Eckville Public Library Plan of Service

2021 - 2025

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the patrons and community members who completed our online and paper surveys during a pandemic. Thank you to Annatjie Goodliff for ensuring that our less tech-oriented patrons had paper surveys to provide their input. Thank you to Dana Kreil, Geri Gordon, and Patti Skocdopole for heading the Plan of Service subcommittee, and to the library staff (Annatjie Goodliff, Keziah See, Elizabeth Lozo) for their insightful input into the process.

Thank you to our volunteer Library Board Members for their time and dedication to the library.

A special thanks to our consultant, Haley Amendt, for all her excellent help and guidance in the process.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Town of Eckville and Lacombe County for library funding and their continued support of the Eckville Municipal Library.

Thank you to Public Library Services Branch for their updates and guidance during this process and during the pandemic and thank you to the Alberta Government for recognizing the vital role of libraries in the community, and how important stable library funding is to provide consistent and quality library service.

Statement of Approval and Accountability

The Plan of Service for 2021 to 2015 has been prepared by the Town of Eckville Library Board in accordance with Alberta Libraries Regulation AR 141/98.
The Board and staff of the library are committed to implementing this plan of service, reviewing it regularly to monitor progress in achieving goals, and updating the plan as needed.

MOTION:

"I move that we adopt the Plan of Service (2021-2015) for the Eckville Municipal Library."
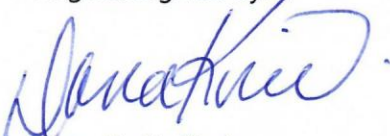
Motion made by: Kevin See

Motion seconded by: Pamela Carritt

Carried.

Date of Board Meeting: May19, 2021

Original signed by:

Dana Kreil, Chair

Mission:

As a friendly community space, Eckville Municipal Library serves Eckville and area by providing resources to encourage a love of reading, life-long learning, community information, and social connection through programming, collection, and entertainment options for all ages.

Library Profile

History:

Eckville Municipal Library was started in 1952 and was formally established/re-established by Bylaw 442, Town of Eckville, in May 1980.

In January 1952, the Eckville Municipal Library opened in Dan Clausen's insurance office. Mr. Clausen managed the library with the help of the Presbyterian Church ladies and the Eckville Board of Trade.

The library joined the Parkland Regional Library System in 1964. Also, in 1964, after the passing of Mr. Clausen, the village relocated the library with the help of local organizations to the main floor of the new Village Office. A local board of directors was formed, and after joining Parkland Regional Library and receiving a grant of $40,000 from the County of Lacombe, the new library opened on March 21, 1964, with Mr. Nels Mogensen as Library Manager.

In 1979. the library moved downstairs to the basement of the Town Office in the same building, considerably increasing the space available. The grand opening for the new facility was held on June 21, 1980. The library remained in this location until 2004.

In July 2004, the Eckville Municipal Library moved to the present location, one block East of the main street intersection at 4855-51 Avenue. The new location provides increased accessibility and a pleasant outdoor space.

Pre-pandemic:

The Eckville Municipal Library is a bustling community social hub, with children, teens, and adults using the library: to access computers and much needed Wi-Fi; to hold clubs/meetings and visit; to obtain library items from our library and libraries across Alberta; to find information about the community, and to attend various programs. It teams up with local businesses to provide ongoing book sales. It is an active member in interagency meetings and coalitions and has a growing and enthusiastic Friends group (Eckville Municipal Library Association).

Pandemic Impact:

During the pandemic, we have offered curbside, and have been open at limited capacity, when allowed. We offer our programming through Zoom, and have created many take-home packages, both on our own for different ages and for Summer Reading Club, and in partnership with the Eckville and Area Wellness Coalition (see Partnerships below). We connect to our patrons and community in many ways during this difficult time.

The Eckville Municipal Library is forward looking, and actively working to provide a great facility and excellent service to the fulfill the needs of the Eckville community and surrounding areas.

Hours:

The Eckville Municipal Library is regularly open 30 hours a week. These hours have been reduced to 20 hours a week of curbside, to accommodate for online programming being produced and sent from the library, and to be fiscally responsible and safe by providing adequate staffing during open pandemic hours (an extra staff person handling patron safety and needs to provide for adequate help, monitoring, and cleaning).

We look forward to the time we can get back to a simpler library environment again, with regular hours and in house programs. In the meantime, safety for patrons and staff is paramount.

Governance:

The Town of Eckville Municipal Library is governed by a volunteer board consisting of:

- 2 Town Council Members
- 5 Community Members at Large (One of these community members is a County Councillor but is serving in the capacity of a member at large)

Human Resources:

The Eckville Municipal Library currently has four part-time staff. Patti Skocdopole is the current Library Manager, Annatjie Goodliff is the current Assistant Manager.

