



Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

# Legislative Library Strategic Priorities 2015-2020

April 2015



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In the winter of 2015, the Clerk of the House commissioned a strategic review of the Legislative Library. This review was a follow-up response to a recommendation of the Legislative Assembly Support Programs Accountability Review (LASPAR) Report concerning the urgent need for the Library to develop a multi-year strategic plan.

The first phase of the review consisted of a brief assessment of existing Library services and how effective they are in meeting client needs. Several users of Library services were consulted. Meetings were held with caucus staff of the government and opposition parties, and the legislative assistants serving the three Independents. Non-partisan staff employed by Assembly departments were also interviewed. While their interactions with the Library vary, these clients all recognized that the Library provides an essential and valuable service for legislators and their staff. At the same time they suggested that the Library could do a better job in: providing information in digital form on a timely basis; explaining on an ongoing basis what is available from the Library; and improving service standards and performance measurement.

Phase Two of the strategic review of the Library focused on determining the future direction for library priorities for the next five years and developing achievable targets and actions to meet these priorities. Based on the clients' feedback, 3 strategic priorities for 2015-20 are proposed:

## **1. Expand Digital Access and Services**

Specific initiatives to implement the first strategic priority are as follows:

- Develop an integrated and comprehensive digitization strategy
- Introduce distinct specialized media-monitoring services
- Create an accessible database containing information on current and former MLAs
- Continue digitization projects in collaboration with other libraries
- Refine and update the collection development policy for digital and print materials

## **2. Strengthen Relationships with Legislative Clients**

Specific initiatives to implement the second strategic priority are as follows:

- Develop a new Library promotion and outreach strategy
- Create communications tools to promote new products and services
- Offer more training opportunities for Library clients

## **3. Enhance Operational Performance**

Specific initiatives to implement the third strategic priority are as follows:

- Review service standards to strengthen quality assurance
- Improve performance measurement reporting to Legislative Assembly
- Develop skills and talents of divisional staff

Besides operational priorities, this strategic plan also addresses the question of space planning.

# INTRODUCTION

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For over 100 years, Members of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia have relied on the Legislative Library for information resources and services to assist them with their parliamentary duties. Today, technological change, the evolving needs of Members and their staff, and budgetary constraints are reshaping the Library's primary roles and services.

Legislative libraries in other parliamentary jurisdictions across Canada and elsewhere are facing pressures similar to those confronting the BC Library. In this context, other jurisdictions are reorienting their information services for Members and other legislative clients by:

- ***An increasing emphasis on digital services*** – In an era when Internet-based search tools provide Members with direct access to information on a 24/7 basis, legislative libraries are becoming portals which provide Members with access to: digital products that are not freely accessible elsewhere, confidential advice on trustworthy sources, and a comprehensive base of information on parliamentary and policy issues.
- ***Internal reallocation of budgets to respond to new priorities*** – The rising demand for digital information is absorbing an increasing share of library budgets and staff resources to purchase specialized databases and convert print collections to digital forms. Given overall budget constraints, these pressures tend to be managed through internal budget reallocations, with reduced funding of lower priorities.
- ***Improvements in performance reporting*** – Increasing requirements for accountability by parliamentary institutions are also resulting in more systematic performance reporting by legislative libraries. Libraries are expanding their use of performance measurements to identify how well they are delivering services and whether there are new service areas requiring attention.
- ***Enhanced communication with legislative clients*** – Some legislative libraries have taken steps to find out if their services are meeting legislative clients' information needs. For example, the Library of Parliament and legislative libraries in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador have recently examined how they are delivering services to Members and reoriented their information priorities to renewed digital programs.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE BC STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic review of the BC Legislative Library is a by-product of a 2014 Legislative Assembly Support Programs Accountability Review (LASPAR) commissioned by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. The review follows up on a LASPAR recommendation for an urgent need for the Library to develop a multi-year strategic plan to meet the changing requirements of Members and the Assembly. It also dovetails with the Legislative Assembly's focus on improving accountability and financial administration.

The review was undertaken in two phases:

- Phase One consisted of a brief assessment of existing services and how effectively they meet client needs. Background information on the historical role and evolution of the Legislative Library was also compiled.
- Phase Two focused on determining the future direction for library priorities for the next five years and developing achievable targets and actions to meet these priorities. New service-delivery options adopted by other legislative libraries were also examined to determine best practices and lessons learned.

The development of this strategic plan has been informed by an analysis of information collected from a variety of sources. Two recent reports produced by the Legislative Assembly (LASPAR Report, Accountability Report, 2013-14) were consulted. Historical and current Library policy documents (including its 2007 and 2013 strategic plans) were also reviewed. Additional information was obtained through helpful meetings with the Library's management team and divisional staff, who provided valuable input on how to enhance Library operations.

