



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: February 17, 2016
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TO: Library Board
FROM: Director, Corporate Services & Facilities
SUBJECT: Transfer from Reserves for Collections

SUMMARY

This report discusses a transfer from reserves and increasing spending on Collections.

PURPOSE

This report is for recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommend to the Board that \$300,000 be transferred from Reserves for the purchase of Collections.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Committee requested some background related to transfers from reserves for collections. Eric Smith clarified that the Library Board has approved significant transfers from reserves to support collections in the past. He also noted that the Library's request for base budget increases to the collections budget has been turned down for two years; although the City has provided one-time collections budget boosts the past two fiscal years. Committee members noted their regret that the Library needed to use the gift and grants reserve fund to maintain collections which are a core service. The Committee passed the motion unanimously.

POLICY

The Library Board's Strategic Plan notes the importance of Collections and Resources as a core foundational element of public library service.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Library's Collections are the foundation of its service to the community, ensuring that every resident regardless of their socio-economic circumstances has access to the information and resources they need to enrich their lives. While there has been some discussion in the media and other platforms that digital availability reduces the need for library collections, in fact, the opposite is true: Digital access only means convenient access and only for those who have digital tools. Digital books and reading still require funding to access. Further, increases in the cost of living in Vancouver and costs across all aspects of life -- childcare, housing, food, transportation -- place significant financial pressure on families and individuals living in Vancouver, making free access to access to recreational and information resources even more critical.

BACKGROUND

As part of the 2016 operating budget submission, a business case for an additional \$465,000 for Collections was submitted. This ongoing funding was not provided; however a one time, \$200,000, will be provided in 2016. The library also received a one-time increase in 2015 of \$350,000 funded from the library's 2014 surplus.

DISCUSSION

While the planned one-time contribution of \$200,000 is helpful, it still does not allow the library to maintain adequate collections purchases. An additional \$300,000 transferred from Library reserves will help bolster collections in Branches and Central. The original business case, for increased on going collections funding, recommended increases in areas with high demand in both print and digital formats: multilingual collections, children's collections, and popular adult recreational reading. Increasing funding in these areas will help to encourage recreational reading in Vancouver.

Staff plan to distribute the \$300,000 funding from reserves to physical branch collections to refresh subjects such as health that need current, accurate material, as well as popular adult non-fiction (such as biography, narrative history, travel, cookery). Adult fiction, teen and children's collections have received supplementary funds in past years as well as an annual

increase in the base materials budget. Staff plan to distribute the \$200,000 to reduce holds lists for popular print and digital material.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2016 collections budget will be increased by \$300,000 as will the transfer from reserves.

FINAL REMARKS

Management is appreciative of the City staff's recognition of the importance of library collections. An additional one-time lift to the collections budget will offer an opportunity to make up for a number of years of static investment that could not address inflation and diversifying formats. The collection is the Library's foundational service, and this transfer allows the library an opportunity to offer greater variety and opportunities for our community of readers.