



Board of Directors

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

October 5, 2023

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 2.27% for 2024.

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

2024 Library mill rate	0.91400
2024 City of Regina net levy request	\$25,564,084
2024 Grants in Lieu	\$1,541,288
Mill rate increase over 2023	2.27%

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 black ink, appearing to read 'Marj Gavigan', written in a cursive style.

Marj Gavigan, Chair
Regina Public Library Board of Directors

Encl.



2024 MILL RATE REQUEST

2024 LIBRARY MILL RATE	0.91400
2024 CITY OF REGINA NET LEVY REQUEST	\$25,564,084
2024 GRANTS-IN-LIEU	\$1,541,288
MILL RATE INCREASE OVER 2023	2.27%





MILL RATE REQUEST



Regina Public Library (RPL) is pleased to present its 2024 Mill Rate Request, a supplemental document to last year's two-year mill rate process.

RPL requests a 2.27% increase over 2023. This request represents an additional \$600,000 to fund RPL's capital, operating, and reserve requirements in 2024. Our request amounts to an increase of \$4.66 per year, or \$0.38 per month, for the average homeowner.¹

Inflationary increases proved much higher than anticipated when the 2023/2024 mill rate was presented to City Council last year. However, RPL has successfully realigned its priorities to absorb these increases.

Also unanticipated in last year's request was the need to significantly increase safety and security measures at RPL. We always prioritize safe and welcoming spaces for our customers, and we met this year's marked challenges with a host of proactive, community-engaged strategies at Central Library and our eight branch locations. These ongoing safety resources will cost RPL an additional \$340,000 in 2024, equivalent to a 1.3% mill rate increase – however, RPL has worked to adjust our budget to reduce our 2024 request. Only an additional 0.49% increase is requested, equivalent to \$130,000, above the 1.78% increase presented last year.

For RPL, a 1% mill rate increase equates to \$264,000. A 2.27% mill rate increase means an increase in revenue of \$600,000. RPL's requested 2.27% mill rate increase equates to a 0.2% increase in the City of Regina's mill rate.

This 2023 request report supplements our 2023 document. It includes an overview of how we have used our budget to date, a short update on our strategic priorities, and shares our plans for the future as we strive to positively impact the community.

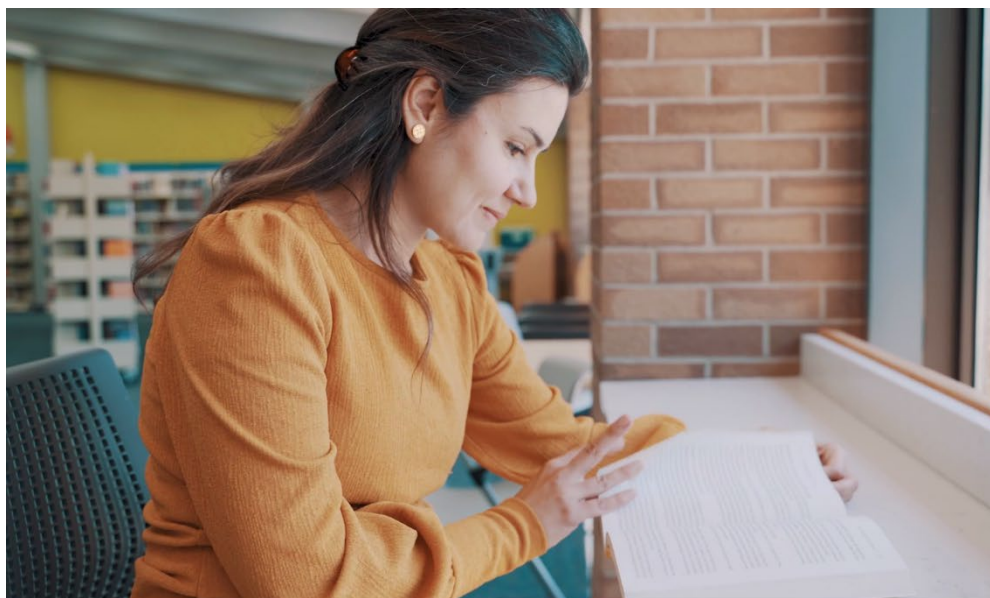
Also included is an update on our decision to move Central Library to a temporary location in 2024, and steps we are taking to ensure safe and welcoming spaces for the people of

¹ Calculated based on the City's average residential assessed value of \$315,000.

Regina. We know that Reginans continue to use their Central Library: visit numbers remained consistent through 2023, and were even higher than the same 2022 period. Central remains our busiest location by number of visitors, showcasing how important our in-person services are to a wide range of customers. We look forward to maintaining consistent services by relocating next year.