### ***Client consultations***

Interviews were conducted to seek the views of some of the Library's main clients. Meetings were held with legislative staff employed by the government and opposition caucuses, and by the three Independent MLAs. Directors and managers of the Assembly's departments were also consulted about their existing relationship with the Library; and one department, Financial Services, provided financial information. A summary of the client consultations is presented in a later section.

## ABOUT THE LIBRARY

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This brief overview of the organization is designed to provide some background information on the Library's origins, governance structure, financial situation and existing staff resources.

### **History**

The Library has a proud tradition of service, dating back to 1863 when it was founded to assist the colonial legislature of Vancouver Island. It became the Legislative Library of British Columbia when the province joined confederation in 1871. Over the years the Library has served as the repository for Assembly papers, books, government publications and newspapers, and as a valuable information resource for generations of parliamentarians. Since 1915 the Library has been housed in a wing of the Parliament Buildings, and plans are underway to celebrate its centennial later this year.

### **Governance structure**

The Library's governing statute, the *Legislative Library Act*, was enacted in 1894. The Act establishes the Library to serve the needs of the Legislative Assembly, authorizes the acquisition of collection materials for the use of the Assembly and its Members, provides that the Library be "conveniently near" the Legislative Chamber, and authorizes the Library's management and staff. Up until the mid-1980s, jurisdiction for the Legislative Library was shared between the Speaker and the Provincial Secretary, with the former in charge when the House was sitting and the latter during periods of adjournment. On February 21, 1985, the Library became a dedicated program of the Legislative Assembly, entirely separate from the provincial government.

Standing Orders, 116 through 119, adopted in February 1985, provide a glimpse into the restricted mandate of the Library some 30 years ago. Standing Order 116, for example, simply instructs the Legislative Librarian to maintain a catalogue of the Library and file an annual report to the House. Standing Orders 117 and 118 restrict the use of the Library during a sitting of the House and limit the circulation of books during a session. Finally, Standing Order 119 vests the management and control of the Legislative Library with the Speaker, emphasizing the move away from shared authority with a cabinet minister.

### **Resourcing**

The Library's budget and staffing have been limited over recent years, and the organization has underspent its annual budget due to carrying some funded but vacant staff positions. Approximately 80 percent (\$1.8 million) of the Library's approved budget of \$2.2 million for 2015/16 is allocated for employee salaries and benefits, with the remaining 20 percent (\$0.4 million) set aside for collection materials, supplies, office and business expenses, information systems, and professional services. The Library's valuable collection of government documents is acquired free of charge enabling the Library to minimize acquisition costs; however, converting these documents to digital format requires considerable staff resources.

