

Director's Office

2311 - 12th Avenue  
P.O. Box 2311  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
Canada, S4P 3Z5

October 6, 2022

Her Worship Mayor Sandra Masters  
Members of City Council  
City of Regina  
PO Box 1790  
Regina, SK S4P 3C8

Dear Mayor Masters and City Councillors,

Under Section 22, (1) of The Public Libraries Act, 1996, the Board of Regina Public Library requests that Council approve the Library mill rate request.

The Library Board is requesting a mill rate increase of 2.50% for 2023. The Library Board is also requesting approval in principle for a mill rate increase of 1.78% for 2024.

Revenue from tax sources can be summarized as follows for 2023:

2023 Library mill rate	0.89371
2023 City of Regina net levy request	\$24,641,877
2023 Grants in Lieu	\$1,575,337
Mill rate increase over 2022	2.50%

Revenue from tax sources can be summarized as follows for 2024:

2024 Library mill rate	0.90962
2024 City of Regina net levy request	\$25,334,855
2024 Grants in Lieu	\$1,603,382
Mill rate increase over 2023	1.78%

The Regina Public Library Board submits these proposals as citizens entrusted to provide and steward public library services to our patrons, and with the knowledge that the budget presented is required to operate the Library system effectively and efficiently.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sean Quinlan', is written over a horizontal line.

Sean Quinlan, Chair  
Regina Public Library Board of Directors

Encl.

Account Description	2023		2022		Variance		Variance	
	BUD		BUD		BUD		BUD	

**Revenue**

Tax Levy + Grants-in-lieu	\$	26,217,214	\$	25,299,821	\$	26,217,214	\$	721,023
Provincial Services Agreement		612,593		612,593		612,593		-
Grants Other		236,850		236,800		236,850		(21,850)
Other Revenue		873,178		694,480		873,178		(6,866)
Transfers from Reserves		1,245,738		26,500		1,245,738		(410,943)
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>29,205,573</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>26,870,174</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>29,205,573</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>281,364</b>

**Expenses**

**Operating Expenses**

Library Services	\$	11,011,278	\$	11,036,449		11,011,278	\$	324,218
Customer Experience		7,671,668		7,327,235		7,671,668		(93,182)
Service Innovation		3,694,296		3,437,160		3,694,296		137,676
Finance & Strategy		2,043,831		2,028,929		2,043,831		53,153
Governance		96,000		80,500		96,000		-
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>24,517,073</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>23,910,274</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>24,517,073</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>421,864</b>

**Capital**

Library Materials	\$	1,513,000	\$	1,497,000	\$	1,513,000	\$	45,000
Shelving, Furniture, and Equipment		250,000		269,793		250,000		20,000
Information Technology		1,343,500		663,250		1,343,500		(250,500)
Fleet		-		30,000		-		45,000
Branch Library Development		-		620,000		-		-
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,106,500</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,080,043</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,106,500</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>(140,500)</b>

**Contributions to Reserves**

Contributions to Reserves	\$	1,582,000		-	\$	1,582,000		-
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>29,205,573</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>26,990,317</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>29,205,573</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>281,364</b>

**Total Revenue**

Total Revenue	\$	29,205,573		29,486,937		29,486,937		
<b>Total Expenses</b>		29,205,573		29,486,937		29,486,937		
<b>Net Budget Required (\$0 indicates balanced)</b>		-		-		-		

**Mill Rate** - This is the amount of revenue generated by 1% increase in mill rate.

<b>Mill Rate</b>	\$	255,000		264,000		264,000		
<b>Mill Rate Request</b>		2.50%		1.78%		1.78%		





The Regina Public Library  
City Mill Rate Request

Account Description		2023	2022	Variance		
		BUD	BUD			
Sch. 1 - Reserve Breakdown						
Transfers from Reserves						
Transfer From Fleet Reserve		-		-		
Transfer From Branch Library Development Reserve				-		
Transfer From Building Maintenance Reserve		230,000		230,000		
Transfer From mānawēyatitān centre Renewal Reserve				-		
Transfer From Operating Reserve				-		
Transfer From Shelving, Furniture, and Equipment Reserve				-		
Transfer From Information Technology Reserve		950,000		950,000		
Transfer From Central Library Development Reserve				-		
Planned Funding from Dunlop Reserve		65,738	26,500	39,238		
Total Transfers from Reserves	\$	1,245,738	\$	26,500	\$	1,219,238
Contributions to Reserves						
Contributions To Fleet Reserve		30,000	-	30,000		
Contributions To Branch Library Development Reserve		1,000,000	-	1,000,000		
Contributions To Building Maintenance Reserve		100,000	-	100,000		
Contributions To mānawēyatitān centre Renewal Reserve		50,000	-	50,000		
Contributions To Operating Reserve		-	-	-		
Contributions To Shelving, Furniture, and Equipment Reserve		-	-	-		
Contributions To Information Technology Reserve		-	-	-		
Contributions To Central Library Development Reserve		402,000	-	402,000		
Total Contributions to Reserves	\$	1,582,000	-	\$	1,582,000	
Sch. 2 - Operating Expenses by Object						
Wages, Benefits and Honoraria		15,663,287	15,051,852	611,435		
Administration Costs		1,686,760	1,957,987	(271,227)		
Client Services		3,429,289	3,359,441	69,848		
Building Costs		3,737,737	3,540,994	196,743		
Total Operating Expenses by Object	\$	24,517,073	\$	23,910,274	\$	606,799

Account Description		2023	2022	Variance		
		BUD	BUD			
Sch. 1 - Reserve Breakdown						
Transfers from Reserves						
Transfer From Fleet Reserve		45,000		45,000		
Transfer From Branch Library Development Reserve				-	45,000	
Transfer From Building Maintenance Reserve			230,000	230,000		
Transfer From mānawēyatitān centre Renewal Reserve				-	(230,000)	
Transfer From Operating Reserve		741,000		741,000		
Transfer From Shelving, Furniture, and Equipment Reserve				-	741,000	
Transfer From Information Technology Reserve		-	950,000	950,000		
Transfer From Central Library Development Reserve				-	(950,000)	
Planned Funding from Dunlop Reserve		48,795	65,738	16,943		
Total Transfers from Reserves	\$	834,795	\$	1,245,738	(410,943)	
Contributions to Reserves						
Contributions To Fleet Reserve		30,000	30,000	-		
Contributions To Branch Library Development Reserve		1,000,000	1,000,000	-		
Contributions To Building Maintenance Reserve		100,000	100,000	-		
Contributions To mānawēyatitān centre Renewal Reserve		50,000	50,000	-		
Contributions To Operating Reserve		-	-	-		
Contributions To Shelving, Furniture, and Equipment Reserve		-	-	-		
Contributions To Information Technology Reserve		-	-	-		
Contributions To Central Library Development Reserve		402,000	402,000	-		
Total Contributions to Reserves	\$	1,582,000	\$	1,582,000	-	
Sch. 2 - Operating Expenses by Object						
Wages, Benefits and Honoraria		16,417,668	15,663,287	754,381		
Administration Costs		1,631,429	1,686,760	(55,331)		
Client Services		3,365,922	3,429,289	(63,367)		
Building Costs		3,523,918	3,737,737	(213,819)		
Total Operating Expenses by Object	\$	24,938,937	\$	24,517,073	\$	421,864





# 2023 MILL RATE REQUEST

2023 LIBRARY MILL RATE	0.89371
2023 CITY OF REGINA NET LEVY REQUEST	\$24,641,877
2023 GRANTS-IN-LIEU	1,575,337
MILL RATE INCREASE OVER 2022	2.50%



# 2023 Mill Rate Request

Regina Public Library is pleased to present its 2023 Mill Rate Request. We are requesting a mill rate increase of 2.5% for 2023, an amount equivalent to a 0.23% increase in the City's mill rate. Our request amounts to an increase of \$5.55 per year, or \$0.46 per month for the average homeowner.<sup>1</sup>

For 2024, we are requesting approval in principle for a mill rate increase of 1.78%, equivalent to a 0.16% increase in the City's mill rate. The request amounts to an increase of \$4.06 per year, or \$0.34 per month for the average homeowner.