Community:

The Town of Eckville has a population of 1163 people and is 24 km West of Sylvan Lake, and 47 km East of Rocky Mountain House. Because the community resides in Lacombe County, and borders both Clearwater County and Red Deer County, the library serves residents from the town and various counties.

The community population is approximately:

- 20% in the ages 0-14 age range,
- 60% evenly distributed in the 15-64 age range, and
- 20% in the 65 and up age range almost evenly distributed between the ages of 65-90.

Partnerships:

The library actively partners with many different local agencies. Besides attending the Interagency meetings regularly, the library works with the Eckville and Area Wellness Coalition, FCSS, and Neighbourhood Place to provide quality programming and books to promote literacy, mental health, and wellbeing to the community.

We keep contact with the local FRN Child and Youth Empowerment Coach and the School Social Worker from the Elementary/Jr/Sr High Schools.

We provide service to the Eckville Manor House and participated with the Wellness Coalition to provide tablets to the seniors at the Manor to improve access to the world during the pandemic.

We have provided approximately 500 stress relieving/wellbeing activity packages in partnership with the Eckville and Area Wellness Coalition (a community project to maintain mental health and community connection during these difficult and isolating times).

We are part of the Parkland Regional Library System and belong to A.P.L.A.C and L.A.A.

Needs Assessment

In the winter of 2020-2021 The Eckville Public Library, with the help of Parkland Regional Library Systems Consultant Librarians Haley Amendt and Jen Kendall, conducted a COVID-19 adapted needs assessment. They hosted a digital survey which ran from November 19, 2020, until March 23, 2021. This survey focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the community and how the library could contribute to grow a greater community growth. There were 47 respondents. The results from this needs assessment were reviewed by a committee of board members and then by the library staff. This information will guide the Eckville Public Library's 2021-2025 Plan of Service.

Data from the community needs assessment meeting are contained in the report in Appendix A.

2021-2025 Plan of Service

The Plan of Service is reviewed annually and may be modified to adapt to emergent situational changes or to take advantage of innovation or new opportunities and strategic alliances. Detailed action plans and short-term emergent strategies at the operational level are part of library operations and are, therefore, not included in this document.

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: Library patrons will have a collection and services that reflect community interest.

Objective 1: Improve and update collection to create a community-lead collection.

- Perform a community interest survey for the collection to determine preferred subjects, genres, and formats.
- Create an approachable and browsable physical collection with a space/size range to act as a reference.
- Produce and maintain a health collection that is reflective of community needs and interests (Weeding, inventory, collection surveys, purchasing, etc.).
- Promotion of the collection: verbally, virtually, and physically.

Objective 2: Provide programming that reflects community interest.

- Perform a community interest survey for programs.
  - Create an ongoing interest suggestion/feedback survey.
- Provide programs for different age ranges and topics based on community feedback.
- Work with community partners to provide programs that reflect community interests.

Goal 2: Library staff and patrons will have a thorough awareness of library and community services.

Objective 1: Provide staff training about library and community services.

- Perform an assessment of staff knowledge to target training opportunities (library and community knowledge)
- Ensure staff have at least one paid day a year for professional development.
- Request community organizations share relevant information about their services.

Objective 2: Partner with organizations to create awareness of library and community services.

- Host community organizations to talk with patrons about their services.
- Participate in updating the community services guide.
- Actively attend interagency meeting to promote library services.

Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces

Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support social networking.

Goal 1: Patrons will have access to accessible and welcoming library spaces.

Objective 1: Improve the outdoor library space.

- Advocate for the improvement of the outdoor library space (seating, accessibility, etc.)
- Maintain the gazebo's physical condition to encourage use by library patrons.
- Host and promote activities in the outdoor library space.

Objective 2: Evaluate the current library space for potential growth.