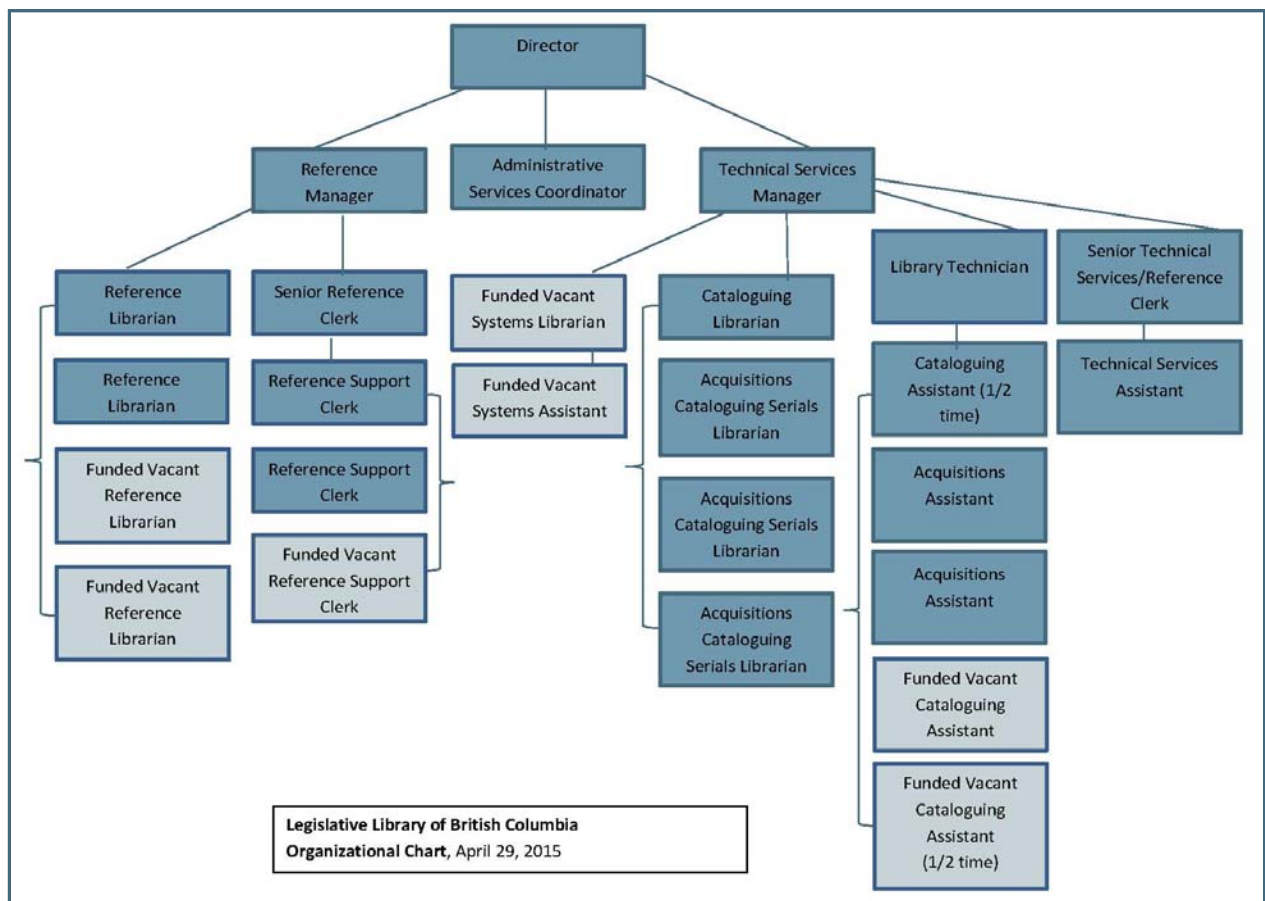


## Legislative Library Budget (\$ million)

	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
<b>Library Approved Budget</b>	2.2	2.2	2.1
<b>Library Actual Expenditures</b>	N/A	1.5	1.8
<b>% of Total Legislative Assembly Budget</b>	3.1%	3.1%	3.1%

## Staffing

Financial constraints have affected staffing and service levels. Since 2007, the Library has not filled some librarian positions and support staff positions. Attrition is also occurring as a result of staff retirements, with the accompanying loss of corporate knowledge. The current staff complement is 18.5 employees with funding provided for 6.5 vacant positions in the current budget, as the April 2015 organization chart shows:



### **Comparison with other jurisdictions**

The Library's level of performance in reference services compares favourably with other legislative libraries, and the Library has a strong position of cost-effectiveness in relation to other jurisdictions:

#### **Legislative Library Comparison (2013/14 statistics)**

	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Questions Answered</b>	<b>Circulation</b>	<b>Expenditures (millions)</b>	<b>Expenditure per MLA</b>	<b>Expenditure per capita</b>
<b>BC</b>	21	3,562	4,296	\$1.8	\$21,117	\$0.39
<b>Alberta</b>	22	2,557	1,522	\$2.5	\$28,494	\$0.61
<b>Sask.</b>	19	2,079	1,721	\$1.8	\$31,500	\$1.64
<b>Manitoba</b>	13	3,607	1,139	\$1.4	\$25,175	\$1.19
<b>Ontario</b>	52	4,017	1,522	\$5.7	\$53,271	\$0.42
<b>Quebec</b>	73	6,074	5,158	\$4.9	\$39,328	\$0.60
<b>Federal</b>	343	61,600	5,202	\$42.3	\$102,493	\$1.21

## LIBRARY SERVICES

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The Library provides information services primarily to MLAs and their staff in legislative and constituency offices, the permanent Officers of the House, and to non-partisan staff employed by Assembly departments. The Library also assists former MLAs, the press gallery, independent statutory offices, provincial government researchers and members of the public when this service does not conflict with the needs of legislative clients.

### **Reference services**

Answering questions is the core reference service provided to the Library's legislative clients. Information requests are handled by professional reference librarians who provide confidential, non-partisan and timely assistance. Sample research questions from MLAs and their staff are:

- Can you find me the article on bridges published two years ago in the local paper?
- Could you put in a rush order for this new book on health care reform?
- Do other provinces have laws governing trophy hunting?
- Whatever happened to the photo-radar program?