Our annual mill rate requests account for our ongoing business, as well as new ideas and work to improve our services to the public. As part of our request, we have compiled information and data to demonstrate how we have been using our budget in 2022, and to share plans for the future. Our work to date, and our future plans, demonstrate our commitment to our customers and our community.

RPL is grateful to the City of Regina for its continued support of the library. What started as a room at City Hall has blossomed into a public library system that serves customers from across Regina.

We are proud to have been part of the community for over 110 years, and we continue to evolve based on customer and community expectations. We are forward thinking and anticipate need. We listen to the public and discover ways to address their wants and expectations, whether through stocking popular fiction, offering free access to new technology, supporting small business owners, providing events and entertainment, or offering spaces for the community to come together. There is something at the library for everyone.

We invite you to review this document to learn more about our year to date, our successes in meeting our goals, ways in which we enhance our productivity and resourcefulness, and what lies ahead for the remainder of the year and into 2023.

---

<sup>1</sup>Calculated based on the City's average residential assessed value of \$350,000.

2022 has been a positive and productive year to date. We are pleased with our ability to reach out and connect with our community following the easing of Covid restrictions.

During Covid, we saw a shift in how our resources and service offerings were used. We learned there is a need for library resources for the community beyond safe and welcoming spaces – our practical and hands-on resources such as printing, telephones, etc. are absolutely crucial to our customers. And we learned that, as our customers and community adapt to a new reality, they expect their public library to be there for them.

Our organization quickly adapted our service provision and offerings, and discovered opportunities for innovation, and for learning new ways of doing business. For example,

- In 2020, RPL expanded the perimeter of our WiFi outside of branches and have continued this service. We've seen a significant uptake from community members who don't have access elsewhere.
- We continue to offer curbside pickup service, which began as an option during Covid

Don't have to leave my house in bad weather & of course the pandemic prevented going to the library. I have turned to listening to audio books & the library offers a wonderful selection. Very easy to access. So pleased.

- Respondent, RPL Customer Experience Survey

## RPL Customer Satisfaction Survey 2022

In spring 2022, a customer satisfaction survey was conducted to identify opportunities to:

- improve the RPL Experience by better understanding the needs of customers;
- create a baseline through which to measure future progress; and
- identify priorities to support development of a Customer Experience Framework, as well as to assist with measurements for a number of strategic priorities including a Community Responsiveness Plan and a Service Delivery Plan.

Outcomes of the survey have been shared throughout this document.

- lockdown;
- We continue to offer *Check it Out*, a grab-and-go service that offers books organized by genre or theme – another popular service developed during Covid; and
- We continue to offer both online and in-person programming, after participants during Covid expressed appreciation for the online format.



## Economic impact of library services

RPL offers resources and services that create an economic contribution to the community through the value they provide to users. In the absence of the library, people in Regina would have to access similar resources elsewhere, some in the private market, while others would not be available at all. And, for a variety of reasons, many community members would not be able to access the same resources or services due to a number of barriers.

The primary economic impact of RPL is the value that customers gain by accessing a wide variety of materials, collections, programs, and services. All members of the public have access to space for work/study as well as private, corporate or community gatherings at our branches and Central Library. They enjoy access to amenities including free computer usage, 3D printers, and the Digital Media Studio. They can access a range of physical and digital collections including books and ebooks, newspapers, magazines, streaming movies and music, and unique collections such as musical instruments, bird watching kits, and CO2 monitors.

Since I can not afford to go back to school I can borrow books and learn [from] these books. What a wealth of education!

- Respondent, RPL Customer Experience Survey

Our many programs – in-house, in the community, and online – offer all ages opportunities for recreation and entertainment, lifelong learning, and skill-building in a range of areas including literacy, career assistance, general life skills, and digital literacy.

## Community impact

RPL's commitment to its community is centred on its aspiration to drive social vitality and economic prosperity for the people of Regina. RPL prioritizes understanding, engaging with, and serving the needs of all community members and ensuring accessibility and relevance of library services.

As a non-profit youth organization, we appreciate the meeting space RPL provides. The setup of the room, location, and amenities allow us to focus on our programming, rather than overhead costs and concerns. Plus, our members enjoy the fun library activities before and after our meetings.

- Melodi Lee, Regional 4-H Manager  
4-H Saskatchewan

RPL's physical branches serve as important gathering places for the community and contribute to the development of community bonding and sense of belonging. RPL hosts a number of recreational, special interest, and community programs that bring communities of people together for shared experiences. These offerings contribute to a stronger understanding of all people in our community.

In addition to community-focused programming, RPL branches provide space for other organizations in the community to deliver programs and events.

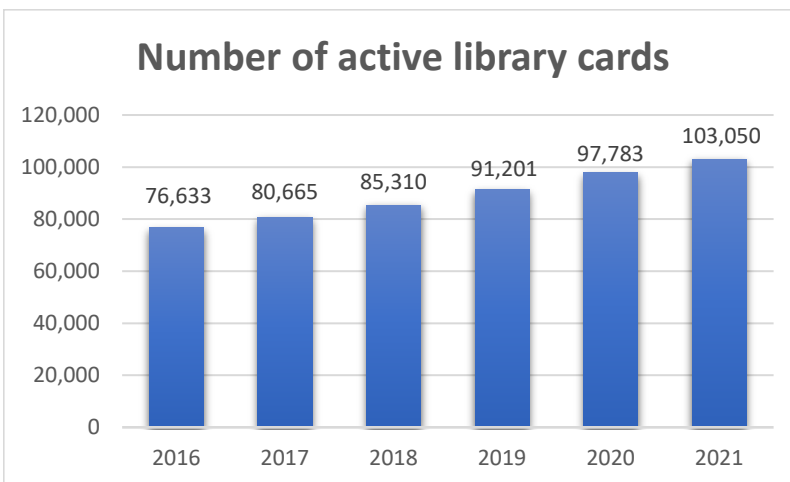
New Canadians make up a significant portion of the city's population and RPL's targeted programs and services help them settle into their new community. The library is a central place where new Canadians can access information and support services, both when they arrive to help with settlement and on an ongoing basis through various programs.

## Library usage

We know that use of library services continues to increase based on the number of active library cards in our system. The numbers below show the annual count of active cards, which continued to increase even through Covid; this means that people kept using the library even though the physical spaces were limited or closed.

We are pleased with these numbers and continue to work on improving and expanding our services so even more people will take advantage of what the library has to offer.