RPL is committed to bolstering the vitality of Regina, and it is with the City's continued support that the library can remain relevant. We offer customers free access to new technology, support career growth, and provide dedicated spaces for the public to gather. We offer valuable cultural events, popular fiction, and cutting-edge entertainment. Use of our services increased since last year, which had already skyrocketed from pre-COVID numbers. There is something at the library for everyone, and we are grateful for the City's support so that we may provide all we do for our community.

We invite you to review this document to learn more about our successful year to date, our plans for the rest of the year, and our primary focuses for 2024.



"Regina Public Library became my second home, and it made my early days here in Canada so much easier. I was successful to get a residency in family medicine program here in Regina. I'm happy that now I will be able to contribute to this community."

-Kholoud



An overview of 2023, year-to-date

Library Service	January 1, 2023 to August 31, 2023	January 1, 2022 to August 31, 2022	% Difference
Hours of service to public	17,619	17,177	3%
Visits to our physical locations	957,414	769,321	24%
Visits to our website (sessions)	811,041	743,589	9%
Active library cards (meaning used within the last 3 years)	108,875	101,013	8%
New library cards issued	10,010	8,675	15%
Physical items circulated	1,136,661	1,045,960	9%
Digital items checked out or streamed	366,203	319,948	14%
eAudiobooks checked out or streamed (on Hoopla and Overdrive)	123,546	101,974	21%
eBooks checked out or streamed (on Hoopla and Overdrive)	211,909	191,831	10%
TV or movies streamed (on Hoopla and Kanopy)	25,469	22,568	13%
Music streamed	5,279	3,575	48%
Public computer sessions initiated	121,145	99,462	22%
3D print jobs requested	659	725	-9%
Hotline questions answered	21,177	31,405	-33%
Number of programs delivered	3,449	2,648	30%
Number of film screenings offered	328	187	75%
Digital Media Studio bookings (at Central Library)	977	739	32%
Percentage of available hours WhisperRoom was in use (at Central Library)	87%	77%	13%
Percentage of available hours WhisperRoom was in use (at Sherwood Village)	21%	not applicable	
Percentage of Regina residents who are active RPL borrowers	47%	44%	3%

Strategic Plan:

2023 highlights

The Regina Public Library Strategic Plan 2022-2025 provides direction for the organization's priorities, and is shaped directly from our aspiration, purpose, strategic imperative, and organizational values. It defines the RPL experience – our promise of what customers and the community can expect from their library.

The information below provides a sampling of work under *The Regina Public Library Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. These significant initiatives are in addition to the core, everyday business of RPL.

Our Customers

- We focused on opportunities to create efficient experiences for our customers through the leveraging of technology. For example:
 - We are now a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system, meaning that most materials are RFID tagged so that they could be read by RFID readers, improving efficiency and ease-of-use experiences.
 - We completed a website accessibility audit and made significant website (www.reginalibrary.ca) updates to be compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 standards. Our goal is to make our website accessible to as many users as possible, including those with disabilities.
 - We implemented online customer registration and renewals, addressing a key barrier to growing RPL's customer base. Our customers who are interested in digital products, services, and programs no longer need to bring identification and proof of residency to a RPL location for verification.
 - We began a process to enhance public printing and computer reservation services.
 - We expanded popular existing services to more RPL locations, such as the Digital Media Studio, multiplayer gaming stations, digital magazine and newspaper kiosks, and digitization stations.
- We developed and delivered *Discover RPL*, an e-newsletter highlighting library programs, events, and key services.
- We began the process of reimagining our Prairie History Room (PHR) service model. PHR serves a small group of passionate users who are seeking local history and genealogical resources. In 2023, we analyzed the PHR collection, the use of the space, and engaged extensively in consultations with stakeholder groups. This work will inform a new PHR service model to better serve our customers.

Our Employees

- The Discover, Learn, Connect employee survey, first run in April 2022, was completed again in May 2023. The survey was an opportunity for all employees to share their thoughts about being part of the team at RPL. The mean scores stayed the same or increased in all 21 areas addressed, including positive feelings about working at RPL on a typical day reported by 76% of staff, up from 70% in 2022.
- We are exploring new, innovative ways for our employees to work and to collaborate, including:
 - The launch of IdeaWake, an online platform that all employees at RPL can use to submit and explore ideas for future service improvements at the library; and
 - the development of new tools that help employees to work and collaborate effectively, such as new digital workspaces and a new intranet.

Since our last mill rate request: What has changed?

Temporary Central Library

As a part of the Central Library Renewal project, the Board of Directors voted at its regular public meeting in May 2023 to proceed with a temporary relocation of Central Library services earlier than originally envisioned in the timeline for the renewal project. This decision was not made lightly.

An updated risk assessment of the most imminent risks to the Central Library building was conducted. Major building systems, such as the electrical system, the roof, and the boilers create risk and require mitigation. The failure of any of these systems creates risk that is compounded by the major service interruption that would result from long procurement and replacement processes. These risks, and their costs, are too high to bear.