### **Access to online databases**

The Library catalogue is a searchable database containing records of most items in the holdings. The Library licenses commercial databases providing access to news and corporate information. Members and their staff can access these resources from the legislative precinct, at their constituency office, or from an off-site location. Catalogue and database training is provided so MLAs can:

- Browse newspaper articles in regional and national papers.
- Read books on BC history, politics and public policy.
- Find a scholarly journal article on education policy.
- Search current and historical BC statutes and regulations.

### **Access to print collections**

The Library houses an estimated 300,000 print documents, and the total aggregate replacement value of the collections is estimated to be \$28 million (2014). Technical staff at the Library collect and make accessible the information resources that are available in:

- The book collection that emphasizes subject areas such as Canadian and BC history, political biographies, economics, law, political science, and parliamentary procedure. It also includes “quick-information” reference sources (e.g. parliamentary guides, city directories and telephone books), popular fiction, DVDs and language learning tools.
- A complete set of BC parliamentary publications since 1851, containing Journals (minutes of Assembly business), Bills and Statutes, and Hansard (record of debates).
- Extensive holdings of BC government publications. As the government depository, the Library has collected copies of most printed documents dating back to colonial times.

- A large collection of historical newspapers, including long runs of important BC papers.
- Separate collections of BC royal commission reports and BC trade publications, the largest available anywhere.

### **Library products**

Library staff continue the tradition of producing valuable reference materials, increasingly in a digital form. They compile summaries from primary sources in the collections that represent value-added information resources for MLAs and their staff. A sample is given below:

- Local News Update, a current awareness tool e-mailed to MLAs and caucus staff.
- New Books List, a monthly list of new non-fiction publications acquired by the Library.
- Electoral History of BC, a complete history of provincial elections and by-elections available on the Library's public website and intranet site.
- MLA and BC Political Information, includes a list of Speakers since 1872, and separate lists of Premiers, Executive Council Appointments, 1871-1986 and Cabinets since 1986, available on the public and intranet Library websites.
- Historical and current BC Government Press Releases, available online since 2000.

### **Partnerships**

The Legislative Library participates in digitization projects with other libraries in the province. The partnerships listed below provide access to technical expertise in a cost-effective manner:

- University of British Columbia: The Library prepared and sent ten years of early BC Sessional Papers (1876-1886) to UBC for digitization, with plans to digitize more papers.
- University of Victoria: The Library partnered with UVic to digitize the early BC Gazette and Times Colonist newspaper.
- UVic and BC Electronic Library Network: The Library's original batch files of BC government documents are modified by UVic and available for use via the BC ELN. The Network works with post-secondary libraries to provide equitable, expanded and cost-effective access to information for learners, educators, and researchers throughout BC.

The Legislative Library also partners with Elections BC to research and publish the Electoral History of British Columbia, with the most recent supplement covering the years 2002-2013.

## CLIENT FEEDBACK ON LIBRARY SERVICES

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The Library's legislative clients include MLAs, their staff, and Assembly departments. To assess their interactions with Library staff and ways to enhance service delivery, interviews were conducted with the staff of government, opposition and independent MLAs and Assembly departments on levels of usage, the Library's strengths and challenges, and priorities for the next two years. The interview findings regarding usage levels indicate that the staff of MLAs access Library services, with levels ranging from moderate (governing caucus) to frequent (opposition caucus and Independents). Not surprisingly, given the diversity of legislative support Assembly departments provide to MLAs, their level of usage varies from rare (Information Technology Branch) to frequent (Parliamentary Education Office), and a range of feedback was given on the other general questions. Overall there was widespread acknowledgement of the Library's important role in supporting the work of the Assembly, and constructive feedback on ways to enhance its products and services.

### STRENGTHS

#### ***Responsive staff***

Without exception, all the clients we interviewed commented on the knowledgeable and helpful staff who process information requests quickly and share their expertise in searching online databases, accessing other parliamentary libraries, and locating historical materials. The specialized training sessions provided by reference staff provide were also much appreciated.

#### ***Valuable print collections***

Some clients described the Library's extensive holdings as an asset. In particular, they recognized the value of historical documents in the print collections, singling out BC government publications and historical BC newspapers for special mention.

#### ***Central location***

For caucus staff, another strength is the proximity of the Library to the legislative chamber and Members' offices. From their perspective, the central location facilitates the timely borrowing of books and provides easy access to the province's daily and regional newspapers.

### CHALLENGES

#### ***Alternate information sources***

Legislative clients identified the trend towards digital technology as a major challenge, noting that competition from online databases makes it difficult for the Library to provide cutting-edge services. They also thought that the usability of the Library's websites and the visibility of Library products need to be improved.