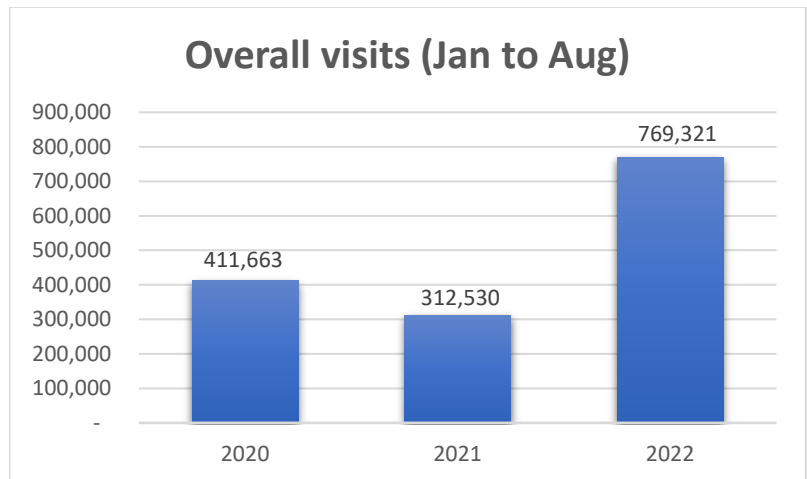
Our reputation and brand recognition also improved during Covid due to our many efforts to provide services to a community in lockdown. One way we measure this is through media stories: community levels of interest in library services generate media interest and vice versa. In 2021, the number of RPL stories/mentions in the media was about seven news stories per month. This is a significant increase over the one or two positive media stories/mentions per month from previous years. At the end of August 2022, we are averaging about 10 stories/mentions per month. Our social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) are also seeing a steady increase of followers.



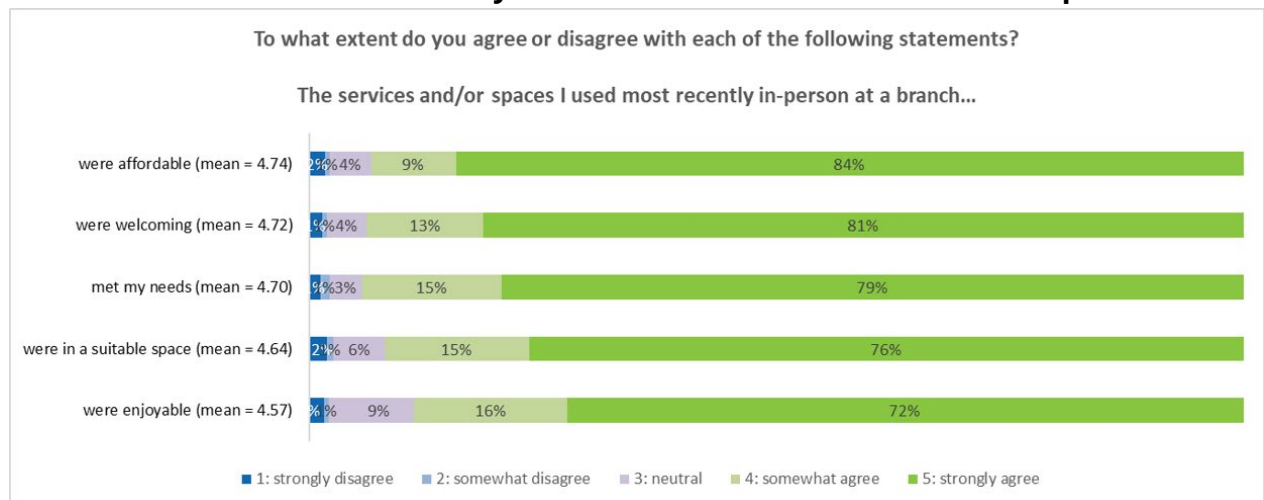


## Visits to branches

We are pleased to see new and returning customers back in our library branches. Visit numbers continue to increase at all locations as our community becomes more comfortable venturing out. Customers tell us they are happy to return to their favourite branches and to make use of library events, programming, and services once more.



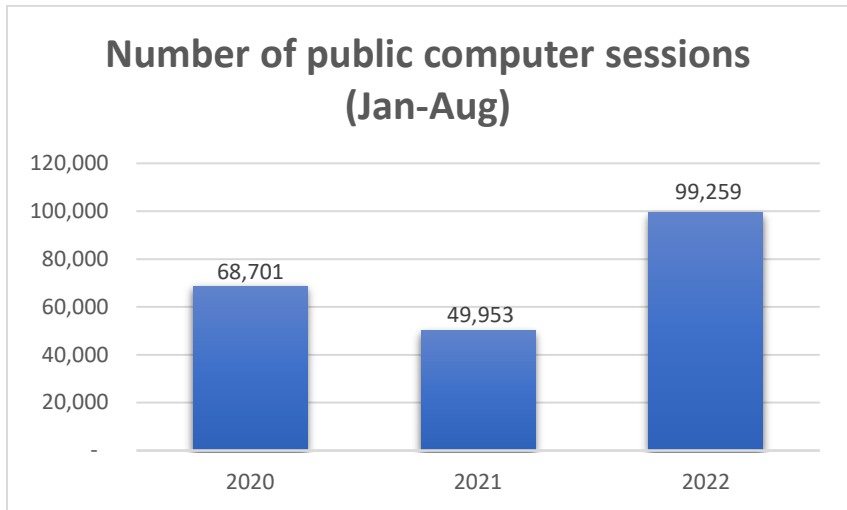
## RPL Customer Satisfaction Survey 2022: Satisfaction with Services and Spaces



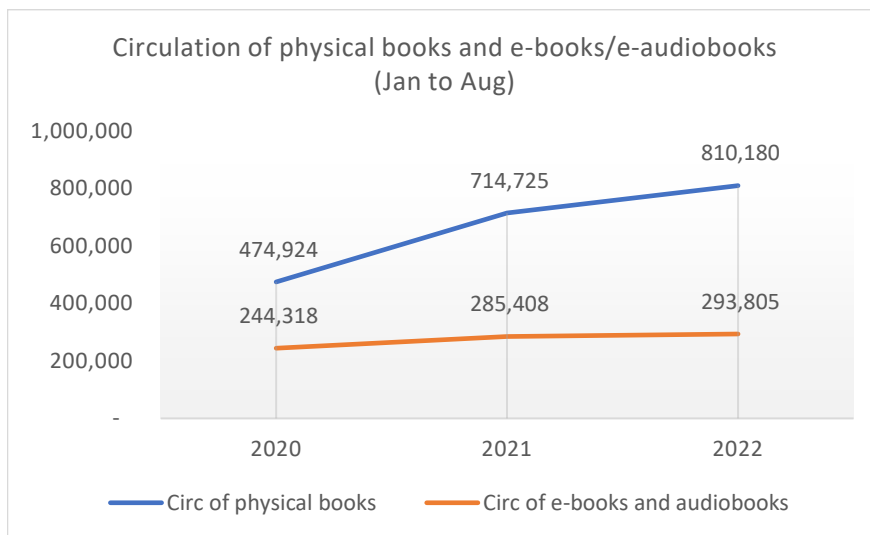
Those who used RPL services and/or spaces within the three months prior to taking the survey provided ratings ranging from 4.57 to 4.74. Customers rate affordability the highest, followed by being welcoming. Two of the five attributes tested are drivers of overall satisfaction with RPL: welcoming and enjoyable.

### In-person public computer use

Like other physical services, RPL is seeing a steady increase in computer workstation use at all branches. Library workstations are used for a variety of reasons including searching and applying for jobs, filling out citizenship applications, and doing homework.



