



Winnipeg
Public Library
Board

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**A loaf of bread for \$1.32
A litre of gasoline for \$0.57
A Patricia Cornwell paperback for \$5.00**

***Wouldn't it be great if we could
buy these goods today at 1996 prices?***

Unfortunately, we can't. Yet the materials budget for Winnipeg Public Libraries has been flatlined for more than a decade – with the exception of *one-time* \$100,000 grants over each of the past two years.

So how does Winnipeg Public Library continue to stock its shelves with materials using 1996 budget dollars? The reality is, we continue to slip further behind each year with the amount of materials our libraries are able to purchase. We need *today's dollars* to address the current and future needs of the thousands of Winnipeg children, teens, adults and seniors who regularly use our library services.

How much we need

The gap has grown wider over time. In 2001 Winnipeg Public Library Board commissioned a report to find out just how great that gap is. The report compared and analyzed materials budgets of large urban public libraries in Canada. Based on the findings, the Board asked the Standing Committee on Protection and Community Services in 2002 to increase the Library's materials budget by 75 cents per capita, or \$465,750 per year for the next three years. That increase was never approved.

We were encouraged by the two *one-time* \$100,000 increases, however **we need an increase to our base materials budget. And so the Winnipeg Public Library Board is requesting a \$400,000 increase to our materials budget. This amount will allow us to regain some of the ground lost over the past decade.**

Why we need an increase to our base materials funding

- More than 424,000 or 68% of Winnipeg's citizens hold library cards.
- Winnipeg spends \$3.90 per capita on library materials when compared with the national average of \$5.04 per capita.

- When compared with other large Canadian cities, Winnipeg in 2004 ranked 30th in its expenditure per capita on materials.
- The findings of the 2001 report commissioned by the WPLB indicated that the Winnipeg Public Library was falling behind most of the large library systems across the country.

Why we need more funding

- A flatlined materials budget over the past decade means that each year we have been adding fewer new books to the collection, which is both ageing and shrinking.
- Although new items are added, many are withdrawn due to being outdated, worn or damaged. We added approximately 175,000 items last year – and withdrew 139,000 items.
- Buying power for new children's books has been reduced by 35% over the past decade which means fewer books for our people to read.
- The current average price of a paperback book will be \$11 by July 2006 – compared with \$5 ten years ago.
- A decade ago the average cost of an adult book was \$17 – compared with \$25 today. That's a significant reduction in buying power.
- Fewer books mean longer waiting times for books and materials loaned from the Winnipeg Public Library.

What library users want

- The acclaimed Millennium Library is a world-class award winning community facility offering enhanced services and programs. It is a key component of downtown Winnipeg's revitalization, reflecting a future-thinking city. Average daily attendance has increased by 74%, computer bookings are up about 51%, and patron registrations have increased by 110%.
- Library users increasingly need and ask for a more diverse range of materials. Preliminary results of Library Advisory Committee surveys completed in late 2005 indicate users' concerns about library collections. The recurring message is that they want more books, and more materials in other formats. Over 50% of the respondents visit libraries once a week.
- Winnipeg's public library system is faced with changing needs and increasing demands of an increasingly diverse population that includes aging baby boomers, immigrants, people with disabilities and the largest Aboriginal population of any Canadian city.

The impact that libraries have on our community

- Public libraries bolster the economic prosperity of their communities. They contribute to the economic well-being of local businesses; they improve the market worth of the communities.
- The library has an important role in literacy development not only for children but also for adults.

- Literacy and numeracy are the building blocks for an informed, literate citizenry.
- Libraries are fundamental to building and maintaining the community capacity that enables economic development.
- Crime levels have been linked to literacy levels. For example, members of the Winnipeg legal community estimate an illiteracy rate of 80% among inmates at Headingley Correctional Centre.
- Libraries and library services are among features that attract new citizens to Winnipeg.
- The public library has a key role in ensuring access to the electronic world of information, by providing both computer technology and electronic resources.
- The public library system is a vital component of the City's infrastructure for the future, "fostering and supporting a learning culture in a knowledge-based economy" as Professor Wendy Newman stated in an excellent report on public libraries.

Library staff do an outstanding job

The Library Board wishes to acknowledge that staff members are doing an outstanding job of meeting library users' needs within the current budget, providing an excellent return on investment for Winnipeggers.

The Library Board acknowledges the challenges faced by City Council

The Winnipeg Public Library Board thanks all Councillors, who in their deliberations face many competing demands for funding and have difficult choices to make.

Our Board – which comprises volunteer citizens committed to ensuring the citizens of Winnipeg receive the library services they need and want – respectfully seeks City Council's support in **bringing our baseline libraries materials budget to an appropriate level to meet today's needs.**

A vibrant, modern library system adds to the greatness of the city and leaves a footprint for the future.

Dianne Zuk, Chair