#### ***Uncertainty regarding core business mandate***

Some clients asked questions about the Library's current mandate, citing outdated print materials in the stacks and the promotion of popular fiction as out-of-mandate examples.

## **Resourcing**

The impact of Assembly-wide fiscal constraints on the Library was raised during the interviews. Some clients noted that certain value-added Library products have been discontinued, while others expressed concerns about attrition and the accompanying loss of corporate knowledge.

## **PRIORITIES**

### **Provide more digital resources**

One striking theme in the interviews was the general desire for more information resources to be made available on the Library's intranet website. Clients reported that in their fast-paced work environment, they rely increasingly on electronic access to Library products and services:

- *Everything should be put online. We don't have time to visit the Library.*
- *We would use more of the Library's print resources if they were put online.*
- *MLAs generally prefer the electronic format for the delivery of information.*

### **Promote historical value-added print resources**

The interviews also revealed an appreciation of the value of the Library's older print resources, such as MLA and reference files, the newspaper card index, and sessional clipping books. At the same time several clients were not aware of the existence of these hidden and potentially useful Library products:

- *All information resources for past and present MLAs are useful.*
- *We rely on the Help Desk to find historical materials not available via Google.*
- *Provide online access to documents no longer in the public domain.*

### **Review collection development practices**

During the interviews, some clients questioned the relevance of certain items in the Library's holdings. They made specific suggestions to modernize collection development practices that would also result in the better management of the Library's physical space:

- *Eliminate duplicate copies of BC legislative and government publications.*
- *Weed out the documents that are available in other parliamentary libraries.*
- *Get rid of out-of-mandate items like Kindles and popular fiction books.*

### **Renew the organization**

Another theme emerging from the interviews was the need for the Library to reorient its mission and ensure its services and products are in line with its changing mandate:

- *Short-term priorities for the Library are to define what their business is going forward, and to upgrade its website.*
- *The Library should aim to become the authoritative source for BC parliamentary history.*
- *The Standing Orders governing the Library's operations are out-of-date and need updating to reflect the current organizational structure and service practices.*

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2015-2020

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The feedback from the legislative clients, and the lessons learned about best practices in other legislative libraries, provide the foundation for the recommended strategic priorities and initiatives in this section. It became apparent during the client interviews that the Legislative Library is an essential and trusted information resource for MLAs, caucus staff and non-partisan staff in Assembly departments. To retain this role and meet the changing needs of legislative clients, the Library must accelerate and enhance access to digital services and products, supported by strengthened relationships with legislative clients and improvements in its operational performance. This reorientation will occur at a time when there are competing demands for Library space, a challenge discussed in a later section.

### **I. EXPAND DIGITAL ACCESS AND SERVICES**

Legislative libraries in other jurisdictions are taking steps to expand and enhance digital services. In Ottawa, for example, the Library of Parliament's recent strategic review specifies increased digital service as its top priority and sets specific digitization targets for parliamentary documents and other high-demand materials. Digital initiatives are being taken by legislative libraries in the following provinces: PEI has launched a Legislative Documents Online project to expand digital access for clients; Ontario has established a searchable Private Act database; and Quebec's library has developed a series of online thematic guides, an inexpensive initiative that has capitalized on existing web technologies and has been very popular with clients.

The BC Legislative Library has also been taking steps to improve digital services and to facilitate access to online databases. Its stated goal is to become an electronic library that provides access to Library services no matter where the legislative clients are, and delivers information to them in the format of their choice. Databases are now accessible from outside the precinct. The Library plans to continue to improve and publicize its e-book lending program, investigate new ways for clients to contact reference services staff, including a text-messaging service, and to reallocate funding from the collection budget to improve the Library's electronic resources.

The client consultations, however, suggest that the Library still faces the challenge of providing information in digital form on a timely basis. To address this, the following initiatives are recommended for the implementation of the first strategic priority:

#### ***Develop an integrated and comprehensive digitization strategy***

Now, more than ever, legislative clients need instant online access to the Library's information resources and services on a 24/7 basis. Therefore a top priority for the Library must be the development and implementation of an integrated and comprehensive digitization strategy. This strategy must be developed with legislative clients' needs in mind, and include criteria for the acquisition of new materials and a plan for phasing in historical print content.

The digitization strategy will include value-added library products currently only available in print (e.g. older BC government publications and sessional clipping books) or in microfilm (e.g. historical news releases). Consideration should also be given to providing integrated access to digital content through new user-friendly and searchable interfaces, such as online databases or web portals. Existing access to digital versions of documents, through the catalogue or via compiled checklists, will need to be continued. To promote seamless access, a redesigned Library intranet website will be required that must be user-friendly, designed with client needs for better links in mind, and include links to other departments' relevant information resources (e.g. Journals, educational resources).