### Circulation of physical and digital books

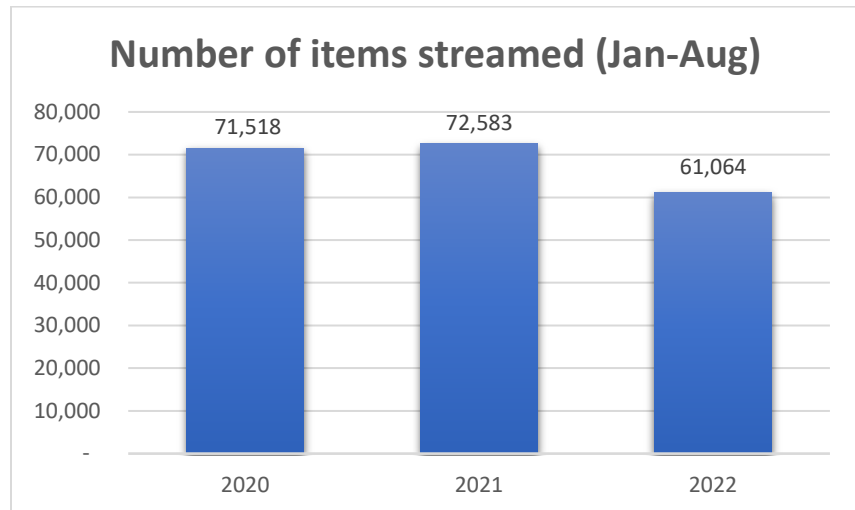


Use of our physical materials has increased in 2022 after an understandable decline during Covid, when it was unclear how the virus was spread, and while our branches were closed.

Use of eBooks and eAudiobooks increased during Covid and usage remains steady.

## Streaming services

The library offers free streaming movies, TV programs, and music. Use of streaming services took a jump during Covid, and customers expressed their appreciation while stuck at home. Usage decreased in 2022 as people grew more confident in being out together, but we are still pleased with uptake and expect it to increase moving forward.



## Collections

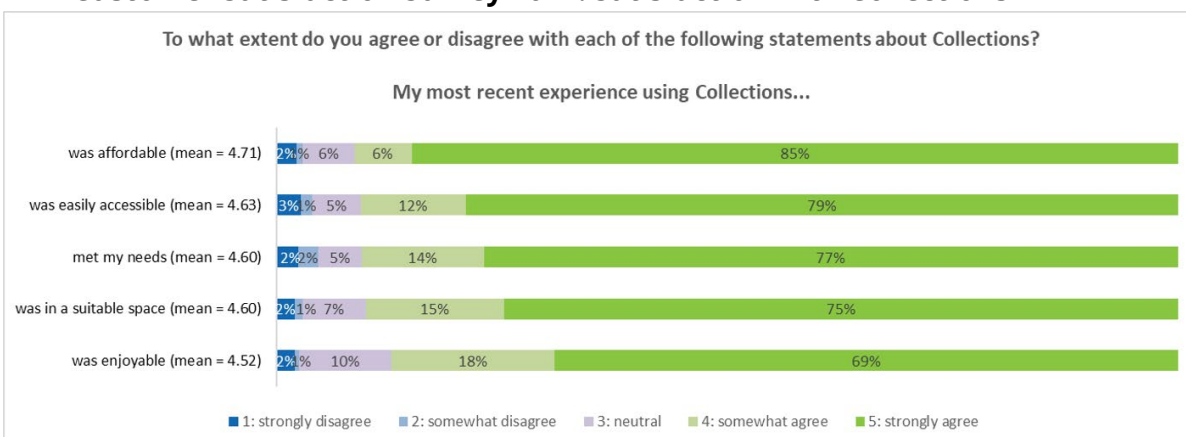
Libraries worldwide are expanding their range of materials available to borrow, and Regina Public Library is too. New in 2022:

- RPL participated in a province-wide pilot to loan library card holders free passes to Saskatchewan regional parks during summer months. The pilot program was created through a partnership between the Saskatchewan Library Association, the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, and the Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association;
- We've recently introduced bike locks to borrow at Prince of Wales and Glen Elm branches;
- A set of Birding Kits with high-quality binoculars will be introduced thanks to a partnership with Birds Canada starting this fall; and
- CO<sub>2</sub> monitors are now available to borrow at all locations.

The library has been strongly committed to enhancing our offerings to all customers, with a particular focus on growing a robust children's collection to help foster a love of reading in the early years. This approach helps develop life-long readers and learners.



## RPL Customer Satisfaction Survey 2022: Satisfaction with Collections



*Those who used Collections within the three months prior to taking the survey provided ratings ranging between 4.52 and 4.71 on a 5-point agreement scale for each attribute tested. Customers rate affordability the highest, followed by being easily accessible. Four out of the five attributes tested – affordable, met my needs, in a suitable space, and enjoyable – are drivers of overall satisfaction with RPL.*

## Digital infrastructure

A connected and digitally literate population is a more informed and more productive population. RPL provides access to digital infrastructure by offering free public WiFi and access to technology and equipment.

In 2022 RPL worked to bring back digital services that were removed from public access during Covid, and to expand them to more locations.

- The Virtual Reality Discovery Kiosk, providing public access to virtual reality experiences, was reintroduced at Central in August 2022. A second kiosk is planned for Albert Branch in fall 2022.
- A children's interactive gaming system called BEAM was introduced at George Bothwell Branch in July 2022. The ceiling projection system has been popular, hitting 100 to 150 visits per day in its first few weeks.
- The library's 3D printing service was expanded, and a new printer is now housed in the DMS to provide an onsite, hands-on experience.
- A new teen gaming space is planned for Sherwood Village Branch in November 2022. A Nintendo Switch console will allow multiplayer gameplay for up to eight players simultaneously. This will provide a unique and interactive community-building experience for gaming enthusiasts.

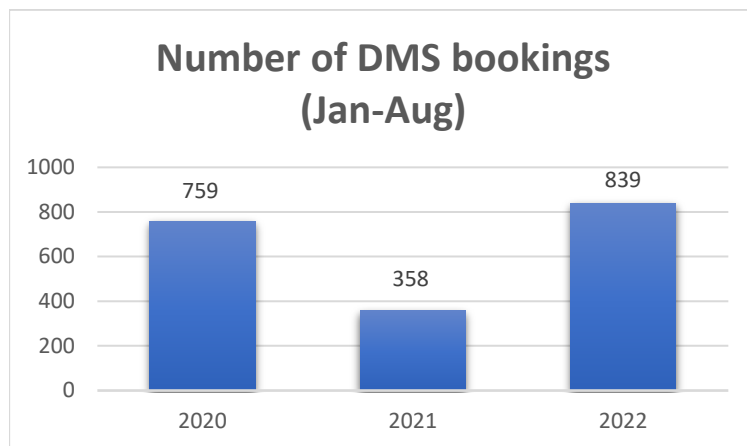
### *Use of the Digital Media Studio (DMS)*

The Digital Media Studio is a unique and popular offering at RPL. Housed at Central Library, the studio provides free access to specialized hardware, equipment, software, and expertise that let customers explore, collaborate and learn about digital media and create professional quality audio and video productions.

The studio remains very popular and we are seeing an uptick in bookings once again in 2022.

The Whisper Room Sound Studio continues to be the most popular resource within the DMS, and its use is steadily climbing. At the end of August, it was booked at 76% capacity.

The WhisperRoom is being replicated at Sherwood Village Branch as part of the refresh project in November 2022.

