



Media Release

Vancouver Island Regional Library Board approves downtown Sooke branch

Monday, March 27, 2017, Nanaimo, BC – At its March 18 meeting, the Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) Board of Trustees voted unanimously to approve a new library in downtown Sooke. The new library will sit on a 0.8-acre parcel within the five-acre site on Wadams Way, referred to as "Lot A", which was purchased by the District of Sooke in 2016. The Board's approval moves a new Sooke library closer to fruition.

"The overwhelming majority of Sooke residents asked for a new library in central Sooke," says Chair of the VIRL Board of Trustees, Barry Avis. "I know I speak for the entire Board when I say that we couldn't be happier to be providing a library that will become part of the fabric of a vibrant and diverse downtown."

Two initial challenges with the Lot A site were the cost of preparing the land for construction, and paying a municipal development charge. VIRL has approval to borrow a maximum of \$6 million towards all costs of site preparation and construction, with the goal of building a facility between 10,000 and 13,000 sq. feet (the current facility is just over 3,600 sq. feet). In recent weeks, a reassessment of one parcel on the Wadams Way site showed the potential to significantly drive down land preparation costs, which would lessen the budgetary implications and the design impacts.

"We're assembling our team and we're looking forward to the first public consultation," says VIRL's Executive Director, Rosemary Bonanno. "Sooke residents are passionate about their library and I anticipate a robust and productive consultation process. With the public's input, we look forward to building a new library and pillar of the community."

The lease at the current facility expires in December 2018. Although a firm project timeline has yet to be set, VIRL is committed to moving forward as quickly as possible with the new facility.

"Time is of the essence," says Director of Library Services, Jamie Anderson. "We all want a new library for the community and we are committed to providing the best possible facility, within budget and within an efficient timeline. In recent years, we have enjoyed great success building new branches in communities up and down Vancouver Island and I have full confidence that Sooke will continue our track record of success."

More information will be provided as it becomes available, including the date, time and location of the first public consultation.

Monitor **virl.bc.ca** for updates.



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