RPL knows, through the analysis of the Needs Assessment and the Project Plan for Central Library, the need for a temporary location during the construction of a new Central Library building. The Board, therefore, made the decision to relocate Central Library to a temporary location sooner than expected because the cost of addressing the risk and remaining in the current building is comparable to the cost of relocating early. The latter option is a more effective use of taxpayer dollars and ensures continuous service to our customers.

The temporary location will be the service delivery point leading up to, and throughout, the design and construction of the new Central Library.

In summer 2023, RPL worked with Colliers to issue a Request for Proposal for architectural services and a Request for Information on existing or proposed buildings in downtown Regina for a temporary Central Library. As a result of the RFP process for architectural services, *1080 Architecture Planning + Interiors* will be working with RPL on the temporary location.

In 2024, RPL will be working with its architect to design the temporary space so that it is suitable for our needs. Contractor and landlord work will be done in the first and second quarters of the year, with operational readiness and a move-in date slated for Fall 2024.

Safe, Secure, and Welcoming Spaces

We have faced increasing safety and security challenges and concerns downtown at our Central Library, as well as at our inner-city branches. The issues influencing our operations include opioid and other substance use, people experiencing houselessness, declining mental health and wellness, an observed number of people carrying weapons, and food insecurity.

While these challenges are not unique to Central Library and are also affecting other businesses and organizations downtown, one of RPL's core values is inclusion. We embrace diversity and champion access for all. Where other businesses and organizations may choose to ban customers, we see public libraries as welcoming and inclusive spaces for everyone. Even RPL customers who are temporarily banned from our buildings may still access our programs and services through digital means. However, the library shares the common obligation to ensure safety for all customers, staff, and the community.

Addressing these challenges has required a multi-faceted approach. While traditional security services are needed, RPL's customers have a diversity of needs that require additional supports. Earlier in the year, RPL and RDBID were in discussion about the possibility of including Community Support workers as a customer support at Central Library, but a new service model and other pressures in the program meant that this option was not feasible.

The 2024 budget for safety and security presented last year has increased by over \$340,000, which would be the equivalent of a 1.3% mill rate increase. We have worked to mitigate this increase: many of the actions we have taken to address safety and security concerns, listed below, have been accomplished through refocusing our budget. However, there remains a need for a mill rate increase slightly beyond what was requested last year.

Since fully reopening after the pandemic, we have been gradually and steadily building on the actions needed to enhance the safety and security of RPL while keeping RPL buildings

welcoming, especially at Central Library. A serious incident at Central Library in 2023 has further shown the necessity to enhance safety and security. The following are actions we have taken and will continue to take in 2024 as part of our multi-faceted approach:

- Engaging with external stakeholders (e.g. the City of Regina, the Rainbow Youth Centre, the Nēwo-Yōtina Friendship Centre, and more) downtown to help revitalize and activate downtown spaces.
- Engaging with inclusive and customer-centric third-party organizations who have expertise in safety, security, and crisis intervention to assist in service areas that fall outside the mandate and scope of library services.
- Addressing challenging customer behaviour proactively with empathy- and community-engaged strategies.
- Working with Crisis Intervention Workers from Family Service Regina to address challenging behaviours before they escalate, using a trauma-informed approach, including connecting customers to other community services.
- Employing a security services firm that embodies a customer service approach, which means building rapport and having positive interactions with customers.
- Training staff in the administration of nasal Narcan.
- Making adaptations to physical spaces, both indoors and outdoors, to support safety (e.g. improved sightlines and visitor traffic flow).
- Employing a new Safe and Welcoming Specialist, who coordinates third party services, provides training for staff, directs customer support, and develops and reviews customer safety procedures.
- Improving our security incident tracking so that we have data to support changes to our safety, security, and welcoming procedures.

We will continue to adapt to challenges in 2024 and beyond. We will continue to foster relationships, and build new ones, with third party organizations and customers.

Accessibility

In 2023, RPL continued the work begun in previous years of developing a customer-responsive accessibility strategy and framework. RPL will have completed an accessibility strategy report by the end of 2023, based on consultations with customers and an internal audit of our Outreach unit, and will implement this strategy in 2024.

The 2024 Mill Rate Request

2024 mill rate request

RPL is requesting a 2.27% mill rate increase for 2024. This amount is equivalent to a 0.2% increase in the City's mill rate. RPL's request amounts to an increase of \$4.66 per year, or \$0.38 per month, to the average homeowner with a house valued at \$315,000.

Revenue

93% of RPL's revenue, not including transfers out of reserves, 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 such things as lost materials or photocopying.

Transfers from RPL's reserves are also included in revenue, although they are technically not revenue. Instead, these funds are being allocated from reserves to fund specific projects or services. In 2024, RPL is transferring \$4.1 million out of its Central Library Development Reserve to fund the move to a new Central Library temporary location. A further \$741,000 is being transferred from the Operating Reserve to further fund RPL's Automated Materials Handling project.