### ***Introduce distinct specialized media-monitoring services***

New media monitoring products that are not available through other sources such as Today's News Online (TNO) must also be considered. For instance, media monitoring of regional and ethnic-based news stories, and news coverage of House activities (e.g. question period, bills, throne speech, budget, etc.) could prove highly useful to a range of clients.

### ***Create an accessible database containing information on current and former MLAs***

Expanding digital access will provide the Library with the opportunity to develop new and specialized online products for its clients. For example, the creation of an online database to house MLA and BC Political Information (e.g. election history, cabinet positions, committee memberships) would be an invaluable resource not only for Members and their staff but also for the general public if the database were to be made available on the Library's public website.

### ***Continue digitization projects in collaboration with other libraries***

It is also recommended that existing digitization projects with other libraries continue, and new cost-effective projects be actively pursued that will result in a significant expansion of information resources in digital form. Partnering with other libraries could result in more digital content being added to the public website and enhance access to other digital collections.

### ***Refine and update the collection development policy for digital and print materials***

The development of a digitization strategy will necessitate a review of the current collection development policy to ensure that it better aligns with the information needs of MLAs and their staff, as well as Assembly departments. The purpose of this review would be to strengthen and enhance the core collection of BC legislative and government holdings, and limit out-of-mandate and non-BC-related purchases.

## **2. STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEGISLATIVE CLIENTS**

Parliamentary libraries in other jurisdictions have established outreach and engagement programs to promote awareness of information services and to seek feedback from Members and other clients on service delivery and areas of interest. Their orientation activities include training in how to access library products and services. For example, the Manitoba Legislative Library has launched a training program in legislative-documents research.



The BC Legislative Library justifiably prides itself on having developed good relationships with its legislative clients and other libraries. Its promotion and outreach activities include general orientation sessions for new Members and their legislative and constituency staff at the start of a new parliament, and for new Assembly staff. Specialized training sessions are also offered.

The client consultations suggest that the Library needs to do more outreach to MLAs, their staff, and Assembly departments in explaining on an ongoing basis what services are available and in seeking information on new areas of priority and interest. To address this, the following initiatives are recommended for the implementation of the second strategic priority:

#### ***Develop a new Library promotion and outreach strategy***

The Library needs to take a series of steps to strengthen and build new relationships with MLAs and other legislative clients. An important start will be the development of a new strategy that will provide a framework to raise awareness of Library products and services, and profile the Library's role as a core program of the Assembly. The main focus of the strategy could be more promotion of the Library's mandate in relation to its legislative clients and raising the profile of the Library's rich information resources, including commercial databases and the valuable collections of BC parliamentary documents and government publications.

#### ***Create communications tools to promote new products and services***

More awareness of Library products and services can be facilitated through the adoption of more regular and informative communications with legislative clients. In this context, it is suggested that the Library consider developing additional information bulletins. A *What's New* bulletin, for example, could be emailed to all Assembly clients on a weekly basis during sittings of the House. This could include information regarding updates to Library products, new government publications and books, interesting facts, and other promotional content. Specific clients could even be given options on which types of information updates they would like to receive, and how often. The Library could also promote new products and services by taking advantage of Assembly social media initiatives, once these are implemented.

#### ***Offer more training opportunities for Library clients***

Another way to promote what the Library has to offer is to provide additional training sessions to a wider pool of clients. The Library currently offers training sessions on how to navigate commercial databases such as BC Online, Court Services Online, and QuickScribe (includes access to older versions of BC acts and regulations). These sessions have been well received by caucus research staff. Opportunities exist for the Library to build on this success by offering additional training on how to navigate the databases to caucus communications staff and non-partisan Assembly staff, with sessions offered on a regular basis.

### **3. ENHANCE OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

For parliamentary libraries in other jurisdictions, performance reporting is an integral part of their operations. The UK House of Commons Library, for example, publishes a wide range of performance indicators, including timeliness in responding to Members' requests for information, and the Library's progress in expanding services to parliamentarians. The Library of

the Parliament of Canada regularly issues a strategic outlook document with detailed performance measures on Library use, budgets, and staffing.

The BC Legislative Library has already developed protocols for providing reference services and criteria for its collection development policy. These professional service standards were developed at a time when there was more demand for information resources to be made available in print form. The growing demand from legislative clients for information in digital form requires a reassessment of existing standards and staff roles.