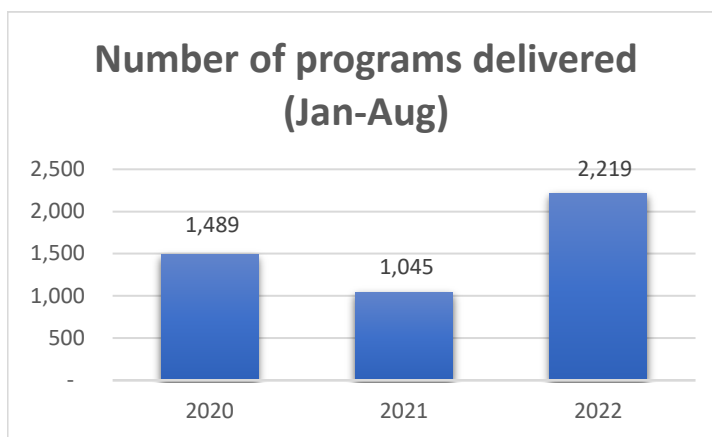


*Note: Availability of the DMS was limited in 2020 and 2021 due to instances of Covid closures and/or reduced hours.*

### **Programming**

RPL offers a range of programs and services that support skills development, knowledge, and experience that create economic contributors to the Regina community. For example, academic supports such as in-branch homework help and online resources such as Brainfuse online tutoring have benefitted children and youth by helping improve

academic performance and the chances of high school completion. RPL also offers online and in-person homework support aligned with Saskatchewan curriculum.



The number of programs on offer decreased during Covid due to instances of branch closures and/or limited hours. During that time, RPL introduced online programming and

received positive feedback about the format. Online programming allows RPL to expand its offerings and take advantage of subject matter experts from around the world. Attendance at adult programs increased 27% over 2021, and attendance at children's programs increased by 83% over 2021.

### *Business programming*

The library is a key supporter and promoter of financial literacy in Saskatchewan, mainly through the sheer amount and frequency of financial literacy programs offered to the public.

In 2022, RPL focused mainly on personal finance and career coaching programs. Career coaching programs are offered in a one-to-one format and are held twice to three times a week depending on demand and volunteer availability. Every week, customers are supported with job searches, resumé building, interview prep, and/or career consultations. The career coaching program has created a lot of positive impact and many former participants express their gratitude after finding employment.

### *Offsite programming*

Offsite programming also picked up speed following Covid. Offsite programming includes any program offerings that aren't at an RPL branch or offered online.

To date in 2022, RPL has offered a small number of offsite programs with a relatively high attendance. As public spaces continue to re-open, the library will be able to offer more offsite programs.

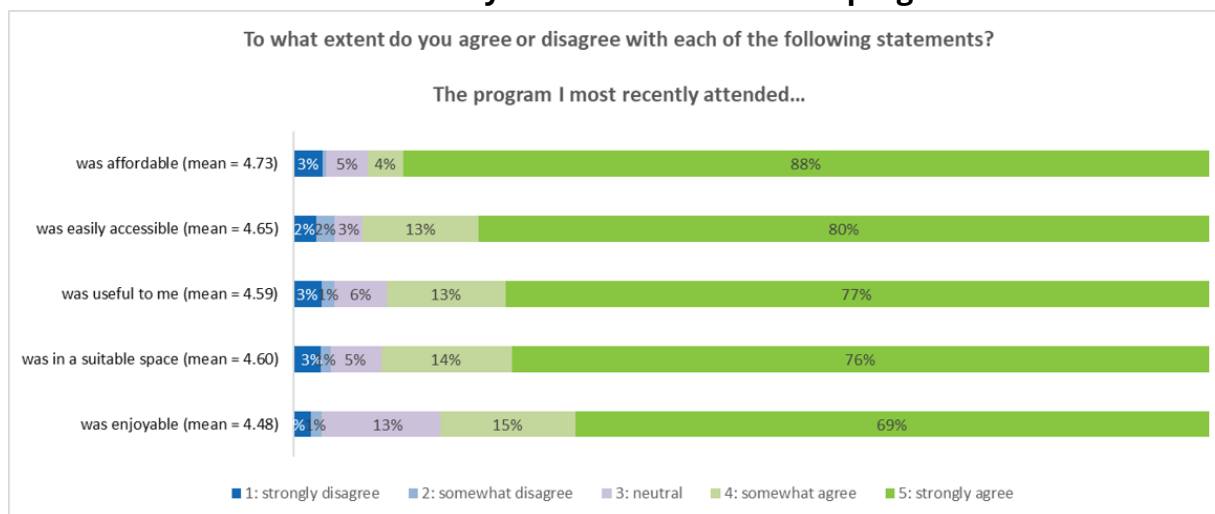
### *Online programming*

The library greatly expanded online programming to the community in 2020. As mentioned above, customers have demonstrated a great appreciation for online programming, and we will be increasing our online adult programs starting in fall 2022.



RPL has also begun to provide online programming options to schools to use in classrooms. For example, the Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards (the Willow Awards) were offered online for teachers to share in classrooms. We were pleased with the attendance at this and other online classroom options and will continue to offer them in the future.

## RPL Customer Satisfaction Survey 2022: Satisfaction with programs



*Those who attended an RPL program within the three months prior to taking the survey provided ratings ranging between 4.48 and 4.73 on a 5-point agreement scale for each attribute tested. Customers rate affordability the highest, followed by easily accessible. Three attributes - useful, in a suitable space, and enjoyable - are drivers of overall satisfaction with RPL.*

## Community Outreach

Each year, Regina Public Library partners with several community groups to offer programming, special events, and service offerings. We continue to value our partnerships with like-minded organizations with similar community goals such as the Regina Open Door Society, the Saskatchewan Science Centre, and the Royal Saskatchewan Museum. RPL connects with these and other organizations in the community to ensure greater impact through partnerships.

The library also participates in community events and offers programming and services through the Frost Festival, Nuit Blanche, the Queen City Marathon, Canada Day (RPL delivered the children's area), and the Cathedral Village Arts Festival, and we are regulars at the Regina Farmers' Market.

For the past two years RPL has partnered with other Treaty 4 libraries to offer *Treaty 4 Talks*, a series of talks with local Indigenous authors and known personalities that are geared toward students to support understanding and advancement of reconciliation. Due to Covid, the talks were hosted online in 2021 and broadcast into classrooms. The online format proved to be a big success with close to 4,000 students (approx. 136 classrooms) participating in two events. The 2022 program was also recently delivered online and, again, response was overwhelmingly positive with 5,250 attendees (approx. 209 classrooms) participating in three events. RPL is looking forward to working with our partners to host this event in the future.

RPL recently opened Community Commons at Central Library to bring people together through common interests and opportunities, and to engage directly with our communities to learn what we can do to support them. Created with a focus on celebration of Indigenous culture on Treaty 4 land, the space provides programs and events in a small and intimate setting; meeting rooms for use by community organizations such as Thrive Counselling and Pro Bono Law; and much more. Through the Centre we are leveraging the reputation of the library as a centrally located, safe place for all people to seek supports for health and wellness. Not only does this impact individuals, it supports community well being.

In summer 2022, RPL completed an asset map to improve understanding of Regina's neighbourhoods and communities as an important step to engage with the community. This approach improves RPL's ability to identify and respond to community need. Partnerships will include entrepreneurs and small business, newcomers, Indigenous peoples, and other groups identified by RPL. Through these partnerships we will better understand and support reconciliation, community well being, and economic development.



## Investing in our future

---

Regina Public Library's commitment to our community remains strong and continues to be demonstrated in our strategic actions. The *Regina Public Library Strategic Plan, 2022 to 2025* provides direction for the organization's priorities, and is shaped directly from our aspiration, purpose, strategic imperative, and organizational values.

Led by the RPL Board of Directors, the plan captures recurring themes voiced by the community; envisions a desired future; and defines actions required to achieve that future. It defines the RPL Experience – our promise of what customers and the community can expect from RPL.

The information below provides a snapshot of actions to date. Many of the action items within the strategy map intersect and fit within more than one subsection. For the purposes of this document, one sub section has been assigned to highlighted actions with more than one home.

