

Subject: 2021 Library Collections Budget**Purpose and Background**

On October 5, 2020, the 2021 Capital Budget pre-approval report went before the General Committee of Council. That report included the request to pre-approve 1.6 million dollars of Markham Public Library’s collection budget. The amount represents the annual amount paid to MPL’s vendor, Library Services Centre (LSC) for their selection, processing, cataloguing and shipping of MPL’s physical collections (print books, etc.) at all 8 of MPL’s branches.

The supply of the physical materials was awarded through the bidding process in 2019. The contract (PO#PB19099/SA 011-R-19) was awarded to LSC for \$1,598,193.31 inclusive of HST. The term of the contract is for 3 years (January 2020 to December 2022) with the option to renew for an additional 2 years. A pre-approval of the amount is required in order to ensure that LSC can continue to order materials for the library without their being a gap in the collections in 2021.

General Committee passed the motion that “the Capital Budget Pre-Approval Item 21099 Library Collections, be referred to the Library Board for additional consideration.” Discussion included the suggestion that given the impacts of COVID-19 and the partial closure of branches, that there may be room to reduce the 1.6 m requested for physical collections.

Discussion**2021 Collections Capital Budget**

The Library collections budget comes from Lifecycle funding and increases by CPI each year. The Lifecycle amount for Library Collections for 2021 is **\$2,820,500**. This budget is normally broken down in the following manner for library materials:

Books & Subscriptions*	\$960,000
Audiovisual*	\$315,000
French Materials*	\$25,000
Multilingual Materials*	\$300,000
Microfilm	\$3,500
Digital Materials	\$937,000
Periodicals	\$100,000
Miscellaneous Supplies	\$180,000

* LSC Contract (\$1.6M)

As per Council’s request, the Library has reviewed the overall collections budget, especially the budget allocated for the contract to LSC and have found potential savings for the 2021 budget year. Based on the assumption that the four branches currently opened will remain open in 2021 and that the remaining four branches that are closed will reopen on a phased in basis in 2021, the Library proposes the following:

- A 25% reduction of the original contract with LSC from \$1,598,194 to \$1,203,441, a net savings of \$394,753;
- That the Library reallocate \$200,000 from the net savings of \$394,753 from the staff award and transfer to the digital collections in 2021 - during this pandemic we have seen a 74% increase in the borrowing of digital materials;
- And, that the remaining amount for the contract, \$194,753, be reduced from the budget ask for 2021.

These three recommendations were approved by the Markham Public Library Board on Monday, October 26, 2020. As a result, an amended Capital Budget request form for \$2,625,700 has been submitted for approval by Council.

The Importance of Library Collections

Providing Library Collections to Markham residents is MPL's core service, and is highly valued and used by the community. In fact, the community values the Library collections more than any other service provided by the Library as shown in multiple customer surveys and community feedback. In both of our 2020 Strategic Plan Survey and our 2020 Collections Survey, over 5,000 residents selected borrowing materials as the main reason for visiting the Library. Over **94% of all respondents to the Collections Survey believe that books are important.**

We need a constant stream of new material to keep up with customer interest and demand. Approximately 75,000 new physical items are necessary to add to the collections every year in order to keep up with publishing and customer demand across eight branches. **Throughout the pandemic, borrowing of digital materials has increased by 74% over the same period last year, creating a much higher demand on resources that are 5 times more expensive than their physical counterpart.** As Council is aware, it is a continuous struggle for the Library to keep up with demands for digital materials due to the pricing models of the publishers. Offering services such as eBooks, online research databases, virtual homework help for students, online learning for all ages, and eAudiobooks for the print disabled is vital.

Circulation of all materials continue to be strong at MPL for all collections. The 2019 total circulation was 5,576,295, which 731,177 was from digital materials and 4,845,118 was from physical materials. While demand for eBooks continues to increase year over year, physical items (such as print books) continue to drive circulation at a much higher rate. **In 2019, circulation of physical items contributed to 84.85% of MPL's overall annual circulation, while eBooks contribute to about 15.15% of the library's overall circulation.**

Even though some Library branches may be closed for part of 2021, residents living in those areas still demand library materials and will go to the nearest branch in order to borrow them. As such, it is important that MPL purchase sufficient copy numbers of items in order to meet customer demand and reduce wait times. We already get complaints regarding long wait times for materials, both for digital and physical copies of popular items.

Additionally, families with children overwhelmingly demand physical books as a preferred reading experience for the family and helps parents avoid excessive use of screens for their children. Print books are inherently less distracting for children, provides a more immersive reading experience for, and supports early childhood literacy skills and brain development. Overall, surveys and digital collections usage data show that children and teens

have not adopted to eBooks at the rates that adults have. Multilingual books are also currently not available to the Library in digital formats, hence the need for physical multilingual collections given our diverse community.

Finally, we have heard from Markham residents throughout this pandemic regarding the importance of Library collections. Some comments include:

- “[MPL] still plays an important part in my family’s life. My father is 83. He has not been out much since the pandemic hit Markham in March. We rely upon the books he reads as a way to keep him mentally stimulated. This will be crucial to his well being come the colder months, when we cannot socially distance with him in his back garden.”
- “I love that my reading doesn’t need to be put on hold; eBooks and comics are readily available for me to read on my tablet whenever my heart desires.”
- “Books help me and my little sister to grow as learners, to gain different perspectives, to keep us off technology, and to develop our writing skills.”
- “The audiobook collection has helped see me through the pandemic! I’ve spent countless hours outdoors enjoying the fresh air listening to book after book transport me to different eras and lands.”
- “With COVID-19, it made my connection to my local library closer. I use it a lot more than I have ever had. I borrow eBooks and physical books.... Thank you for opening back up.”

Key Messages

- As per Council’s request, the Library has reviewed its capital budget request for collections for 2021 and have **reduced the amount requested by \$194,753** due to current COVID pandemic conditions.
- Library collections are highly valued by Markham residents who expect to borrow new materials both digitally and in print as they are published.
- Any further reduction to the Collections budget will have an impact on the community and the Library’s ability to meet their needs.

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Date Finalized:	Monday, November 2, 2020		
Approved By:	Catherine Biss, CEO, Markham Public Library		
Distributed To:	Markham City Council, Budget Subcommittee		

Template last revised: 2018-Oct-10 (ST)