To address these issues, the following initiatives are recommended for the implementation of the third strategic priority:

### ***Review service standards to strengthen quality assurance***

To facilitate the reorientation to digital services, a review of the existing service standards governing the work of the Library's two divisions needs to be undertaken. The review will help to clarify the Library's mandate and core functions during a time of fiscal constraints, and will provide a general framework for evaluating the benefits and costs of providing digital information. It will also serve as a basis for measuring and reporting on staff performance. As a guide, the service standards need to: provide a point of reference for self-evaluation and a general framework for future development; support change in policy, technology and formats of materials; support and guide staff; and encourage excellence in Library service.

### ***Improve performance measurement and reporting***

Measuring, tracking and reporting on performance are a key part of the Legislative Assembly's accountability to British Columbians for services and the use of taxpayers' funds. Ongoing performance measurement and reporting would provide Legislative Assembly management, Library staff, and clients with information on the Library's progress in meeting its strategic priorities, and would support the Assembly's broader work to increase accountability and transparency to British Columbians.

The Library collects a range of statistics on activities, which provide basic information on services to Members and Assembly programs. Additional performance measures, and survey results, would enable the Library to monitor performance over time and to adjust services as required to meet the changing needs of Members and Assembly programs. These measures could include indicators with respect to timeliness in responding to information requests, progress on digitization, and significant changes to service requests from legislative clients.

Instituting regular and annual reporting practices would also provide overall transparency and support accountability of Library operations. The collection of accurate and reliable information about the activities of the reference services and technical services divisions would facilitate decisions about internal operations. It would also enable the Library to present a solid case for consideration of budgetary decisions to facilitate the streamlining of service delivery.

### ***Develop skills and talents of divisional staff***

The changing work environment of legislative libraries is resulting in digital services becoming a major focus of staff development and recruitment in the UK House of Commons Library, the Library of Parliament in Ottawa and some provincial libraries. It is appropriate therefore that the BC Legislative Library assess staffing needs with a view to leveraging the training and knowledge of existing employees and filling the existing vacancies with prioritized positions, as budgetary resources permit. Implementation of the initiatives recommended in this strategic plan are unlikely to proceed without acquiring more in-house technical expertise and support. Long-term staffing needs must also be assessed to ensure that the Library has the ongoing capacity to provide excellent service to its clients.

## LIBRARY SPACE PLANNING

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The BC Legislative Library has occupied a wing of the Parliament Buildings since 1915. The facility's proximity to the Legislative Chamber and Members' offices was designed to enable the Library to serve MLAs quickly and effectively. In recent years, the work of the Library has evolved, as it has for many occupants of the Parliament Buildings: Members, caucuses, other Assembly departments and ministerial staff.

In recognition that space management and planning within the legislative precinct must balance the shifting operational needs and priorities of the above groups, some areas of the Library's operational space have been reallocated in recent years to address urgent requirements. For example:

- In the last Parliament, a Library office was temporarily assigned to an MLA.
- In 2014, two first floor office rooms were provided on a temporary basis to caucus staff to meet a specific urgent need.
- The Library recently repurposed one area for use as the Assembly First Aid room, and regularly provides office space for BC Legislative Interns.

Consultations with government and opposition caucus staff and Assembly departments indicate that accessibility to Library staff continues to be important in meeting their information needs. This is an important factor to take into account in planning the future use of Library space in the Parliament Buildings. Two scenarios are presented below for future consideration:

### ***Scenario one: retain existing space for Library use***

The original design of the Legislative Library established seven floors of stacks to house documents and records, with access restricted to staff. Approximately three quarters of the Library's total area of 35,260 square feet is used to house the collections, with limited space made available for the acquisition of new materials. The existing physical space for housing the collections limits the scope for conversion to new priorities without a major renovation and significant capital expenditure. However, changing the use of the Library's public space is not precluded, as the recent conversion of the Reference Room to the Gathering Room illustrates.

Like other heritage areas of the Parliament Buildings, the existing Library facility requires ongoing maintenance and repairs. Consultations with Assembly facilities staff indicate that the basement walls are experiencing some moisture damage, and that air circulation and controls need to be strengthened to ensure the preservation of Library materials and meet modern fire safety standards. Although serious, these challenges are not new nor urgent; and they could be assessed in the context of a broader review of parliamentary space considerations.

Other provincial libraries have recently invested in upgrading their facilities. Saskatchewan completed a renovation of its library's collection annex in March 2012 that focused on gutting the space and rebuilding the room to conform to modern building standards, including the installation of a climate control system and a pre-action sprinkler system. A refurbishment of the Alberta library was completed just in time to celebrate the centennial of the Legislature Building in 2013.