A schematic of RPL's strategic plan is available at <https://www.reginalibrary.ca/about/strategic-planning>.

### The RPL Experience

The RPL Experience is the overall set of four goals we seek to achieve: customer-centric, welcoming spaces, exceptional value, and enjoyment. All actions on the strategy map point to one or more of these goals to ensure an overall positive and dynamic experience for customers and our community.

An RPL customer experience framework was crafted in summer 2022 to ensure our work meets the four critical factors that support delivery of the RPL experience: customer-centric service; a welcoming environment; exceptional value; and enjoyment. Use of RPL Customer Satisfaction Survey 2022 key findings has been instrumental in developing the framework and identifying priorities for 2023 and beyond. Service-wide outcomes from the survey are included below.



Overall, customers reported they are very satisfied with their RPL experience. RPL rated very favourably across all areas tested, with at least 84% of customers agreeing or strongly agreeing with the survey's statements about library services. Top drivers included enjoyable, inspiring, innovative, and useful programs, collection, services, and spaces. Knowledgeable, inspiring, and innovative staff also ranked very high.

"Absolutely the best! My go-to place to help me out."

- Respondent, RPL Customer Experience Survey

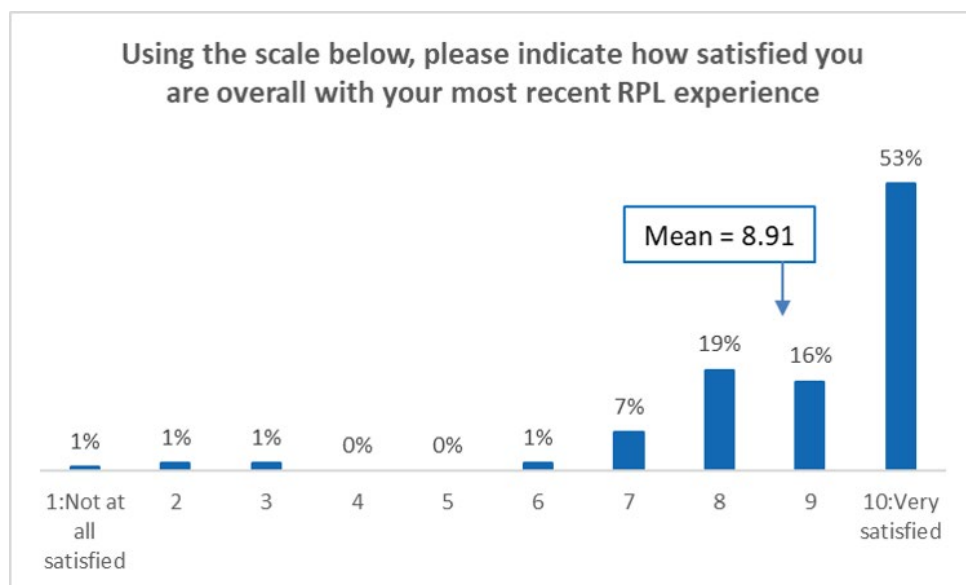
## Looking forward

In years to come, RPL is faced with the unique challenge of working to improve survey scores that are exceptionally high.

An area of focus identified in the Customer Satisfaction Survey was the experience of Indigenous customers. While respondents who identify as being Indigenous persons still rated their experiences quite high, their responses were lower than non-Indigenous persons.

Qualitative responses provided by Indigenous respondents are all positive, and

RPL will be doing further work to identify opportunities to improve the RPL experience for our Indigenous customers. The 34 recommendations that comprise RPL's *Indigenous Services Strategy*, discussed below, include further community consultation to gather more information.



*RPL Customer Satisfaction Survey overall satisfaction. On average, customers rate their satisfaction with their library experience at 8.91 out of 10.*

## Sustain

*We prudently manage resources for sustainable operations*

- A new budget model, including a reserves policy, was developed and approved by the Board to specify the reserves to be maintained by RPL, their purpose, and how they are funded. Other policies updated and approved include a Tangible Capital Assets Policy and an Investment Policy. The new budget model, policies, and processes help RPL work smarter, be better informed, and inspire confidence among customers and stakeholders. When reporting to City Council and the public on what RPL accomplishes with tax dollars, these tools support effective and efficient operations and help RPL to be accountable. They also help ensure that RPL has sufficient funds to meet its commitment to the public (e.g., funds for a major renovation, expansion, or replacement of any current library branch).

## Looking forward

- Following the City's lead, the Library is presenting its first multi-year budget for the years 2023 and 2024 in the fall of 2022.
- The Library plans to use reserves to supplement larger, one-time expenditures. This will allow us to smooth expenditure over time and even out year-to-year mill rate requests.
- The Library also plans to use reserves to allocate funds for future use. In particular, funds will be reserved for Central Library and branch renewal.

"Easy access, incredible resources, no financial barriers"

- Respondent, RPL Customer Experience Survey

## Grow

*We position the library for future growth*

- A 2022 spring donation appeal was launched using direct mail to past supporters. As of August 2022, the spring direct mail appeal had a 22% response rate, exceeding industry standard. As well, an additional internal donation campaign was launched and completed in summer 2022, raising over \$20,000.

## Looking forward

- Work is progressing on a fall/winter acquisition and year-end appeal. As well, ongoing work continues to identify, cultivate, solicit, and steward individuals and organizations who have capacity to donate at a major gift level.
- The RPL Fund Development Office is also solidifying a best-practice approach to reporting on fundraising activities.

## Programs and Services

*We support the success of individuals and the community*

- RPL is moving forward with a project to improve our customer experience through Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and automated materials handling (AMH). Our first focus has been on RFID, which allows an item such as a library book to be tracked and communicated using radio waves. The system will make it easier for customers to sign out and return books, and for the library to quickly turnaround those materials to get them back on shelves. The first step in the new project is to add RFID tags to materials for the new system, which RPL began in summer 2022, and is expected to complete in October.  
The second phase of the project is to introduce AMH, an automated system that uses mechanical equipment, to do repetitive tasks. This change will improve customer service by offering new technology to make it easier to access and borrow library materials. It will also improve efficiencies and support staff by removing those repetitive tasks from their duties, allowing them to focus on other work. We expect to begin setting up AMH at Central Library in the new year.
- RPL uses an internal assessment tool, *Edge*, from Urban Libraries Council to set measurable, strategic goals for digital inclusion, and to engage leaders in meaningful conversations about 21<sup>st</sup> century community needs. RPL has completed its Edge self-assessment for 2022 and from it has identified future goals and objectives.
- RPL increased accessibility to its Outreach collections, which are books and other materials for customers who are unable to read print material or unable to visit the library due to illness, age, or disability. Outreach collections and tools are now available throughout the library system, making it easier for customers to access them.



## Looking forward

- As part of the RFID project, RPL will be installing new self checkout stations to accommodate the new technology in late 2022. In 2023, we will look into the purchase of external kiosks to create an easy and convenient way for customers to access library materials. Kiosks will be available in spaces such as care homes or hospitals. Customers can swipe their library card to access materials, and the borrowing record is automatically added to their account.
- RPL will be enhancing its web accessibility design and content management practices to ensure compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines from the World Wide Web Consortium. Changes are underway by RPL's Web Development Team and initial testing is expected in August.
- RPL seeks to refine its Prairie History Room service through a review and customer needs assessment. An assessment of the space, collections, and services of the Prairie History Room will be undertaken in fall 2022. RPL will undertake consultation with key service-related local organizations and conduct environmental scans of other public libraries and collections.

