

## **Background**

### **Definition of Library Collections**

Londoners see library collections as the core to all library services. Collections serve diverse users of all age groups, including children, teens, adults and seniors, from a variety of demographic and socio-economic backgrounds including newcomers, students, businesspeople and professionals with a wide range of needs and expectations.

Collections comprise a spectrum of fiction and nonfiction subjects and a balance of viewpoints in order to support Londoners in all aspects of their lives from formal learning to lifelong learning to daily information needs to recreation, leisure and cultural needs.

As consumers, Londoners want access to a variety of formats: books, magazines and newspapers; DVDs, CDs, and MP3s; and electronic databases, online music and downloadable audiobooks. Londoners seek specialized resources: materials in many world languages for newcomers; literacy material and resources for learning English as a second language; access formats for the visually challenged, including books on tape, described videos, large print books and magazines access to adaptive technologies.

### **Fiscal Implications**

The collections budget has neither kept pace with inflation nor with user demand. The CPI for printed materials is significantly higher than general CPI over past 12 years, 1994-2006: budget increase = 14.74%; CPI for printed materials = 42.29%; average price increase for all collections materials = 27.91%.

User demand: Changes in the marketplace, including internet access, the proliferation of new formats (DVDs, MP3s, electronic resources) and powerful marketing campaigns have raised consumer expectations increasing demand for new types of collections in addition to ongoing and increasing demand for traditional resources.

LPL capital program has resulted in increased collections circulation in new and refurbished locations (2001-2005). An infusion of \$250,000 to support the new, expanded Central Library (2000/2001) helped to narrow the growing gap between funding and need. There has been no corresponding operating budget increases to support increased demand for branch collections.

Efforts to offset reduced purchasing power and the impact of increased demand include: electronic acquisitions protocols to speed purchasing and processing, prioritization of collection budget allocations (e.g. reduction of number of print materials to fund electronic resources; fewer “in depth” resources; the introduction of shorter loan periods for bestselling books; aggressive procurement; consortium buying; partnerships and donations.

### **How will restoring this service add value?**

There has been extensive analysis of collections holdings and usage, 1994-2004, using both quantitative and qualitative services assessment and

external comparative measures such as OMBI data. Current OMBI data shows lower service levels and higher usage in London than in other comparable communities:

- service level - total library holdings: 979,386 volumes // total library holdings per capita: London = 3.08; average = 3.30
- community impact - total annual circulation: 3,598,943 // total annual circ. per capita: London = 10.377; average = 8.542

### **What is the return on investment for this service?**

The return on investment made by Londoners will be:

- improved service levels in terms of the scope and currency of content of library collections materials
- increased community impact resulting in increased numbers of items within the collection thereby improving access.

### **What are the risks associated with failing to restore this service?**

- Teens and young adults will not discover relevant, current material in formats that engage them
- Newcomers will not find enough resources to support them in settlement and language learning activities
- Literacy initiatives will not be supported by sufficiently varied and appropriate library materials
- Traditional library customers will be increasingly frustrated at the shortage of up to date high demand collections
- The library's relevance and resonance will decline with the public.

### **Staff Recommendation**

To meet the current and projected public needs, expectations and demands and to address inflationary impact since 1994, it is recommended that London Public Library's core collection operating budget be increased by \$100,000 per annum for 2008, as it was in 2007 and 2006. Please note, this only allows us to 'keep up' versus funding to enhance or expand the collection options.

### **Monitoring Results and Future Reporting**

LPL uses both quantitative and qualitative services assessment and external comparative measures to assess service levels, community impact and effectiveness/efficiency for service delivery to Londoners. In addition to the OMBI measures, LPL benchmarks and measures using Ministry of Culture, Canadian Urban Library Council, Canadian Library Association, and International Federation of Library Associations standards.

LPL reports quarterly on collections and lending services, comparing current quarter and year-to-date with that of previous year(s). In addition LPL produces an Annual Report to the Public that gives an overview of collections services.