### ***Scenario two: move some Library operations to a different location***

A 1989 report by a former Legislative Librarian first recommended that the existing Library space be converted to another use, and that more efficient Library quarters be provided elsewhere on the legislative precinct. This alternative-space option was proposed then as a better way to meet the information needs of the growth in the number of MLAs (6 new seats in 1991), and to assist in solving the space pressures from other offices. The 1989 report, which was reissued in 1992, also recognized the impact that new technologies and different ways of delivering information were having on the existing facility.

With the contemporary digitization trend, the Library is providing more and more information to Members via online services. As a result, there is a need to assess if all staff, or the various collections of print and historical records, must be housed in a central physical location. In this scenario, BC could consider following the Library of Parliament approach, where the restored core heritage facility houses key staff and collection materials, while additional staff providing digital services and low-use collections occupy a separate location off site. If this model was adopted, the Library would maintain a presence in the main building with some staff and core reference materials, with other employees and collections housed nearby.

### ***Next steps***

Given ongoing questions about the use of space in the Legislative Assembly and the proposed new strategic priorities for the Legislative Library, it seems an appropriate time to consider the future of the facility in conjunction with a long-term space planning process at the Legislative Assembly. A long term space planning process should include and consider the operational requirements of Assembly departments, including Library operational needs, along with the requirements of other building occupants.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Legislative Library’s strategic priorities for 2015-2020 are designed to respond to the evolving needs of the Members of the Legislative Assembly, their caucus and constituency staff, and non-partisan employees of Assembly departments. The implementation of these priorities will need to engage the Library’s leadership and divisional staff, as well as the Legislative Assembly’s senior executive and all Members. The following implementation plan sets out key actions, timelines, and responsibilities for the Library’s strategic priorities for 2015-2020, building on work already under way by the Library and the Legislative Assembly.

Key Action	Timeline	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a detailed action plan to address each strategic priority, including timelines for implementation and reporting on progress of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digitization strategy</li> <li>Promotion and outreach strategy</li> <li>Operational performance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Summer 2015	Legislative Library Management Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of draft strategic priorities implementation program</li> </ul>	September 2015	Legislative Assembly Senior Executive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess staffing needs and prepare a recruitment plan proposal</li> </ul>	Summer 2015	Legislative Librarian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare annual report covering Library activities during 2012-14</li> </ul>	Summer 2015	Legislative Librarian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit to Clerk, Speaker and LAMC</li> </ul>	November 2015	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide expanded performance measurement indicators for <i>Accountability Report 2015-16</i></li> </ul>	September 2015	Legislative Library Management Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of <i>Accountability Report 2015-16</i></li> </ul>	October 2015/ November 2015	FAC LAMC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submission of FY2015-16 budget proposal</li> </ul>	October 2015	Legislative Librarian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of Assembly department budget proposals</li> </ul>	November 2015	Legislative Assembly Senior Executive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of Assembly budget proposal</li> </ul>	December 2015/ January 2016	FAC LAMC

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin roll-out of expanded digital database, media monitoring and partnership initiatives</li> <li>• Implement communications and training initiatives for MLAs, caucus and Assembly staff</li> <li>• Implement expanded performance measures, client feedback indicators, reporting processes</li> </ul>	<p>October 2015+</p> <p>October 2015+</p> <p>October 2015+</p>	<p>Legislative Library Management Team</p> <p>Legislative Library Management Team</p> <p>Legislative Library Management Team</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare an assessment of the Library’s current operational space requirements to support the long-term space planning initiatives of the Legislative Assembly</li> </ul>	<p>December 2015</p>	<p>Legislative Library Management Team</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate a comparative review of the governance structure of other legislative libraries to identify potential ways to update <i>Legislative Library Act</i> and Standing Orders</li> </ul>	<p>Summer 2015</p>	<p>Deputy Clerk</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-term evaluation of Legislative Library Strategic Priorities 2015-2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seek feedback from legislative clients on Library services and priorities</li> <li>▪ Identify possible changes to strategic priorities, if required</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Consideration of status report on Legislative Library Strategic Priorities 2015-2020</li> </ul>	<p>2018</p> <p>2018</p>	<p>Legislative Assembly Senior Executive Legislative Library Management Team</p> <p>FAC LAMC</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate lessons learned from implementing 2015-20 priorities into new 5-year strategic plan</li> <li>• Consideration of final report on 2015-2020 plan</li> </ul>	<p>2019+</p> <p>2020</p>	<p>Legislative Library Management Team</p> <p>Legislative Assembly Senior Executive FAC LAMC</p>