- Survey the community for potential growth (services, physical spaces, etc.)
  - Create an ongoing suggestion method.
- Have library staff and trustees evaluate the space for potential growth (services, accessibility, safe storage needs, separated spaces, etc.)
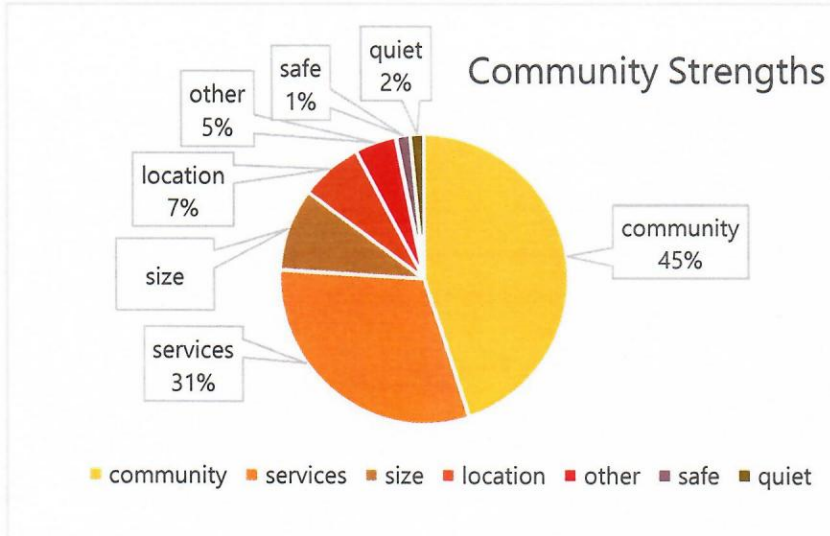
Objective 3: Create a virtual space that is cohesive and accessible.

- Create a more cohesive look (logo, signage, social media, promotion, etc.)
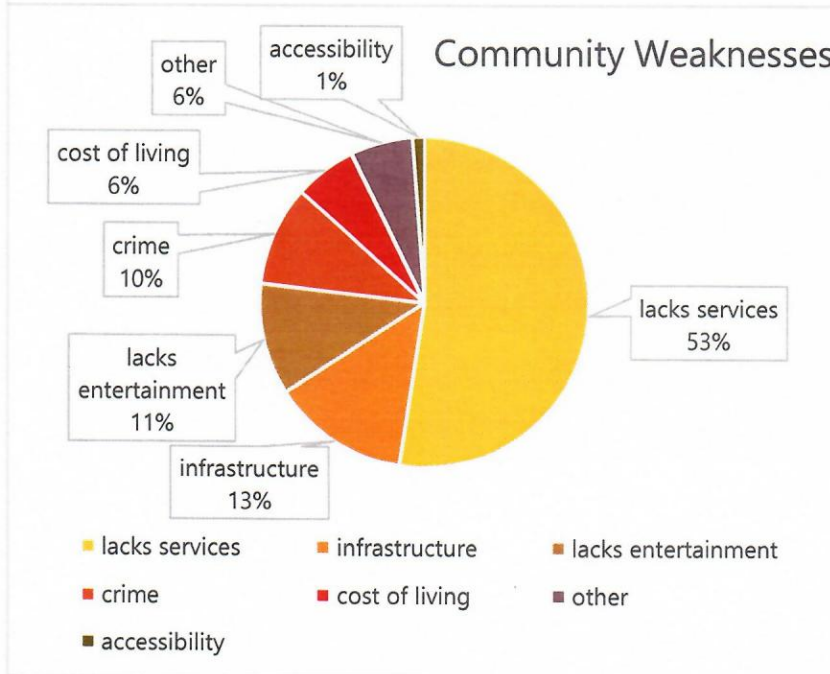- Create/maintain a posting schedule (social media, website, etc.)

APPENDIX A

Community Needs Assessment Report

Below is a summary of highlights from the community needs assessment. For full access to the survey results please enquire with the library manager.

Community Strengths

- community 45%
- services 31%
- size
- location 7%
- other 5%
- safe 1%
- quiet 2%

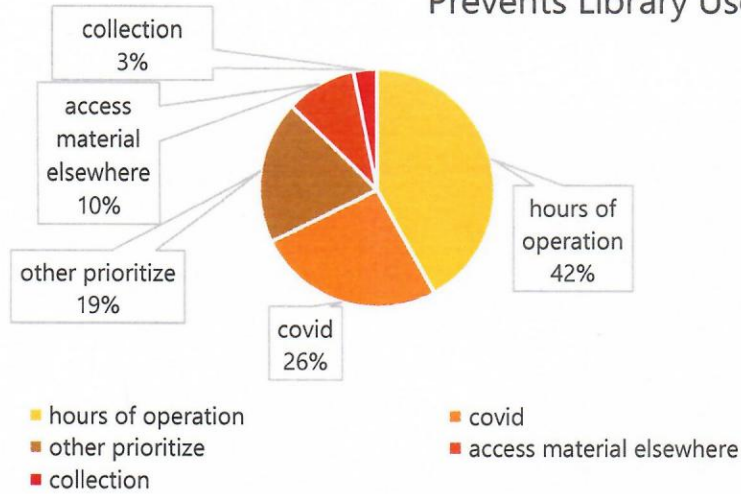Legend: community, services, size, location, other, safe, quiet

When participants were asked to identify three **strengths** of the community, the results identified 7 major categories, though most prominent was the feeling of community and general friendliness of community members. The quality of services that are currently available was also identified as a core strength.