Expenses

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

RPL's Operating Expenses are budgeted to increase by \$1.3 million over 2023. There are three main reasons for this increase:

1. Salary and Benefits –staff will receive a 2.75% economic increase on January 1, 2024. Salaries and benefits make up 64% of RPL's operating expenses.
2. Safety and Security costs, mostly at Central Library – outlined previously.
3. Central Library temporary relocation – the operating portion of these costs include project management and moving costs (although this is offset by the drawdown from the Central Library Development Reserve).

The increase to RPL's capital budget is driven by the Central Library temporary relocation. Tenant improvements to a leased space in addition to the furniture and shelving required for the new space make up the biggest changes to the capital budget when compared to 2023. As noted, these capital purchases are being funded by the Central Library Development Reserve.

The contributions to reserves are similar to 2023, with one exception of an increase to funding of the Central Library Development Reserve. RPL's reserves policy notes that all interest income flows through to this reserve. Interest revenue has been budgeted higher than in 2023 due to higher interest rates.

In Closing

Regina Public Library aspires to contribute to the social vitality and economic prosperity of the people of Regina.

We are pleased with the results we've had this year to date as use of our services, collections, spaces, and technologies grows.

We continue to implement actions from our Strategic Plan to serve our community and our customers, and we look forward to executing important key actions in 2024, including the temporary relocation of Central Library.



**The Regina Public Library
City Mill Rate Request**

Account Description	2024	2024	Variance
	COR2024	OBUD	
Revenue			
Tax Levy + Grants-in-lieu	\$ 27,105,372	\$ 26,938,237	\$ 167,135
Provincial Services Agreement	630,973	612,593	18,380
Grants Other	265,450	235,000	30,450
Other Revenue	1,248,312	866,312	382,000
Transfers from Reserves	4,992,104	834,795	4,157,309
Total Revenue	\$ 34,242,211	\$ 29,486,937	\$ 4,755,274
Expenses			
Operating Expenses			
Library Services	\$ 11,640,271	\$ 11,335,496	\$ 304,776
Customer Experience	7,988,075	7,578,485	409,590
Service Innovation	3,868,341	3,831,971	36,369
Finance & Strategy	2,210,524	2,096,984	113,540
Governance	96,000	96,000	-
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 25,803,211	\$ 24,938,937	\$ 864,274
Capital			
Library Materials	\$ 1,477,000	\$ 1,558,000	(81,000)
Shelving, Furniture, and Equipment	906,000	270,000	636,000
Leasehold Improvements	2,949,000		2,949,000
Information Technology	1,093,000	1,093,000	-
Fleet	45,000	45,000	-
Branch Library Development	-	-	-
Total Capital	\$ 6,470,000	\$ 2,966,000	\$ 3,504,000
Contributions to Reserves			
Contributions to Reserves	\$ 1,969,000	\$ 1,582,000	\$ 387,000
Total Expenses	\$ 34,242,211	\$ 29,486,937	\$ 4,755,274
Total Revenue	\$ 34,242,211		
Total Expenses	34,242,211		
Net Budget Required (\$0 indicates balanced)	\$ 0		
Mill Rate - This is the amount of revenue generated by 1% increase in mill rate.	\$ 264,000		
Mill Rate Request	2.27%		



**The Regina Public Library
City Mill Rate Request**

	2024	2024	
Account Description	COR2024	OBUD	Variance

Sch. 1 - Reserve Breakdown

Transfers from Reserves

Transfer FROM Fleet Reserve	45,000	45,000	-
Transfer From Branch Library Development Reserve			-
Transfer From Building Maintenance Reserve			-
Transfer From māmawēyatitān centre Renewal Reserve			-
Transfer From Operating Reserve	741,000	741,000	-
Transfer From Shelving, Furniture, and Equipment Reserve			-
Transfer From Information Technology Reserve	-	-	-
Transfer From Central Library Development Reserve	4,147,000		4,147,000
Planned Funding from Dunlop Reserve	59,104	48,795	10,309
Total Transfers from Reserves	\$ 4,992,104	\$ 834,795	\$ 4,167,309

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 māmawēyatitān 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	789,000	402,000	387,000
Total Contributions to Reserves	\$ 1,969,000	\$ 1,582,000	\$ 387,000

Sch. 2 - Operating Expenses by Object

Wages, Benefits and Honoraria	16,448,199	16,417,668	30,531
Administration Costs	2,000,513	1,631,429	369,084
Client Services	3,561,656	3,365,922	195,734
Building Costs	3,813,243	3,523,918	289,325
Total Operating Expenses by Object	\$ 25,823,611	\$ 24,938,937	\$ 884,674