"The RPL is like a lifeline for me. Thank you."

- Respondent, RPL Customer Experience Survey

## Community presence

*We are part of the future of Regina*

- A Community Engagement Framework and Partnership Strategy was completed and advanced to the Board of Directors in July 2022. The strategy articulates RPL's community engagement position to inform, consult, involve, and collaborate with individuals, groups, and other organizations to meet community need.
- RPL has created an Indigenous Services Strategy to formalize the delivery of culturally responsive services that are associated with collections, culturally relevant programs, staff training and recruitment, and provision of an overall positive and enriching experience for Indigenous people. Work to execute the strategy has begun and will continue for the foreseeable future.

## Looking forward

- Central Library renewal continues to be a priority for Regina Public Library. RPL was pleased that a member of its Board of Directors is participating on the Catalyst Committee, and we are looking forward to seeing the recommendations of the committee as they relate to Central Library renewal. A renewed Central Library will

help ensure RPL can continue providing excellent service and contribute to a dynamic and progressive downtown.

“The sheer diversity of program topics! Amazing!”

- Respondent, RPL Customer Experience Survey

- Central Library Community Commons was unveiled in September 2022. The Commons area is a space designed for community-driven supports, accomplished through planned programming, shared spaces with community partners, and encouragement of individuals to use the space for conversation and sharing.
- Branch renewal continues to be an area of importance for RPL. This year, work is being completed to refresh Sherwood Village Branch to ensure it continues to meet community need. The project is expected to be completed in late fall 2022.

## Systems and processes

*Our operations and resources are optimized*

- An Innovation Framework was created to set out organizational structures, budget reserves, systems, processes, and guidance for managers and staff to support idea generation, effective review and assessment of ideas, investment and action, and benefits measurement. The framework supports RPL’s intent to better meet customer needs, maximize the value of RPL’s spending, and ensure the long-term viability and value of RPL within our community.
- RPL introduced a cloud-based business planning and reporting software tool to streamline and help simplify RPL budgeting and reporting processes. The system incorporates variance and forecasting reporting and uses an automated workflow to assign responsibility to unit and project owners.
- RPL improved and streamlined its internal reporting processes for strategy map initiatives. The update includes use of Monday.com, a web-based work management software, to support RPL’s strategic planning and reporting.
- RPL’s Brand Book, a manual that aligns workplace behaviours and decision making according to its brand, was rewritten and refreshed. RPL’s brand and its supports help to ensure employees are consistent in their approach to customer service and decision making.
- Work is underway on a centralized support system for stakeholder and partner management to ensure work with community partners is aligned and strategic.

## Looking forward

- A customer service training module for cross-selling/marketing by frontline staff has been developed and will be assessed and mapped in the months ahead, with a goal

to introduce it in early 2023. The module seeks to ensure RPL customers are provided with excellent customer service through “cross-promotional” staff suggestions and recommendations.

- A new customer newsletter is in the final stages of development. Internal and external testing will take place in early fall with the intent to introduce it to customers and the community in late 2022. The newsletter will help to ensure customers are kept aware of library events and offerings in a timely manner.

## Organization

*Our people are prepared, engaged, accountable*

- The RPL Board of Directors determined steps to ensure greater public accountability and transparency regarding RPL Board of Directors activities. For example, during Covid, the public, and sometimes Board members themselves, could only participate digitally, which prompted a change in format, particularly as the Boardroom at Central Library isn't large enough to hold the Board plus many visitors. With that in mind, the Board maintains this hybrid approach to meetings in which members of the public can observe proceedings digitally. As well, a meeting room across the hall is opened and streaming video and audio is offered to the public, if needed.
- RPL has developed a plan to embed equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in all aspects of the organization. The plan was advanced to the Board of Directors in July. Implementation of this plan will bring a shared understanding of RPL's commitment to EDI for employees at all levels of the organization, the Board of Directors, customers, and the greater Regina community. It will improve the ability of RPL employees and contracted service providers (e.g., security guards) to apply an understanding of EDI in supporting customer interactions when working with customers from diverse, lived experiences that may be different from own lived experience.
- A formal internal employee survey was conducted in early 2022 to support understanding of staff perceptions of the RPL workplace. With a response rate of 93%, the survey demonstrated that 70% of staff indicate positive feelings about working at RPL on a typical day. Three-in-five (63%) indicate strong alignment with RPL's purpose, and 30% saying they are “very aligned.”

“RPL is a great place to be connected with your coworkers, everyone works as a team [to] share inputs, suggestions and emotions too. Really feel good to work here.”

- Employee response, *Discover, Learn, Connect* staff survey
- A Leadership Development Plan has been completed and approved by the

Board of Directors, and a senior leader succession plan is nearing completion. This helps to ensure RPL has the right people in the right jobs by identifying key competencies required to carry out the organizational purpose and focusing on development of individuals to meet future business needs. To date, leadership essentials training was conducted in February for out-of-scope staff, and leadership training for in-scope supervisors took place in September.

## Looking forward

- Work to support staff is being planned in the following areas:
  - the opportunity to develop skills at RPL;
  - being comfortable to share opinions with managers; and
  - having access to tools for optimal performance.
- A self-assessment tool for leaders is under development and will be implemented as part of the annual review process for leaders.
- A plan to build and maintain an engaged workforce with a common purpose is being designed.
- A Customer-Centred Culture Plan will be reviewed and revised in the months ahead.



# Continuous improvement

---

RPL continues to look for operating productivity and resourcefulness on a regular basis. Productivity and resourcefulness can be large or small and occur throughout the workplace on a regular basis. The following list describes some of the more significant opportunities for efficiency savings and innovation. Implementation of these opportunities allows RPL to reinvest savings into more materials and services for customers and to accomplish more using existing resources.

## **Systems and technology**

- In 2022 RPL implemented budgeting and reporting software that is fully integrated with its accounting software, to replace manual processes. The result is more timely financial information for managers, time savings in the budgeting and reporting process, and fewer errors.
- Use of Niche Academy and other online training modules was increased, as was an increased amount of group training instead of individual training. The result is the ability to customize training for RPL specific processes and practices, and the ability for staff to access training during less busy times.
- RPL implemented online recruitment and onboarding modules in its payroll and scheduling system. This allows for more streamlined processes, integration of human resource information, fewer in-person meetings, elimination of paper documentation, and immediate availability of recruitment information for hiring managers.
- An energy monitoring system was installed at Regent Place Branch, providing remote monitoring including the capability to adjust heating and cooling systems to maximize efficiency and energy usage.
- RPL expanded its virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) computing for both customers and staff. The result is less staff time spent servicing computers, reduced long-term capital costs, improved disaster recovery capability, and improved security and privacy.

## **Customer convenience**

- RPL provides enhanced online solutions for citizens to register as new customers. They can register at their leisure and no longer have to visit a branch for a new library card. Staff intervention is no longer required for most of the approximate 12,000 new cardholders registered each year.
- Staff can now use a mobile app or a tablet to access tools and resources to assist customers anywhere in the library through roaming technology. This reduces the

need for staffed service desks and allows customers to get assistance wherever they are in the library.

- RPL will continue to offer virtual programming. Primarily introduced during Covid, virtual programming has continued and makes programs available to a much larger audience. For example, in 2019, RPL offered 66 in-person Indigenous storytelling sessions attended by 3,700 students. In 2022, RPL offered 40 online storytelling sessions attended by 13,800 students. This is also far more convenient and saves transportation costs for the schools. For example, RPL booked three online author visits for Canadian Children's Book Week, and had an attendance of 1,950. This compares with a previous booking of one in-person author with attendance of 40 to 100 students.