Community Weaknesses

- lacks services 53%
- infrastructure 13%
- lacks entertainment 11%
- crime 10%
- cost of living 6%
- other 6%
- accessibility 1%

Legend: lacks services, infrastructure, lacks entertainment, crime, cost of living, other, accessibility
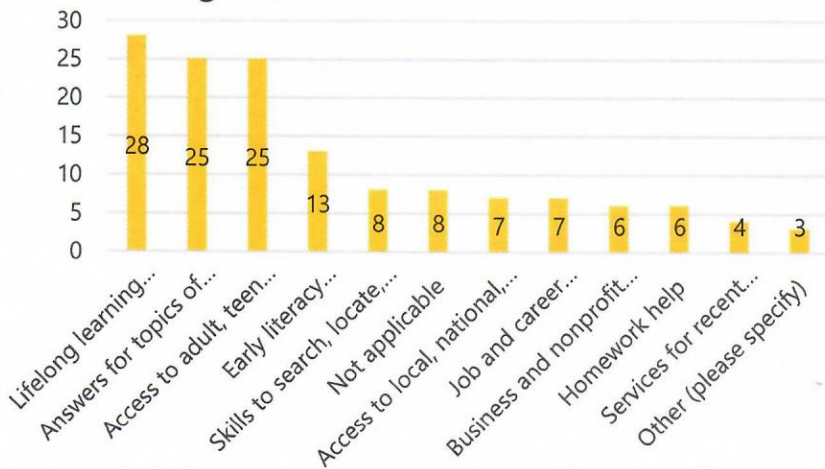
When participants were asked to identify three **weaknesses** of the community, the results identified 7 major categories, though most prominent was a lack of services particularly in the health profession. The community infrastructure which included sidewalk and road conditions were also identified as weaknesses. Responses also identified a lack of available entertainment.

Prevents Library Use

collection
3%

access material elsewhere
10%

other prioritize
19%

covid
26%

hours of operation
42%

- hours of operation
- other prioritize
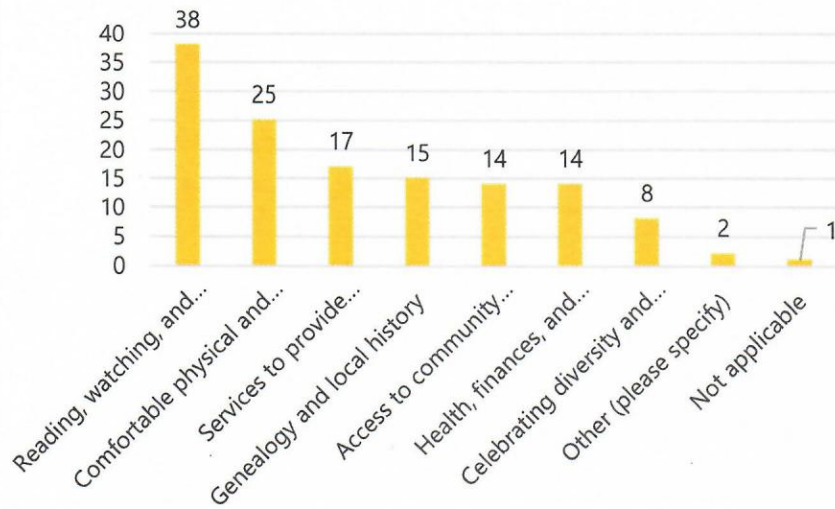- collection
- covid
- access material elsewhere

Participants were asked to identify anything that might prevent them from accessing library services. There were 5 **barrier** categories identified. Most prominent were the opening hours, in that they do not accommodate work schedules. The second greatest barrier was the current COVID -19 Pandemic. These two barriers go hand in hand as the Pandemic has required libraries to limit hours and services.

Learning Goals

Category	Value
Lifelong learning...	28
Answers for topics of...	25
Access to adult, teen...	25
Early literacy...	13
Skills to search, locate...	8
Not applicable	8
Access to local, national,...	7
Job and career...	7
Business and nonprofit...	6
Homework help	6
Services for recent...	4
Other (please specify)	3

When asked about specific library **learning goals,** participants primarily value *lifelong learning opportunities* over the eleven other options.

Leisure Goals

Chart values: Reading, watching, and...: 38; Comfortable physical and...: 25; Services to provide...: 17; Genealogy and local history: 15; Access to community...: 14; Health, finances, and...: 14; Celebrating diversity and...: 8; Other (please specify): 2; Not applicable: 1

When asked about specific library **leisure goals,** participants value *reading, watching, and listening for pleasure* as well as *comfortable physical and virtual library spaces* over the other seven options.