

A New Library for the District of Sooke is Underway

The District of Sooke announced on May 28th that land is confirmed for a new 10,000-12,000 square foot library.

NANAIMO, May 30th, 2016 – Plans are underway for a new Sooke branch of Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL), according to the VIRL Board of Trustees and the District of Sooke.

"We're pleased to announce that we have confirmed land for a new library in the community of Sooke," says Councillor Kerrie Reay.

The announcement was made at the VIRL Board of Trustees regular meeting held on May 28th in Nanaimo by Councillor Kerrie Reay, who sits as Trustee for the District of Sooke. Councillor Reay shared that District of Sooke Council was excited with the agreement and acknowledged the collaborative work between VIRL Executive Staff and District of Sooke Chief Administrative Officer, Teresa Sullivan, in moving the project forward.

The current Sooke library branch, located at 2065 Anna Marie Road, is approximately 1/3 the recommended size according to VIRL facility standards. The branch now serves a population of 17,000, and growing, which suggests that the minimum library size should be 10,000 - 12,000 square feet. In 2015, the Sooke library had 85,000 visitors and saw 146,000 physical items through its doors (up 15% from 2014 alone). The current branch is 3,900 square feet.

The new library's location is confirmed as part of a 5-acre parcel of land purchased by the District. The parcel of land is located north of Sooke Town Centre between Townsend Road and Anna Marie Road. The conditions for the land had to lend toward budget, zoning and access considerations (including parking and easy access for those with disabilities).

"The Sooke library branch is a destination for young families, seniors and teens – and according to our statistics for Sooke, everyone in between. The community makes excellent use of their library, from digital services like public computer stations and online movie databases, to participation in community-enriching programs," comments Rosemary Bonanno, Executive Director of VIRL.

In 2015, <u>4,122 people participated</u> in the <u>programs</u> put on by the library which range from adult learning opportunities to children's literacy-building programs. Since 2014, program participation is up 10% - and the number is steadily growing from year after year.

"We're extremely excited to build on what's been developed at our branch on Anna Marie road. We're imagining what we can do with the space and resources that will allow our staff to even better serve the community," says Adrienne Wass, Library Manager for the Sooke branch.

For more information contact:

Natasha Bartlett Marketing and Communications Officer 250-327-3114 nbartlett@virl.bc.ca

REC.

Press Release

With the new, larger branch, more room will be available to house new items in the collection – including books, magazines, newspapers, DVDs, CDs and public computers, as well as meeting and gathering spaces for residents and businesses.

What's Next?

The community will be invited to participate in public consultation sessions with both VIRL staff and the District of Sooke. The sessions will donate feedback and allow the community to ask questions about their new library, as well as receive info on some of the features that the new branch will offer.

When Will I Know More?

More information will follow as a construction timeline is developed. Visit virl.bc.ca for the latest updates and news about upcoming consultation sessions and events. For more information, including more about the building process and funding, please visit our <u>FAQ online</u>.

###

Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) is the fifth-largest library system in British Columbia. We serve over 430,000 people on Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii, and Bella Coola on the Central Coast through 39 branch libraries, a virtual branch, and a books-by-mail service. VIRL's holdings number one million and include books, magazines, CDs and DVDs. Administrative offices are located in Nanaimo.

For more information contact:

Natasha Bartlett Marketing and Communications Officer 250-327-3114 nbartlett@virl.bc.ca