## **Staff and Processes**

- RPL is creating a "human firewall" to improve its cyber security by better educating staff and providing tools to improve resistance to cyber threats. The result is reduced risk of cyber attacks and the potential cost of such an attack.
- RPL increased its use of pre-screening tools and revised its staffing guidelines to improve recruitment processes in order to improve efficiency and accessibility.
- A review of RPL's phone, email, and chat messaging systems resulted in efficiencies that created a reduction in the number of staff assigned to the help line, lower pricing from the vendor, and a reallocation of staff to direct on-the-floor customer service as in-person visits continue to grow.
- Branch leadership was reorganized to create stable, consistent branch management across the system.
- In advance of and during the pandemic, film distributors updated the model for commercial film distribution and made first-run film screenings a non-viable option for RPL Film Theatre. In response, the film theatre has increased community responsive programming that does not require admission. This has eliminated the need for box office attendants, saves the increased cost of commercial films, and supports local artists. Moving forward, we will continue to monitor our business approach and adapt to accommodate community need as necessary.
- RPL has increased its focus on work from local and regional artists at Dunlop Art Gallery which has brought savings through reduced shipping and transportation costs, and lower travel costs for artists.

## **Purchasing**

- RPL consolidated its purchase of library materials to one provider, selected through a competitive process. This resulted in a significant discount in processing costs, all of which are put back into the purchase of additional library materials. There are also savings in staff time by only having to deal with a single provider.

- RPL increased its use of cloud computing systems and services. This improves cyber security, and reduces capital spending and optimizes operational spending by providing flexibility for just-in-time and right-sized infrastructure and systems use.
- RPL made ongoing use of its competitive purchasing processes. The result of this practice has meant a new supplier of marketing and communications services at a reduced cost and a group purchasing agreement for natural gas, resulting in significant savings.
- Finally, RPL upgraded to LED technology, meaning that when electrical repairs and upgrades are done, LED technology is used when possible to make energy use more sustainable and efficient.

## **2023 and 2024 mill rate requests**

---

This year, RPL is presenting mill rate requests for 2023 and 2024 in line with the City's new multi-year budget process. For 2023, RPL is requesting a decision regarding the proposed mill rate while the 2024 request is presented in principle with a mill rate decision expected in principle. We have planned our ongoing operating/capital budgets and reserve transfers along with any major projects or expenditures for the next two years in line with this new process

### **2023 Mill Rate**

RPL is requesting an increase to our mill rate by 2.5%. As mentioned above, this amount is equivalent to a 0.23% increase in the City's mill rate. RPL's request amounts to an increase of \$5.55 per year, or \$0.46 per month for the average homeowner.<sup>2</sup>

### **Revenue**

94% of RPL's revenue comes from taxation as legislatively, we cannot charge for most of the programs and services we offer. Only 2% of our funding for general library services comes from the province. Other revenue comes in the form of grants for the Dunlop Art Gallery and to a lesser extent, for other services. Self-generated revenue is from interest on investments, donations, and fees for things such as lost materials or photocopying.

---

<sup>2</sup>Calculated based on the City's average residential assessed value of \$350,000.

In 2022, the RPL Board of Directors adopted a new reserves policy. For the first time, RPL is actively using its reserves to fund library operations. In 2023, the Board has determined that funds in the Building Maintenance Reserve should be used to fund urgent electrical and mechanical repairs at Central Library. The Information Technology Reserve is being drawn down to assist in the implementation of a system-wide library materials identification and handling system.

RPL is also using its operational reserves such as the Building Maintenance Reserve to smooth out cash requirements for spending in any given year. Rather than requesting more funding in years when large purchases are planned, a steady amount is budgeted each year with funds coming from the reserve when planned purchasing is higher, and funds going into the reserve when planned purchasing is lower. In addition to reserves for ongoing operational needs, reserves for future library development will also be funded through the budget process. The intent is to allocate funds for Central Library development, Branch Libraries development, and māmawêyatitân centre.

## **Expenses**

RPL has three main categories of expenses: Operating, Capital, and Contributions to Reserves for future projects.

### **Operating expenses**

The requested increase for our 2023 mill rate primarily covers general increases to business costs.

Full-time and part-time salaries are increasing, primarily as a result of a new bargaining agreement with CUPE Local 1594 ratified in September. This necessitated an increase to the salary budget, which comprises 64% of our 2023 operating budget. RPL truly is a service organization with its people at the core of everything we do.

Customer programming costs are increasing as RPL seeks to provide more services to its customers. RPL's strategic plan calls for us to engage communities to ensure responsive programs and services and to innovate to meet the diverse needs and interests of the community and that is what these funds will be used for. Dunlop Art Gallery exhibition costs are also increasing to expand its artistic reach, but the grant-funded nature of gallery programming means that this increase does not impact the mill rate request.

As noted above, \$230,000 will be drawn from reserves to fund urgent electrical and mechanical improvements at Central Library. Although this expense won't affect RPL's mill rate, it is necessary to keep the doors open and reduce risk at Central. This is a modest cost, and these are not projects of any significant size, but they are necessary: failure to act could create significant issues and would force closure of the building.

## **Capital**

Capital is budgeted to increase by 2.5% in 2023 to accommodate the implementation of a system-wide materials identification and handling system. While this project is multi-year, starting in 2022 and finishing in 2024, the majority of its cost will be incurred in 2023. Therefore, the decision was made to use all the funds currently in the Information Technology Reserve to offset most of the cost of this major upgrade and reduce impact on the mill rate.

## **Reserves**

The Board of Directors is adamant that funding should be set aside to fund future projects for Central Library and the branches. RPL's capital project reserve has now been replaced by three reserves: one specifically for Central Library, one for branch renewal, and a special reserve for māmawêyatitân centre renewal.

The funds in the former capital project reserve were allocated to the Central Library Development reserve and this reserve will also receive all the interest income on RPL's investments. The Branch Library Development reserve has been allocated \$1 million to kickstart the reserve and to start building funds for renewal of current branches and/or new branches or service opportunities.

## **2024 Mill Rate**

RPL is presenting its 2024 mill rate request for approval in principle. At this time, the request is for an increase to our mill rate of 1.78%. This amount is equivalent to a 0.16% increase in the City's mill rate. RPL's request amounts to an increase of \$4.06 per year, or \$0.34 per month for the average homeowner.

Revenue in 2024 is similar to 2023. A key change is a lesser amount being drawn from the reserves to fund projects. The \$741,000 Operating Reserve drawdown is for the continuation of the system-wide library materials identification and handling system.

Operating expenses are very stable, even declining somewhat when compared to 2023. The exception is salaries and benefits. Economic and performance/merit increases are included in the determination of salaries and benefits and impacts the mill rate since these expenses make up 64% of our operating expenses.

Capital is declining compared to 2023 as the major expenditure for materials identification and handling will occur in 2023. However, there is still a substantial commitment for 2024 for this project. This expenditure is being offset by a drawdown of the reserves.



Commitments to fund reserves including Central Library Development, Branch Library Development, and māmawêyatitân centre continues in 2024.

## In Closing

---

Regina Public Library remains committed to serving our community as evidenced by our strong partnerships and the responsive programs and services we provide to our community members. We are pleased with our results this year to date as use of our collections, programs, and services returns to pre-covid levels. We continue to implement actions from the *Regina Public Library Strategic Plan, 2022 to 2025*. Our strategic actions will positively impact our community as we aspire to contribute to the social vitality and the economic prosperity for the people of Regina.