista Messenger described as “impressive.” She added that “a lot has been accomplished by both the previous and present boards and staff. The accomplishments should be celebrated and communicated to library patrons.”

The plan has five focal points: vibrant physical and virtual space; informative, timely, accessible communication; resources reflecting the diverse interests of the community; engaging programming for adults, youth and children; and exemplary governance practices.

Highlights include completion of the new Worthington Street entrance in 2024; rehabilitation of the McIntyre Street entrance in 2023; a new meeting space on the mezzanine level in 2021; and board room refurbishment in 2022 and technology upgrades in 2023-24.

The mezzanine level meeting room, board room, and auditorium are all available for groups to book online. This service began in 2023. There is no charge for non-profit groups.

Other highlights under the vibrant physical and virtual space heading include the installation of book-themed illustrations on stair risers, with both adult and children’s titles featured in 2024.

Under the theme, informative, timely, accessible communication, the report notes the installation of new digital signage on Worthington Street in 2024, and a 65-inch interior digital monitor in 2023. New content management software to streamline library content on online platforms and social media accounts was introduced in 2024.

The theme, resources reflecting the diverse interests of the community, highlighted the completion of a new, to code, accessibility ramp for the Worthington Street entrance in 2024. The French and Indigenous collections have been strengthened since 2021 and this work is ongoing.

Braille and signage buttons were installed in the elevator in 2023, and maintenance of a diverse magazine print collection in both English and French is ongoing.

A partnership with the WKP Kennedy art gallery brought a public art mural project this year, and a photo exhibit of Mariupol, Ukraine was also featured this year.

The engaging programming for adults, youth and children theme brought Indigenous author Waubgeshig Rice to the auditorium for a full-house event in 2024. The TD summer reading program for children has been ongoing since 2021.

**Libraries not just about books**

And here’s something for those who think libraries are just about the books. There was an increase in programs from 278 attendees in 2020 to 10,229 in 2023. There were 31 programs in 2020 and 202 in 2023.

Under the exemplary governance practices theme, the report notes the board of directors conducted a thorough review of outdated policies and developed new ones. A new policy template was created to ensure a consistent format.

The board appointed a representative, Krista Messenger, to engage with the Ontario Library Service, ensuring the library’s interests are represented in provincial discussions and fellow library board colleagues are supported.

The board analyzed processes to facilitate charitable donations and has an application being reviewed by Revenue Canada to award charitable status to the library. The board plans to partner with the North Bay and Area Community Foundation.,

The full list of outcomes is below.