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December 18, 2014

Dear Friend of the Library,

Thank you for writing to the Toronto Public Library Board regarding the 2015 operating budget. The Toronto Public Library Board is composed of four City Councillors and eight volunteer citizens committed to improve and protect the largest public library system in the world. Feedback from library users like you is appreciated, and is a critical part of any well run public institution.

As a citizen interested in the Library it is important that you have accurate information about the Library Board's proposed 2015 operating budget:

- The Library Board receives most of its funding from the city. This year, the City Manager instructed all city agencies, boards and commissions, including the Library Board, to plan to achieve a budget target of an overall zero percent budget increase. After lengthy and careful deliberation, the Library Board recommended a proposed budget with an overall two percent increase.
- You may have read information elsewhere that suggests that the City Librarian believes library service is being reduced. In fact, the Acting City Librarian Anne Bailey has this to say about the Board approved 2015 operating budget submission: "[It] would maintain existing services and service levels ... and make progress on a number of important strategic priorities, including opening the new Scarborough Civic Centre library".

It is also important that you know the excellent record of the current Library Board in improving services. For example:

- The Library now has more open hours than ever before. There are 1,794 more annual library branch open hours today than four years ago. The current Library Board has debated and decisively rejected any reduction to branch open hours on numerous occasions over the last four years.
- The Library has a larger collections budget than ever before. The current Board inherited a collections budget of \$17.12 million. As of 2014, the collections budget is \$17.987 million and in the 2015 operating budget a further increase of \$445,000 is proposed.

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Library Board

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Anne Bailey

- The current Board will have opened two new library branches (Fort York and Scarborough Civic Centre) by spring 2015. The 2015 operating budget proposed by the Board includes a funding request for their operation. These are the first additional new library branches to open in Toronto in ten years.

None of these increases to service are threatened or reduced in any way with the budget approved by the Board.

Toronto's public library system is perhaps the most beloved public institution in the city. We all have a stake in its future and we all should have an opportunity to discuss and even debate what that future should be. When misleading information forms the foundation of any public debate or discussion, the quality and integrity of that discussion can be undermined.

At its December 15, 2014 meeting, the Library Board unanimously voted to host a series of public consultation meetings in the four quadrants of the City in February 2015. Meeting dates, times and locations are now being finalized. Please watch www.torontopubliclibrary.ca for more information. The purpose of these meetings will be to hear from library customers directly about their ideas. We hope that you will attend and contribute.

Sincerely,



Michael Foderick
Chair, Toronto Public Library Board

c: Mayor John Tory
Councillor Paul Ainslie
Councillor Ana Bailão
Councillor Sarah Doucette
Councillor Mary Fragedakis