



November 19, 2012

Mayor J. Fontana

Councillor W.J. Armstrong

Councillor J.L. Baechler

Councillor D. Brown

Councillor M. Brown

Councillor J.P. Bryant

Councillor N. Branscombe

Councillor D.J. Henderson

Councillor P. Hubert

Councillor S. Orser

Councillor W.J. Polhill

Councillor J.L. Swan

Councillor H.L. Usher

Councillor P Van Meerbergen

Councillor S. White

### **Re: London Public Library 2013 Operating Budget – Impact of 0% Budget**

In October, London Public Library celebrated *Ontario Public Library Week and Canadian Library Month*. This is a time during which we celebrate:

- How many Londoners use their library - **40.6 annual uses per capita** (highest of all libraries reporting through OMBI and exceeding the median of 28.1)
- How much Londoners use their library services – **14, 940,689 uses in 2011** and use has continued to be extremely high in 2012;
- How much Londoners value their library – overall **public satisfaction was at 97.9%** in a recent survey;
- LPL's high level of efficiency – The cost of less than **\$1.27 per use** is one of the lowest in the country (lowest cost of all libraries reporting through OMBI and less than the median of \$1.69)
- LPL's excellent return on investment for Londoners – **96.3%** of people surveyed recently felt that the Library gives good value for taxpayer dollars spent.

The irony is that as we celebrate an essential community asset that is highly valued and highly used, operated with excellence and fiscally accountable, we are also facing cuts to London Public Library services. The Library has been managing continued high use and increasing costs in a time of fiscal restraint; it has been fiscally responsible by:

- Implementing a continuous process of cost avoidance, cost containment, cost cutting;
- Generating revenue (where allowable under the *Ontario Public Libraries Act*);
- Optimizing resource allocation; and
- Working within budget targets and constraints while continuing to provide high-quality services to Londoners.

Our letter of June 1, 2012, advised that a 0% target for London Public Library's 2013 City of London operating budget appropriation would have a direct impact on service to the community – it would result in cuts to public library services.

In the spirit of cooperation and respect to the City of London Operating Budget process, the LPL 2013 *Operating Budget* appropriation request has been submitted at the 0% target given by City Council. At the same time, the Library Board is not recommending any of the actions that are required in order to achieve the financial target. At its meeting of August 9, 2012, the Library Board passed the following motion:

*That Administration be directed to submit the 2013 LPL Operating Budget request to the City incorporating the following three service reductions: Elimination of Sunday Service (\$40,000); Reduction of the Collections Budget (\$100,000) and Reduction of Library Hours of Service (\$210,000) and Personnel-related actions (\$60,000), along with the accompanying service change business cases; and*

*That a communication from the Board Chair be sent to the Mayor and City Council stating that while the 2013 budget includes the three service reductions in order to meet a 0% target, the Library Board is not recommending these actions and is requesting that City Council consider sufficient funding for the Library in order that these actions not be required in the following priority order: Reduction of Library Hours of Service (\$210,000), Reduction of the Collections Budget (\$100,000), and the Elimination of Sunday Service (\$40,000).*

Since August, when the Library Board affirmed and publicly communicated what would be required to meet a 0% target, many, many Londoners have expressed concerns about the negative impact of cutting library services. They have come forward to tell their stories – to talk about what the library means to them and how essential library services are to their lives. **What is clear is that the community does not want cuts to library services, services that they value and use.**

We respectfully ask that the Mayor and City Council consider the needs and expectations of Londoners when determining the *London Public Library 2013 Operating Budget* appropriation. We ask you to consider the significant positive impact on our community of maintaining heavily utilized and highly valued library services. Maintaining these services would come at a cost of \$350,000 and would allow LPL to continue to provide essential library services to all Londoners and to be a provincial leader in the provision of public library service.

Sincerely,



Josh Morgan  
Chair, London Public Library Board



Susanna Hubbard Krimmer  
CEO & Chief Librarian

cc: Art Zuidema, City Manager  
Martin Hayward, Managing Director, Corporate Services and City Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer