



**Toronto Public Library Workers' Union  
Local 4948 (CUPE)**

20 Eglinton Avenue West, Suite 1109, Box 2053

Toronto, Ontario M4R 1K8

Tel: 416-440-7981 FAX: 416-440-7984

Email: [local4948@rocketmail.com](mailto:local4948@rocketmail.com)

Web: <http://libraryworkersunion.blogspot.com>

**Local 4948**

Affiliated with CUPE and the  
Toronto & York Region Labour  
Council

MAUREEN O'REILLY  
*President*

BRENDAN HALEY  
*Vice-President*

VIVECA GRETTON  
*Recording Secretary*

CARMELA DEGIORGIO  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

NAHID RAHNAVARD  
*North Region*

KAREN SMITH  
*South Region*

SAMEE LEE GROSSMAN  
*East Region*

MARY BISSELL  
*West Region*

PHILIP SINGER  
*North York Central Library*

BRIAN RAYMER  
*Toronto Reference Library*

JAMES JOHNSON  
*Facilities*

STEVEN BURDICK  
*Support Services*

SARAH DECLERCK  
*CUPE National*

September 12, 2011

Dear Toronto Public Library Board:

**RE: VALUATION OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC  
LIBRARY**

In the current debate about the fate of the Toronto Public Library system, much has been written and said about the social, economic and cultural value of libraries but there has been no effort, past or present, to quantify the value of TPL to the City of Toronto and its residents.

Not so in Vancouver, which has recently undertaken a study by Simon Fraser University: Bringing Perspective to the Value of the Vancouver Public Library (March 2011). The study included with this letter and you will see just from the Executive Summary that it is a rigorous analysis of the many aspects of the potential value of having a publicly funded library system. Most telling of all the analyses, however, was the referendum style contingent valuation survey in which a random sample of Vancouver residents, including both library users and non-users, were asked whether they supported government spending a specified amount of tax dollars on their behalf to fund VPL operations.

The survey found that the average respondent was willing to pay more than \$200 in taxes for funding the VPL, whereas in fact, the actual cost to taxpayers is only \$80 per adult resident. And this valuation does not take into account the human capital development and social infrastructure benefits of the library system, which are harder to quantify but nonetheless real. As the reports concludes, "the community net benefits of the VPL significantly exceed the costs of supporting and operating VPL."

Although no such study has been done for Toronto, where the cost per resident for Toronto Public Library operations is \$68 per resident, we suggest that in terms of public asset management, it would be irresponsible in the extreme to cut



**Toronto Public Library Workers' Union  
Local 4948 (CUPE)**

20 Eglinton Avenue West, Suite 1109, Box 2053  
Toronto, Ontario M4R 1K8  
Tel: 416-440-7981 FAX: 416-440-7984  
Email: [local4948@rocketmail.com](mailto:local4948@rocketmail.com)  
Web: <http://libraryworkersunion.blogspot.com>

Toronto Public Library operations without having any idea of their net benefit to the community.

We suggest that the City of Toronto undertake a study similar to the one conducted in Vancouver. The study would be completed well ahead of the next budget cycle and would provide decision makers like yourself confidence in your judgement about the proper level of public taxpayer support for one of the world's great library systems, which, as we have all recently learned, is overwhelmingly supported by Toronto residents.

Sincerely,

Maureen O'Reilly  
President  
TPLWU Local 4948

Encl.

**Bringing Perspective  
to the Value  
of the  
Vancouver Public Library**

*prepared by:*

Marvin Shaffer & Associates Ltd.

*with the assistance of:*

Professor Kennedy Stewart  
Amanda Armstrong (MNP)  
Alanna Schroeder (MNP)

March, 2011

## Table of Contents

	<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Valuation Methodology</b>	<b>9</b>
	2.1 Existing Studies	9
	2.2 Multiple Account Approach	14
<b>3.0</b>	<b>User Net Benefits</b>	<b>16</b>
	3.1 Circulation	16
	3.2 Access to Reading Material and Information	17
	3.3 Advisory and Research Assistance	18
	3.4 General and Specific Interest Programs	19
	3.5 Physical Space and Infrastructure	20
	3.6 Estimated Value of Direct Use Benefits	21
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Community Net Benefits</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Other Net Benefits</b>	<b>28</b>
	<b>Appendix A - Resident Survey</b>	<b>29</b>

## Executive Summary

- In its main and 21 branch libraries, as well as its rapidly growing virtual library, Vancouver Public Library (VPL) offers a wide range of services and programs. In 2009, 275,000 Vancouver residents had VPL cards; there were some 5.9 million visits to VPL library facilities and 4.1 million visits to VPL's website and its virtual library.
- For the most part, VPL's services are offered at no charge. Approximately \$38 million of its \$43 million in operating cost in 2009, was funded by government. The purpose of this study is to assess the value of the services VPL offers in relation to these costs.
- A number of studies have been undertaken in the U.S. and elsewhere to assess the value of public libraries. This study builds on the previous work, but unlike many, does not attempt to estimate a total value or 'return' on investment. Rather, the purpose is to bring some perspective to the value in relation to the costs. The question addressed is not so much what is the total value, but rather whether this value significantly exceeds and therefore justifies the costs.
- There are two major components of the value of public libraries: the direct user benefit – the value of the loans and other services to the users themselves; and there is the indirect benefit that the community as a whole derives from the literacy, learning and other positive impacts that libraries generate.
- One approach to estimate the direct user benefit is to calculate the market value of the services that users would otherwise have purchased if those services were not available from the library. This is an approach that has been applied to U.S. and Australian libraries, where it was found the direct user benefit significantly exceeds library costs.
- The market value approach is very practical and logical. It directly indicates what users should be willing to pay – what value they would assign – to the provision of library services. However, it has its limitations. Most importantly, it does not address the value to users and the community as a whole of the services that would not otherwise be purchased – the reading, research, program participation and other activities that would not otherwise take place. It is the value of what would not otherwise take place that arguably provides the greatest rationale for public funding
- To estimate the indirect benefits or value of public libraries to the community as a whole – in economic terms, to estimate the maximum amount people would be willing to pay for these indirect benefits –

contingent valuation studies are required. In such studies surveys are undertaken to elicit what people say they would be willing to pay or allocate to libraries, because of the social benefits they have. Contingent valuation studies of public libraries that have been undertaken elsewhere indicate that the social benefits of libraries are significant, and like direct user benefits in themselves greater than library costs.

- There are concerns about the reliability of contingent valuation estimates of value, because what people respond in a survey may not in fact represent their true valuation of a good or service. However, experts who have examined this methodology have concluded that well designed and implemented contingent valuation surveys can provide useful 'starting point' estimates of value. While not an exact measure, they can provide perspective to the order of magnitude of value.
- In multiple account as opposed to traditional benefit cost analysis, the primary objective, as in this study, is to provide perspective to the relative values or trade-offs of different policies, projects, or in this case levels of funding. This study does not include a full multiple account analysis, but rather focuses on the two principal benefits of libraries – the direct user and the indirect community net benefits – in relation to VPL costs.
- The assessment of direct user net benefits incorporates a description of the nature and significance of the different types of services VPL provides and an estimate of their value to users both for those services that would otherwise be purchased (based on avoided market cost) and those that would not (assumed to average 50% of the market cost). The assessment of community net benefits incorporates a description of the types of social benefits VPL generates and a contingent valuation estimate of Vancouver resident's willingness to pay for them.
- VPL offers circulation services (loans of books and other materials), access to information, research assistance, programs, and reading, work, meeting and display space. These services and facilities benefit a wide range of users from children to seniors, non-profit organizations and business, students and schools. Without these services, users would either have to purchase them, acquire them elsewhere or do without.
- In Table S-1, the estimated value of VPL services to users is estimated, based on the estimated avoided market cost for those services that survey results suggest would otherwise be purchased, and a lower value for those that would be acquired elsewhere or foregone. The results suggest the direct user benefit in 2009 is almost \$55 million or more, in itself greater than VPL annual operating costs (\$43 million) as well as the proportion (\$38 million)

funded by government.

**Table S-1  
Estimated 2009 VPL Direct User Benefits**

Service	Amount of Use	% Purchased wo VPL	Market cost	Total direct use benefit <sup>1</sup>
Circulation-books and ebooks	6,428,000	.16	\$10.	37,282,000
Circulation- CDs, DVDs, and games	2,441,000	.24	\$4.	6,054,000
Access to information	2,811,000	.11	\$2. - ?	3,120,000 - ?
Research assistance	877,000	.11	\$10. - ?	4,867,000 - ?
Program participation	210,000	.15	\$20	2,415,000
Computer and wireless use	528,000	.25	\$3.	990,000
<b>Total</b>				<b>54,728,000 - ?</b>

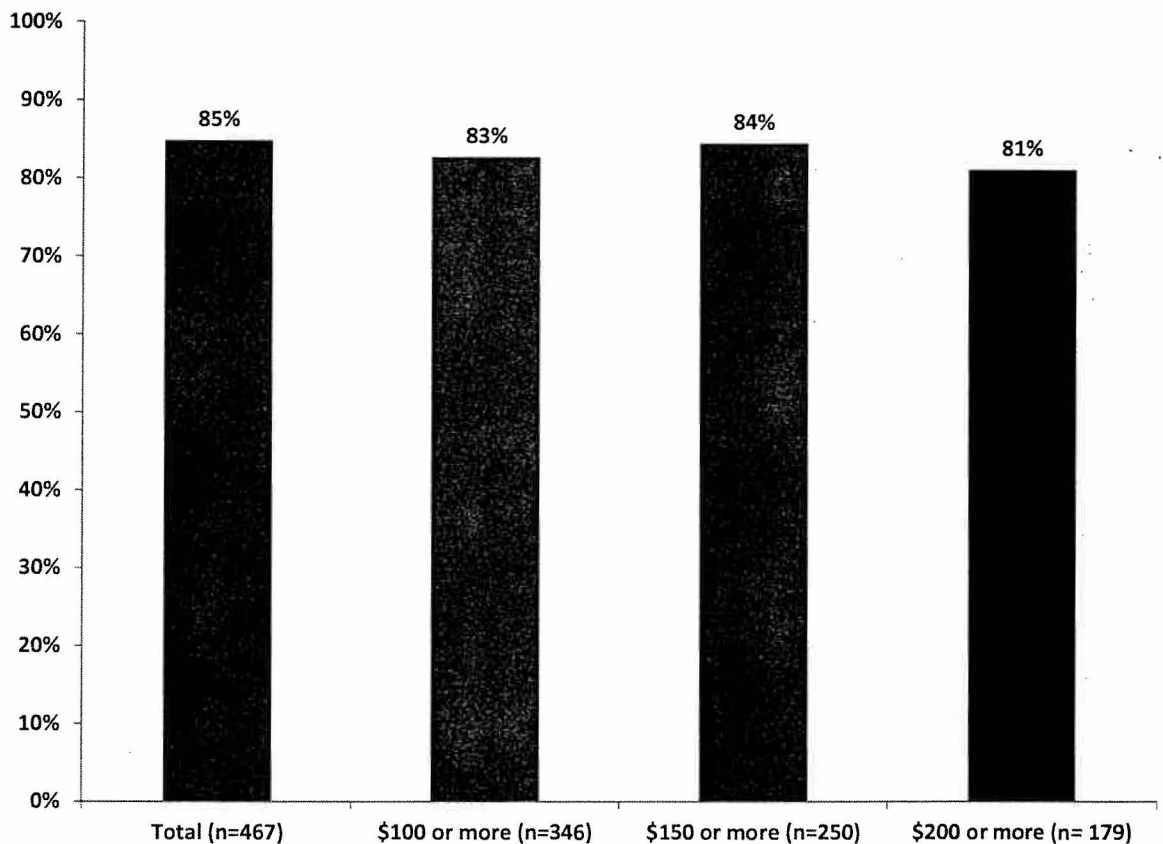
- With respect to the community net benefits, the existence of VPL contributes to the development of human capital and the social infrastructure of Vancouver. It results in more reading, access to information, research assistance, and program participation than would not otherwise take place. It provides welcoming and safe reading and workspace for all residents, including children and their families or caregivers, students, and more marginalized residents with few alternatives.
- The reading and program participation for children promotes early literacy and positive child development. For adults and seniors, access to VPL services and programs contributes to lifelong learning and skill development. For those with limited English language skills, VPL services enhance social integration and economic opportunities. Overall, VPL services help to ensure that everyone has access to reading, learning and leisure opportunities, regardless of their income or individual circumstances.
- The referendum style contingent valuation survey undertaken for this study asked a random sample of Vancouver residents, including both library users

<sup>1</sup> Includes estimated avoided cost of services that would otherwise be purchased and estimated value of services that would not otherwise be purchased, assuming those users' willingness to pay would average 50% of the market cost.

and non-users, whether they supported government spending a specified amount of tax dollars on their behalf to fund VPL operations. Respondents were randomly presented an amount between \$10 and \$300 per year, and in accordance with best practice, were reminded of their budget constraint to minimize upward or yes-saying bias in the willingness to pay response.

- In Figure S-1, it can be seen that there is an overwhelming support or willingness to pay for the funding of VPL. Even for the sub-sample of respondents asked whether they were willing to pay \$200 per year or more, over 80% said yes.

**Figure S-1**  
**Percentage of Respondents WTP Specified Amount**



- Because of the preponderance of yes responses, it was not possible to estimate an average willing to pay for VPL. However, what one can conclude is that whatever that value is, it is greater than \$200 per person, and that is two and one half times greater than the average \$80 per adult resident that people actually pay in taxes for VPL. In other words, the community net benefits, like but even more so than the direct user benefits, significantly exceed the costs of supporting and operating VPL.



## 1.0 Introduction

The Vancouver Public Library (VPL) originated in 1887. Over the years, VPL has continuously expanded and evolved to meet the large and diverse needs of the Vancouver's growing population. In 1903 the library was located in the newly constructed Carnegie building on Hastings and Main. The first branch library opened in 1911. In 1957 the main library moved to Burrard and Robson, and in 1995 it moved again, this time to Library Square on Georgia and Homer, to meet growing and increasingly sophisticated library requirements.

In addition to the main library at Library Square, VPL now has 21 branch libraries serving local areas throughout Vancouver. A major objective of VPL is to meet diverse community needs. It has collections in fourteen different languages; outreach services for home-bound and visually impaired residents; aboriginal student learning and engagement initiatives; children, teen and adult programs.

VPL also has a large and growing virtual library, offering electronic book loans and access to data bases and other information. VPL staff receive and respond to email as well as in-person requests. Visits to VPL's virtual library now exceed the number of visits to any single physical library location.

In 2009 some 275,000 Vancouver residents had VPL library cards. There were approximately 5.9 million visits to library facilities (all branches) and 4.1 million visits to VPL's website and virtual library. Approximately 9.9 million books or other items were borrowed, 900,000 reference questions answered by library staff and 200,000 attendees at VPL programs.

Almost all of VPL's services are made available at no charge to users. A principal objective of the library is to maximize access to and use of its collections and services by all segments of Vancouver society. There are some fees for specific research requests and meeting space requirements, as well as fines for overdue books, but for the most part VPL relies on government funding to pay its operating and facility costs. In 2009, VPL's expenditures totaled approximately \$43 million. Of that total just over \$38 million was funded by government grant, mostly from the City of Vancouver.

Like other services dependent on government funding, VPL has to compete for limited tax dollars and demonstrate the value of the services and facilities it provides. The purpose of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of the value of these services and facilities - to bring some perspective to the nature and magnitude of the benefits derived not only from users of VPL services and facilities, but also the community as a whole.

A number of studies of the value of public libraries have been undertaken in United States, the U.K, Australia and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Some of these studies focus on the benefits to users based on the market value of the books or other material that they loan and the services and programs they access. Others address the social value of public libraries, including their contribution to literacy, community culture and the arts, child development, life-long education, skills and productivity. Several of the studies estimate economic impacts of library and related spending – the jobs and income that spending supports. The methodology, findings and limitations of these studies are discussed in the next section of this report.

The approach taken in this study builds on this previous work. However, unlike most of the previous studies, the focus of this study is not to calculate the total value or, in the language of some studies, the total return on investment. The types of benefits generated by library services and facilities are too diverse and the limitations in estimating their monetary value too great to calculate an overall value and return. This study does make some monetary assessments of benefits; however, the goal is not to determine the precise total value, but rather to bring some perspective to the nature, magnitude and significance of the different types of benefits in relation to the costs.<sup>3</sup>

In economics, value is measured by the trade-off people are willing to make. The value of the positive consequences of any given service or activity is measured by the maximum amount people would in principle be willing to pay for them – in other words the maximum amount of resources they would be willing to allocate for them.

Resources need to be allocated to enable libraries to provide services and facilities. The question addressed in this study is: is there evidence and reason to believe that people are willing to allocate the amount of resources that VPL needs in order to maintain its operations. The question is not what is the total amount of benefits. Rather, it is whether the benefits significantly exceed and therefore justify the costs.

---

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Berk and Associates (2007), *Providing for Knowledge, Growth and Prosperity: A Benefit Study of the San Francisco Public Library*; British Library (2004), *Measuring Our Value*; Duncan, R. (2009), "Best Bang for the Buck: The Economic Benefits of Sunshine Coast Libraries: Queensland", *Aplis* 21 (14); Griffiths, J. et. al. (2004), *Taxpayer Return on Investment in Florida Public Libraries*; Holt, G. et. al. (1998), *Placing a Value on Public Library Services*, St Louis Public Library; Library Council of New South Wales (2008), *Enriching communities: The value of public libraries in New South Wales*.

<sup>3</sup> This study follows a multiple account as opposed to traditional approach to benefit-cost analysis, recognizing that not all values can reliably be measured in dollar terms, and more importantly, it isn't necessary to determine an overall 'bottom line'. See M. Shaffer (2010), *Multiple Account Benefit-Cost Analysis*, University of Toronto Press for a detailed discussion of the rationale and methods of a multiple account approach to benefit-cost analysis.

## 2.0 Valuation Methodology

### 2.1 Existing Studies

There are two basic components of the value of library services. The first is the value or benefits that users of the library derive from the services and facilities they themselves use. In library valuation studies these are commonly termed the direct benefits. The second is the value or benefits that residents derive not because of their own use, but rather because of their appreciation and support of the positive social and economic consequences the library has for the community as a whole. In library valuation studies these are termed the indirect benefits. In environmental valuation studies they are more commonly termed the *existence value*, in that they refer to the value people place on the positive consequences of the existence of whatever is being valued, as opposed to their own use if it.

For both the direct use and the indirect or existence value benefits, the valuation question is: how significant are these benefits – how much would users and residents, whether users or not, be willing to pay to maintain the library operations and facilities, and the services and positive consequences they have?

The analysis undertaken by G. Holt *et. al.* for the St Louis library, and subsequently a number of other U.S. libraries, illustrates different methods by which direct use benefits can be estimated.<sup>4</sup> The question they addressed is: what would users be willing to pay for the loans, research and other library services they used?

One approach in the Holt study was to estimate the market value of the services that people used and would otherwise have purchased if not for the library. This involved estimating, with library data and a user survey, the amount of use of the major types of services offered by the library; the proportion of those services that would otherwise have been purchased if the library's services were not available; and what those services would have cost (their market value). The market value of the services that would otherwise have been purchased indicates the costs that library users avoid because of their use of the library's services. That in turn is an indication of the value they would place on the library's provision of those services (the net benefit or *consumer surplus*<sup>5</sup> they derive from them).

In addition to the costs that library users themselves avoid, the Holt study estimated the costs that alternative service providers – in particular, caregivers and schools – as well as businesses avoid because of the services available from the library. The study estimated the additional expenditures that they would have to incur if the library's services were no longer available, in other words if they had to supply the

---

<sup>4</sup> Holt, G. *et. al.* (1998), *Placing a Value on Public Library Services*, St Louis Public Library.

<sup>5</sup> Consumer surplus refers to the difference between the maximum amount a person would in principle be willing to pay for a good or service less the amount they actually pay. It measures the net benefit the person derives over and above their actual cost.

services that are now available from the library. This indicates the value of the library's services to them, on the assumption they would in fact incur the expense to make up for any loss of service from the library.

This market value approach is a very practical, logical method for estimating the value of library services to users and alternative service providers or business. The data and underlying assumptions are transparent and directly linked to the library's operating statistics. This approach provides an estimate of not only the total value but also the relative importance or contribution of the different types of services the library offers. The St. Louis study, for example, found that the direct use benefits estimated in this way totaled more than 3 times the government funding that the library received. In addition there were significant benefits to schools and business. The single most important source of benefit was library reference research and advisory services, even though book loans accounted for a much greater percentage of the total library use.

Other studies have followed this approach with similar results. For example, an Australian study of Queensland Sunshine Coast libraries also found the user benefits exceeded funding by a ratio of over 3 to 1, though in this case the majority of the benefits derived from book and other loans, not research and advisory services.<sup>6</sup>

Despite its advantages, there are a number of limitations to this approach. Firstly, the value estimates critically depend on the estimated proportions of the different services that would otherwise be purchased. While survey data can be used to estimate those proportions, there is a risk they will be overstated, particularly for lower income library users whose ability to buy books and purchase other services are limited. Holt *et. al.* adjusted their initial results because of concerns about overestimating what would be otherwise purchased, but further adjustments may have been warranted.

This risk of overestimating the direct use benefits applies even more strongly to the estimated school and business benefits. The assumption underlying these estimates is that schools and businesses would in fact fully replace the services that their students or employees use if those services were no longer supplied by the public library. That is not likely to be the case. Some services may not be possible or practical to replace. Others may be beyond the school and business budgetary constraints. Access to books, other loans, research and other services may simply be lost, not replaced.

While potentially overstating what would otherwise be purchased or replaced, the market value approach understates, indeed ignores the value of the services that would not otherwise be purchased or replaced. Those services have some value to users, albeit less than the market price. In the graph below, the market value

---

<sup>6</sup> Duncan, R. (2009), "Best Bang for the Buck: The Economic Benefits of Sunshine Coast Libraries: Queensland", *Aplis* 21 (14), p.146.

approach captures the avoided cost of what would be purchased at the market price ( $p^1$ ), but not the willingness to pay for that portion of the use which would not be purchased at the market price (the area under the demand curve between  $q^1$  and  $q^0$ ).

More importantly, the market value approach, admittedly by design, does not capture the indirect existence value benefits the library provides even though those benefits in some respects provide the greatest rationale for public funding. To the extent a library's services simply enables users to do what they would otherwise do, but at no direct cost to themselves, there would be, in economic terms, primarily a distributional as opposed to real overall effect. Taxpayers would bear the costs that users would otherwise incur. The only source of net benefit would be because of any greater efficiency with which the library can provide those services as opposed to users acquiring them themselves.

However, to the extent that a library's services enables more reading, research, access to information or program participation to take place, because those services

wouldn't otherwise be purchased or available, there can be significant real change and benefit. There would be more than just a distributional effect. More services and programs for children can contribute to healthy child development and greater educational success. More access to books, other materials, and advisory research services for teens and adults can contribute to literacy, life long learning, and a better-informed population. Training programs and research services can assist in job placement and productivity. The reading and work space itself, free and accessible to all segments of society, provides access to books and other reading materials as well as a welcoming safe environment that some would not otherwise have.

Most residents value those positive impacts resulting from the existence of the library and the services it provides. However, that existence value is not captured or addressed in the market value estimates.

To capture existence value, contingent valuation surveys are required.<sup>7</sup> In contingent valuation, survey respondents are directly asked the value they place on the provision of library services. Holt *et. al.*, for example, developed contingent valuation estimates of value in two different ways. They asked how much of a reduction in tax people would need to receive to be willing to accept the loss of library services. They were also asked how much tax people would be willing to pay to maintain library services. In theory the values elicited in this way should capture both the indirect existence as well as use value, though the willingness to pay results in Holt *et. al.* do not appear to do that, as they are significantly less than the avoided market cost values.

More recent studies have used contingent valuation to capture the full value of library services. The British Library commissioned a contingent valuation study to estimate the indirect as well as direct benefits of its library services.<sup>8</sup> It found that the indirect existence values were much greater the estimated direct use value. The combined indirect existence plus direct use benefits were estimated to total over four times the amount of public funding the library receives.

The Library Council of New South Wales also undertook a contingent valuation survey as part of a broader study of the value of public libraries. It specifically asked what people were willing to pay, from a broader community perspective, to maintain the community's access to public library services. The results, which indicated an average value of \$58 per capita, suggested that the indirect existence

---

<sup>7</sup> In a contingent valuation survey, a good or service is described (a hypothetical market is created) and the value people place on that good or service is elicited either with open-ended or referendum style willingness to pay questions. Contingent valuation surveys are needed to estimate existence values because those values are based more on what people feel than what they do. Consequently one cannot infer value from people's behaviour – stated as opposed to revealed preference methods are required.

<sup>8</sup> British Library (2004), *Measuring Our Value*.

values could in themselves exceed the amount of public funding (which averaged less than \$43 per capita).<sup>9</sup>

There are of course many limitations and concerns about the reliability of contingent valuation estimates of value. There is the potential for hypothetical, strategic and other biases affecting the results, and the more general concern that what people say they are willing to pay or accept in a survey may not reflect the trade-off they would actually make. Experts who have formally reviewed this methodology suggest it can provide useful estimates of value, but great care must be taken in the survey design and implementation to minimize bias. As well, the results must be recognized as 'starting points' in a discussion of value. They can provide useful perspective but should not be mistaken as definitive measures of value.<sup>10</sup>

Other library studies recognize the importance of indirect existence values but do not attempt to measure their value in dollar terms. The San Francisco Public Library, for example, estimated the market value of the services it provides. However, with respect to the indirect existence value, it documented in detail the different types of social benefits the Library generates.<sup>11</sup> This included the Library's contribution to education and productivity; literacy; a more informed public; better job matching and placement. It also included the provision of an important gathering place and contribution to San Francisco identity.

There are several other approaches that have been applied to value public libraries. In particular there are studies that have estimated the economic impacts libraries have – the jobs and income that are directly and indirectly generated as a result of public spending on libraries and by the spending of library users. As well, there are studies that use the time and expense that people incur to use library services to indicate its value.

These approaches provide interesting information, but do not in fact provide useful measures of value or net benefit. The economic impact studies do not estimate the incremental employment and income due to library and related spending. They ignore the opportunity cost of that spending – the fact that if government and users did not spend money on libraries or getting to and from libraries they would be spending money on other things, generating impacts elsewhere.

The time and expense estimates indicate the cost people incur to access library services, but not the net benefit over and above that cost – in other words what users would be willing to pay in excess of what they actually pay. It is a component

---

<sup>9</sup> Library Council of New South Wales (2008), *Enriching communities: The value of public libraries in New South Wales*, pp.79-84.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of the debate and expert findings concerning the validity of the contingent valuation method, see P. Portnoy (1994), "The Contingent Valuation Debate: Why Economists Should Care", *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 8 (4): pp. 3-17.

<sup>11</sup> Berk and Associates (2007), *Providing for Knowledge, Growth and Prosperity: A Benefit Study of the San Francisco Public Library*.

of the gross benefit of library services, but not a measure of the net benefit it provides.

## 2.2 Multiple Account Approach

In multiple account as opposed to traditional benefit-cost analysis the principal objective is to document and provide perspective to the different types of benefits and costs, or to the different impacted sectors or groups. Monetary measures of value are developed where possible, but other indicators of benefit or cost are used where monetary measures cannot be reliably be developed or solely relied upon. A primary objective is to inform public policy debates about the nature and relative magnitude or significance of the cost-benefit trade-offs in whatever is being analyzed.

A full multiple account analysis of public libraries would analyze the following:

- Taxpayer net costs: - the public funding required to maintain library operations *less* any reduction or avoidance of other government costs because of the services libraries provide and the positive social impacts that has (e.g., reduction in educational, social service, and criminal justice costs because of the positive child development impacts public libraries services and programs have);
- User net benefits: - the net benefits (consumer surplus) users derive from the library services and facilities they use, because of the costs they avoid if they would otherwise have purchased those services or simply the value they derive for services and facilities they would not otherwise use or access;
- Community net benefits: - the net benefits residents derive because of the value they place on the existence of the library and the positive social and community benefits it has;
- Economy net benefits: - the net benefits (incremental net income) people and business derive because of the language and skills development, job matching, research and other productivity-enhancing impacts the library has;
- Environmental net benefits: the net benefits to the environment because of positive impacts from the research advisory services and programs libraries offer, and from the sharing of books and other materials.

The primary focus of this study of VPL's services and facilities is an assessment of the user and community net benefits in relation to the direct taxpayer costs. There is some discussion of the avoidance and reduction of other government costs, as well



as business benefits. However, time and budget constraints preclude an investigation of other impacts in this study.

User and community net benefits constitute the two most significant components of value derived from public libraries and are the two that have been examined most in previous studies.

The assessment of user net benefits in this study incorporates a description of the nature and significance of the different types of services supplied by VPL as well as estimates of the amount of use and of the value that users place on that use. The estimated magnitude of the direct use benefits includes both the estimated value of the services that would otherwise be purchased as well as the estimated value of those services that would not be otherwise be purchased; the former on the basis of avoided market cost and the latter based on an approximate estimate of the maximum amount users would be willing to pay for the services they use but would not otherwise buy. The estimated proportions of different services that would or would not otherwise be bought are based on a survey undertaken for this study, where users were specifically asked what they would do if VPL services were not available. The survey questions and results are presented in Appendix A.

The assessment of community net benefits incorporates both a description of the types of benefits the community as a whole realizes and an estimate of the amount of taxes residents would be willing to pay or have government allocate on their behalf to maintain them. The willingness to pay estimates are based on the results of a referendum style contingent valuation questionnaire included in the survey undertaken for this study. In this referendum style contingent valuation, respondents were asked whether they support the government spending a specified amount of their tax dollars in support of the library (as opposed to an open-ended approach where respondents would be asked their maximum willingness to pay). Different tax amounts are presented to different respondents to test for the effect of the tax level on willingness to pay. The results are presented in Appendix A.

### 3.0 User Net Benefits

VPL, like other major public libraries, offers a wide range of services for residents, community groups, organizations, agencies and business. For purposes of this study the different services have been organized into five main categories:

- Circulation: - loans (including inter-library loans) to library card holders of books, other printed material, children's story time kits, electronic and audio books, assistive technology (e.g., daisy readers and cassette players), games, CDs, DVDs;
- Access to reading material and information: - in-library and remote access to newspapers, magazines, books, reference materials, databases, directories, research guides, archives and special collections;
- Advisory and research assistance: - assistance in locating information and resource material, referrals for professional advice, reading material recommendations, fee-based research assistance;
- General and specific interest programs: - one-time and on-going programs for children, teens, adults, seniors, ESL students and new immigrants, including training and skill development, cultural and social programs, writing and book clubs, and community outreach initiatives;
- Physical space and infrastructure: - provision of reading and workspace with wireless access, computers, printers and photocopiers, meeting and conference rooms, gallery and other exhibit space.

The nature and significance of these services,<sup>12</sup> and the estimated amount and value of the use of each of these types of services is discussed below.

#### 3.1 Circulation

Circulation services benefit the full range of library users who loan books, DVDs and other materials. This includes:

- children, teens, adults and seniors who benefit from loans of books, DVDs, games and music;
- English as a second language (ESL) users who benefit from VPL's extensive multi-lingual collection;
- students who benefit from materials that are not available in their school libraries;

---

<sup>12</sup> Based on focus group discussions with VPL staff and reviews of other library value studies.

- visually or mobility impaired users who benefit from audio materials and assistive technologies;
- book club members who are able to borrow book sets and accompanying discussion materials;
- institutional users and businesses that can borrow books and other materials (including, for example, multi-lingual and language-learning material for international businesses and standards for engineering firms);
- daycares, pre-schools, senior centres and not-for-profit organizations who for a one-time \$50 fee receive a regularly replenished tote bag of gently discarded books for their own use.

Also benefitting from VPL's circulation services are authors and publishers whose work and publications are purchased, receiving greater exposure than they might otherwise, and publicly available well beyond their typical commercial life.

Without the library's circulation services, users could seek books and other materials from other libraries, or buy or rent them from commercial outlets (bookstores, video rental stores). They would be limited to what is available, with almost certainly less multilingual and other special selections and services.

The benefit users derive from VPL's circulation services is the cost they avoid for what they would otherwise buy or rent, the greater convenience and opportunity afforded by the library's extensive selections, and the greater amount of reading they can do and materials they can access. For those with special needs where the costs of specialty materials would be high, and those with limited incomes, the increased reading and access to other materials can be particularly significant. It enhances their quality of life, and for pre-school and school age children, their social and educational development.

In 2009, VPL loans included over 6.4 million books, a small (20,000) but growing number of ebooks, almost 350,000 CDs and almost 2.1 million DVDs. VPL's annual operating statistics indicate that the total number of loans of all types was over 9.8 million in 2009.

### **3.2 Access to Reading Material and Information**

Many individuals of all ages as well as businesses and organizations benefit from the reading material and information they can access in VPL's branches or through its website and subscription databases. This includes:

- pre-school age children and their care-givers who visit the library and access books and other materials there;
- school-age children who access books, reference material, reports, data and other information for research and school assignments;

- university students that may find it more convenient or otherwise beneficial to access information through VPL;
- international students, especially those in language schools that do not have their own libraries;
- professionals and researchers, including those requiring archival materials and other information not available in other libraries;
- retirees who have the time and interest to seek out reading and other materials at the library;
- homeless and marginalized who are welcomed and able to access reading material and information in VPL's main and other branches;
- educators who seek rare books or information for the development of curriculae, book lists and research guides;
- artists, musicians, authors and illustrators who seek material and information to assist in their creative work;
- small business owners who seek market research data and start-up information;
- design firms and other businesses;
- a variety of immigrant and other organizations and childcare, senior centre and other service providers.

Without the reading material and other information available from VPL, users would have to seek the material they were interested in from other libraries (for example, academic, business, courthouse or private libraries) or from other sources, including internet sites, organizations and religious institutions. They could also purchase the material or hire professional advice. Some material (for example, rare and out-of-print books, historical documents and photos, foreign language documents) would not be available.

The benefit to those who access reading material and other information from VPL is the greater scope, choice and convenience of the materials that are available. Users avoid paying to access information through other channels, and the time spent gathering information from a variety of locations or sources.

In 2009, there were over 2.3 million in-library visits to VPL where users accessed but did not loan materials. In addition there were almost 500,000 users accessing databases and other information through VPL's website.

### **3.3 Advisory and Research Assistance**

In addition to those who seek reading material and information on their own, there are many users who receive advice and assistance from trained VPL library staff. These include:

- individuals who seek advice on what books to read and how to find them;

- students, researchers and others seeking specific information or advice in locating reference material:
- ESL students and immigrants needing assistance in accessing library materials
- hobbyists and others seeking information on particular activities or topics
- job-seekers seeking information on employment opportunities and related matters
- professionals, start-up businesses, organizations and others seeking specific research assistance on a fee-paid basis.

Without the advisory and research assistance, users would have to seek out whatever they were looking for on their own, seek help from family or friends, or hire consultants or other professionals. In many instances they might simply not find the information or advice they sought.

The benefit of these services for users is getting the advice and information they need in an efficient and professional way. There are an increasing number of sources and methods of seeking information on one's own, especially with the rapid development of search engines like Google; however, some people would not be able to find as complete and reliable sources as they could with library staff assistance or advice, and in some cases they may not have the computer facilities or research skills required.

For people with mobility constraints, there is the opportunity to email requests for information and assistance. For ESL residents, there are multi-lingual staff with which they can effectively communicate. For skilled immigrants there is one-on one help with job applications. The services available to these users would be much more limited without VPL.

Working with library staff not only helps meet immediate requirements, it also helps users learn how to navigate through the library's catalogue system and databases, enhancing their own research capacity for future needs.

Hiring consultants or other professionals would enable people to get the information they need, but could be prohibitively expensive in many cases. In any event, the library eliminates the need for incurring that expense for those who could and would pay for it.

In 2009, library staff provided assistance or advice in response to almost 880,000 user requests.

### **3.4 General and Specific Interest Programs**

VPL offers a wide range of programs targeting different age and community interests. The programs serve virtually all segments of Vancouver society. Benefitting participants include:

- children (and their parents and caregivers) who attend any of the 7,000 children's programs VPL offers each year;
- teens, including youths at risk, who attend any of the entertainment, coping, and other teen-targeted programs VPL offers;
- students and others who attend instructional and educational programs;
- adults and seniors who attend general interest or learning and skills development programs;
- ESL residents, new immigrants and refugees;
- writers who participate in writing workshops;
- participants in VPL book club programs;
- marginalized, homebound, visually-impaired and others who benefit from VPL's outreach programs.

Without the programs that VPL offers, participants could seek similar programs elsewhere, for example in community centres, evening school, or private groups, but at a cost. They could also pay for some of the skills development and learning programs from private providers. In many cases, however, they would simply do without.

The benefits to program participants is the costs they avoid by not having to pay for similar programs elsewhere, and the child and family development, language and skills development, learning, entertainment and other social benefits they derive that they would not acquire elsewhere.

In 2009, there were almost 206,000 participants in VPL programs, the majority (almost 165,000) being children.

### **3.5 Physical Space and Infrastructure**

In addition to the specific services VPL offers, users benefit simply from the reading and workspace and other facilities VPL offers. This includes:

- homeless and marginalized persons that use the library, in particular the main branch, as a safe place to sit, integrate with others, and use washrooms to take care of personal hygiene needs;
- tutors and others who use the library space to meet or conduct business;
- home schooled children who use the library to read and study;
- school age children who go to the library to study and or simply to stay after school until their parents come home from work;
- families who visit and stay in the library as an activity in itself;

- daycare operators, parents, and nannies who use the child play area, and interact with other parents or child care providers;
- community partners and faith groups who use the library to conduct their own programs;
- artists who use the library to display their work;
- wedding photographers and tourists who are attracted to the main library because of its architecture;
- individuals, groups, businesses and organizations who rent meeting-room or promenade space for meetings, seminars, conferences or events.

There are other places that people could go to meet, read or study including coffee shops, bookstores, hotels with meeting and conference space, and community centres. Artists could seek to display their work at restaurants or galleries. Photographers and tourists could seek out other sites, However, not all visitors and users of VPL space would be accommodated nor would all needs be met. And if they were, in many cases they would only be accommodated for a fee.

The benefit to visitors and users of VPL space is the costs they save if they went elsewhere plus the convenience and quality of the VPL space that could not be replaced. For the many visitors who would not have alternatives, the benefit is the use of the high quality space they would not otherwise be able to enjoy. For people who are homeless or marginalized it can provide individuals with a welcoming, non-judgmental environment where they can feel a sense of belonging. For parents and children it provides a fun and safe environment. For students it provides space conducive to learning and working. For artists it provides exposure they might not otherwise have.

Some 6 million people entered one of VPL's branches in 2009. There were approximately 350,000 sessions on VPL computers, the majority of which included internet browsing. There were also almost 180,000 user connections to VPL's wireless, with the average session length being approximately 100 minutes.

In terms of space, VPL facilities provide almost 108,000 square feet of public space and over 20,000 square feet of meeting and conference space.

### **3.6 Estimated Value of Direct Use Benefits**

As discussed in section 2 above, there are two components of the direct use benefits derived from VPL services. There is the avoided cost of the services that would otherwise have been purchased plus the net benefit (consumer surplus) for those services that would not otherwise have been purchased but still were valued by the users.

In Table 1 below, the amounts of different services provided by VPL in 2009 are shown along with estimated market costs and the user assumptions needed to

calculate the total direct use benefits. The results should be seen as illustrative. They are presented to provide some perspective to the potential magnitude of the direct use benefits, with arguably conservative valuation assumptions.

The market costs are based on estimates from other studies. It should be noted that the market cost for books and ebooks is much less than average purchase prices. An average purchase price of \$25 was discounted by 60% in an attempt to provide a book cost net of resale or reuse value. The market cost for access to information and research assistance are very rough. Those market costs depend on what is accessed and for library assistance, on the nature of the request and library time required. It should be noted that higher values have been used in other studies.

The estimated percentages of book loans and other services that would have been purchased if not available from VPL are based on the survey results, as summarized in Appendix A, where users were asked what they would do without VPL.<sup>13</sup> As is clear in the Table, for the most part VPL users would not have purchased books and other services if they were not available from VPL. They would have accessed them elsewhere where possible or done without.

The calculation of total direct use benefit includes a value of 50% of the market cost for those services that would not otherwise have been purchased. This is a standard assumption in calculating consumer surplus, recognizing that some users would have been willing to pay close to the market cost, and others almost nothing. The 50% assumption assumes an even distribution of users between these two points.

The table below indicates, that with these estimates and assumptions, the direct use benefits equals almost \$55 million. They could well be much more. The important point, though, is that in themselves (before taking any existence value or other benefits into account) they are significantly greater than the costs VPL incurs (\$43 million in 2009).

---

<sup>13</sup> It was assumed that an estimated 25% of the computer and wireless use would otherwise have been purchased. The survey questions did not address that service.



**Table 1**  
**Estimated Value of Direct Use Benefits**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Amount of Use</b>	<b>% Purchased wo VPL</b>	<b>Market cost</b>	<b>Total direct use benefit<sup>14</sup></b>
Circulation-books and ebooks	6,428,000	.16	\$10.	37,282,000
Circulation-CDs, DVDs, and games	2,441,000	.24	\$4.	6,054,000
Access to information	2,811,000	.11	\$2. - ?	3,120,000 - ?
Library assistance	877,000	.11	\$10. - ?	4,867,000 - ?
Program participation	210,000	.15	\$20	2,415,000
Computer and wireless use	528,000	.25	\$3.	990,000
<b>Total</b>				<b>54,728,000 - ?</b>

---

<sup>14</sup> Includes estimated avoided cost of services that would otherwise be purchased and estimated value of services that would not otherwise be purchased, assuming those users' willingness to pay would average 50% of the market cost.

#### 4.0 Community Net Benefits

The existence of VPL and the services it provides not only benefit users, but also the community as a whole. VPL contributes in a very significant way to the development of human capital and to Vancouver's social infrastructure, both critically important to the economic welfare and quality of life of all Vancouver residents whether library users or not.

With respect to the development of human capital – specifically, individuals' knowledge, cognitive capacity and skills – the reading and other materials, access to information with and without library assistance, programs and facilities provided by VPL benefit all age groups. The survey results shown in Appendix A clearly indicate that a majority of the reading that takes place as a result of VPL simply would not be done. Similarly the majority of the VPL programs that people attend and a large percentage of the information that is acquired would not be acquired elsewhere.

For pre-school children, the reading and program participation that would not otherwise take place promote early literacy and positive child development. That in turn not only benefits the children themselves in terms of their educational attainment and lifetime earnings, but also society generally because of any consequent reduction in remedial education and learning assistance requirements, and problems and expense related to social dysfunction and teen and adult criminal activity.<sup>15</sup>

For school age children, the reading and research that would not otherwise take place enhance research skills and contribute to a more effective educational experience. That in turn contributes to the development of a more productive workforce.<sup>16</sup>

For adults and seniors, VPL services (again, the very significant amount of book loans, programs and other services that people would not otherwise undertake) contribute to literacy, life-long learning and a more informed public. For those with limited English language skills and those new to Vancouver, VPL services contribute to their social integration and their economic opportunities.

With respect to social infrastructure, VPL facilities and services meet a wide range of community needs and values.

The welcoming environment and generally free access to books, other materials, information, and programs helps ensure everyone has access to reading, learning

---

<sup>15</sup> For a review of the impacts that early childhood education can have on future educational outcomes and social behaviour see, L Karoly and Bigelow (2005), *The Economics of Investing in Universal Pre-School Education in California*, RAND Corporation.

<sup>16</sup> For an analysis of the impact of cognitive skills on productivity and economic development see E. Hanushek and L. Woessmann (2008), "The Role of Cognitive Skills in Economic Development", *Journal of Economic Literature*, 46(3): pp. 607-668.

and leisure opportunities regardless of their income, individual capability or circumstance. VPL plays a key role in providing more equal opportunity to these important aspects of life – a social objective widely shared by all segments of society.

The audio material and assistive equipment for visually and mobility impaired, and the outreach services and programs for disadvantaged groups also contribute to the more equal opportunity for all, and a greater social engagement for those who might otherwise be isolated or marginalized.

Library staff assistance, while beneficial to even the most sophisticated users, is particularly beneficial for those with limited language or research skills, again serving to broaden access to information, know-how and opportunity.

The library also plays an important role in supporting and promoting culture and the arts, through the programs it offers, the materials it has, and the public exhibit space it provides. It also supports different organizations and their clients through the programs it offers and meeting space it makes available. Further, VPL plays a critically important role in preserving historic documents, maintaining a detailed record to our past.

Most Vancouver residents recognize and support these important attributes and role of VPL. City budget survey results indicate that financial support of the library is among residents' highest priorities. The contingent valuation results in the resident survey undertaken for this study provide an economic perspective to this priority residents place on the existence of VPL.

In this survey, the facilities, services and social benefits (e.g. contribution to literacy) provided by VPL were briefly described and respondents were then asked whether they support the spending of a specified amount of their tax dollars to enable VPL to continue to provide these services. The specified amount of tax dollars ranged from \$20 per year to \$300 per year, with different respondents randomly presented a different amount.

A number of steps were taken to minimize any upward bias in the results, consistent with best practices recommended by an expert panel that was established in the United States to examine the validity of contingent valuation estimates of value.<sup>17</sup>

Firstly, the nature of the service being valued was made clear and well understood by the respondents. While the responses likely reflected people's valuation of the use as well as the existence of VPL, a follow-up question asked if they were willing to pay taxes to support the library even if they were not users themselves.

---

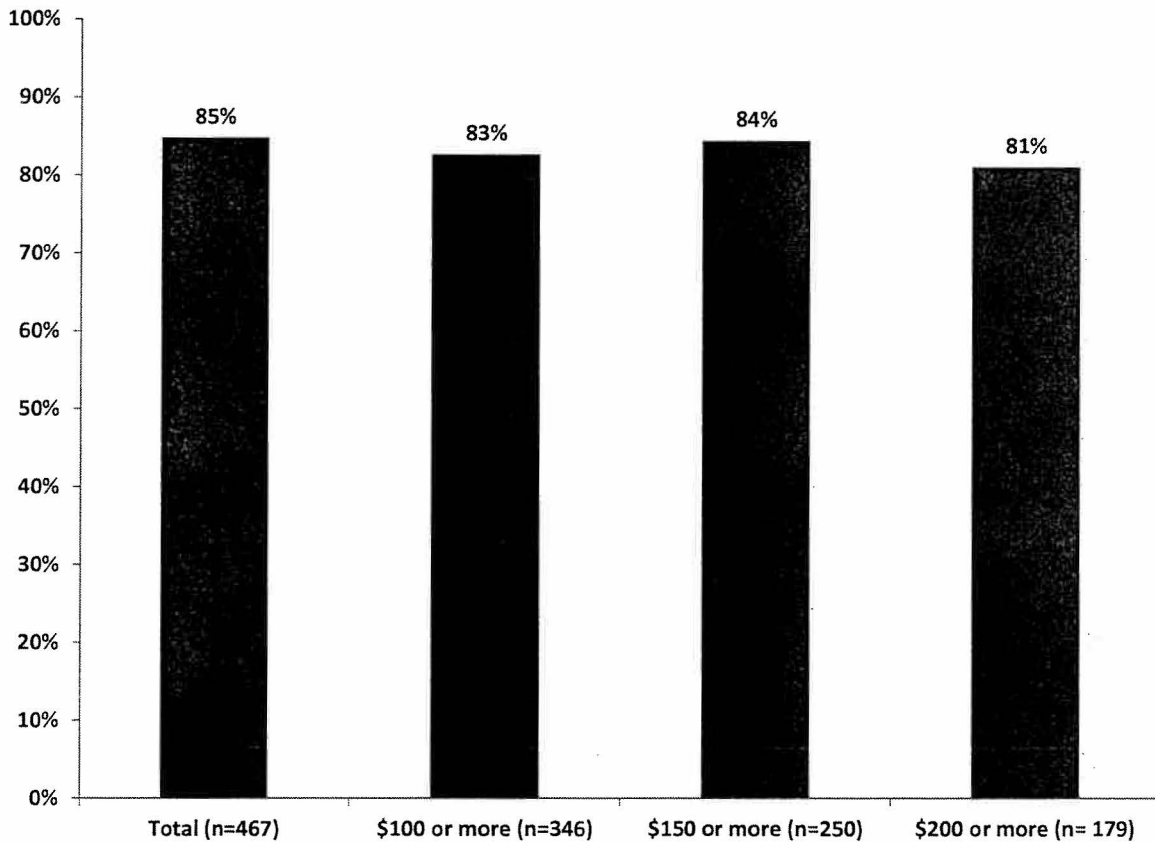
<sup>17</sup> U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (1993), *Report of the NOAA Panel on Contingent Valuation*, Federal Registrar, 58, 10, pp.4602-14.

A referendum style survey was undertaken, as opposed to an open-ended approach, and the range of hypothesized values was purposely restricted to relatively low values (no higher than \$300 per year) as opposed to much higher ranges used in other studies.

Respondents were asked their willingness to pay, as opposed to the compensation (tax relief) they would be willing to accept. Also they were explicitly reminded to consider their income and budget constraint – to keep in mind all of the other services government must fund as well as their own spending needs.

The results, presented in Appendix A and summarized in the chart below, indicate an overwhelming willingness to pay the specified tax amounts. Even for the subsample that were presented tax amounts of \$200 or more, some 81% of the respondents indicated they supported the expenditure of that tax level to maintain the operations of the library.

**% of Respondents Willing to Pay Specified Tax Level**



Typically in referendum style contingent valuation surveys, the results can be used to estimate a willingness to pay curve relating the proportion of the population

willing to pay different amounts. Because of the preponderance of yes responses in this survey, even at the high end of the tax range, it was not possible to estimate the inflection points in such a curve, that is when the tax level was high enough to cause a significant proportion of the population to say no. Consequently, it was not possible to estimate the average willingness to pay to maintain VPL operations.

However, what the results do clearly show is that whatever the average willingness to pay is, it is well above \$200 per person. And that in turn significantly exceeds the average amount of tax support Vancouver residents in fact provide. The actual tax support for VPL totaled just under \$40 million in 2009. With an adult population of over 500,000,<sup>18</sup> that amounts to less \$80 per person. The willingness to pay \$200 is two and one half times the actual per capita level of tax support.

Expressed in terms of total value, the survey results suggest that Vancouver residents are willing to allocate over \$100 million per year to maintain VPL's operations and the community net benefits it provides. That is in addition to the direct user benefits estimated in section 3.6 above. There was a high proportion of respondents willing to pay the specified tax levels, even when asked to ignore their own use and, as well, even for those respondents who did not use the library themselves.

---

<sup>18</sup> The 2006 census reported Vancouver's population at 578,045, 82% of which (approximately 475,000) were 20 years of age or older. The City of Vancouver estimates that the population has increased to almost 630,000, suggesting an adult population of over 500,000.

## 5.0 Other Net Benefits

In addition to direct user and community net benefits, the facilities and services that VPL provides is of significant benefit to school boards, daycare operators, government agencies, business and non-profits.<sup>19</sup>

The materials and information VPL makes available to students complements and expands on what is available through school libraries. VPL facilities themselves are important for students as an after-school place to read or study. VPL is also important for the research support it provides teachers, providing material and information they can use for supplementary course materials and curriculum development. Without VPL, school boards would be under pressure to increase their expenditures on reading and research materials, possibly study space as well.

The materials, programs and facilities VPL makes available for children benefits daycare operators. They expand the services and opportunities they can provide to the children under their care and reduces the pressure on their limited budget that they would otherwise face.

VPL services and programs benefit a wide range of government agencies. They provide an outlet for the dissemination of government information, including forms, directories, statistics and databases. Advisory services are available to assist residents and businesses access the government information they need and to correctly complete and submit government forms. Specific language, training and job search programs and assistance provide needed community services that government would otherwise have to provide. And VPL can provide a welcoming space for people who are homeless or marginalized that social agencies would otherwise have to address.

Business benefits from VPL services and programs in a wide range of ways as well. VPL not only provides information and research assistance that business may need, it also contributes to a better trained, informed and literate and therefore productive workforce. For non-profits, the facilities made available by VPL and the programs it offers enhance their opportunities, efforts and success.

---

<sup>19</sup> Based on focus group discussions with VPL staff and reviews of other library value studies.

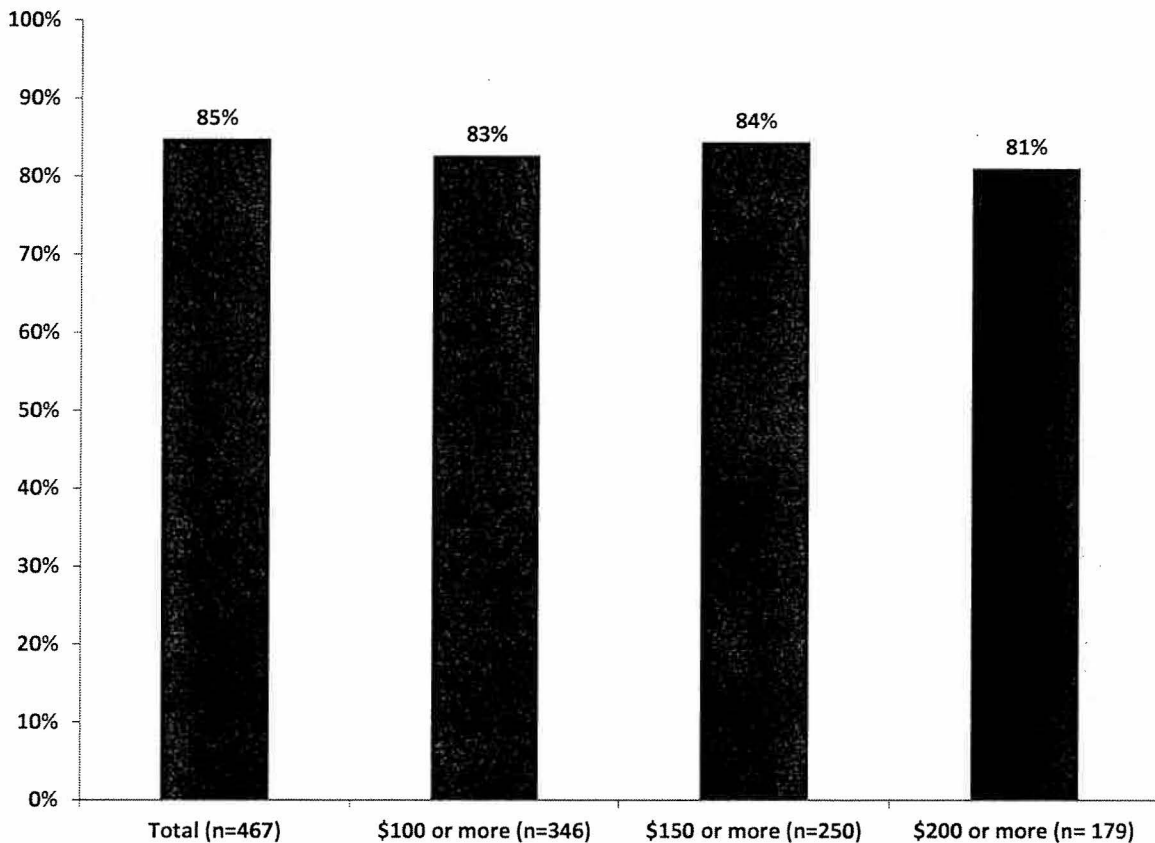
## Appendix A – Resident Survey

A survey of 500 Vancouver residents was undertaken by the Mustel group in December 2010. The results and questionnaire itself follow below.

### Willingness to Pay Results

Question 1: Do you support spending \$[random amount between \$20 and \$300 in 10 dollar increments] of your tax dollars per year to enable the Vancouver Public Library to continue to provide these services?

**Figure 1: Answered ‘yes’ to question 1, shown for the full sample and sub-samples at different hypothesized tax levels<sup>20</sup>**



<sup>20</sup> Only 21 (5%) respondents answering “yes” to Q1 changed their minds and answered ‘no’ when asked Question 3 (n=393) as to whether they would support spending the amount asked in Q1 even if they do not use the library yourself – in other words solely because of the benefits the library provides to the community. As the difference is so slight between the two groups, Figure 1 results will not vary significantly due to changes based on Q3.

### **Use Results**

In the past twelve months, approximately how many times have you visited any branch of the Vancouver Public Library?

***74 per cent of respondents reported visiting a VPL branch at least once in the past 12 months, with the average visitor making 15 visits (median visits = 4).***

And in the past twelve months, approximately how many times have you visited the Vancouver Public Library's website?

***50 per cent of respondents reported visiting the VPL website at least once in the past 12 months, with the average web visitor making 10 visits (median visits = 1).***



**Book/ E-book loans**

*In the past 12 months, 59 per cent of those surveyed borrowed at least one book or e-book from the Vancouver Public Library (n=294) with the mean respondent borrowing 50 books or e-books in total.*

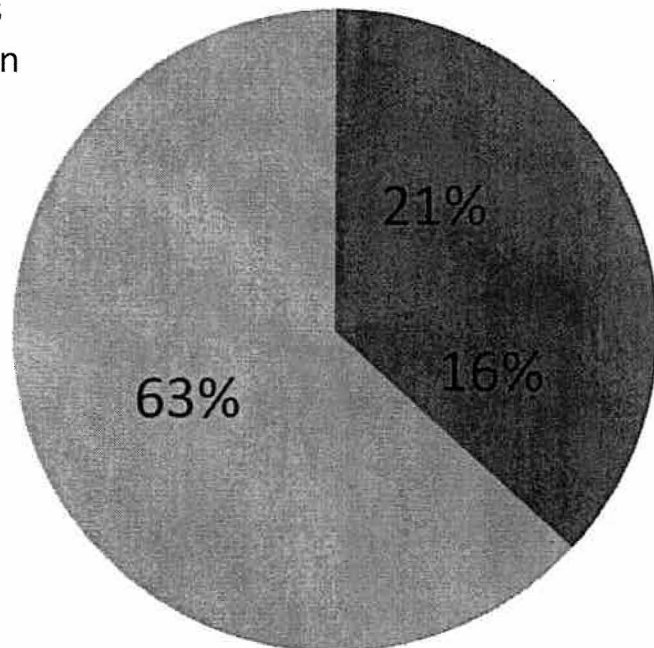
Now imagine you had been unable to borrow those books or e-books from the library.

I'd like you to tell me how many of those you would have:

■ ...borrowed from friends or somewhere other than the public library

■ ... purchased

■ .. not read

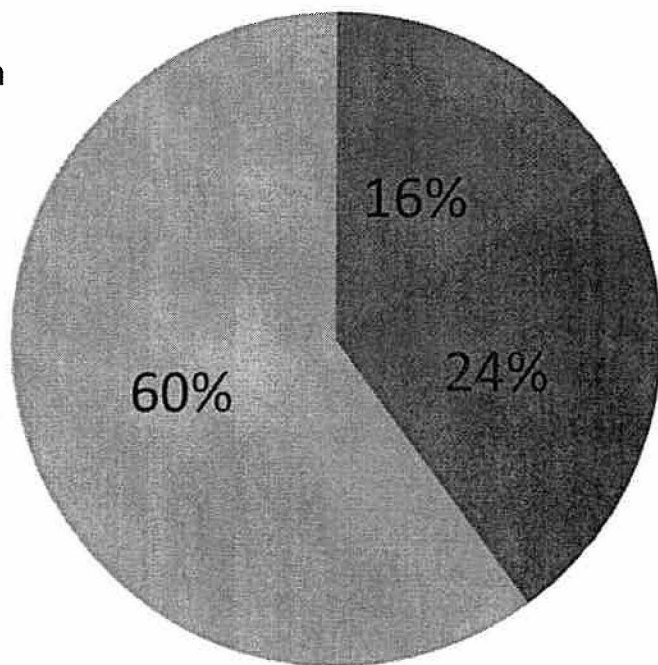


**DVD, CD, Video Game Loans**

*In the past 12 months, 30 per cent of those surveyed borrowed at least one DVD, CD or video games from the Vancouver Public Library (n=151) with the mean respondent borrowing (n=151) with the mean respondent borrowing 8 DVDs, CDs or video games in total.*

Now imagine you had been unable to borrow those DVDs, CDs or video games from the library. I'd like you to tell me how many of those you would have:

- ...borrowed from friends or somewhere other than the public library
- ... purchased or rented
- .. not enjoyed

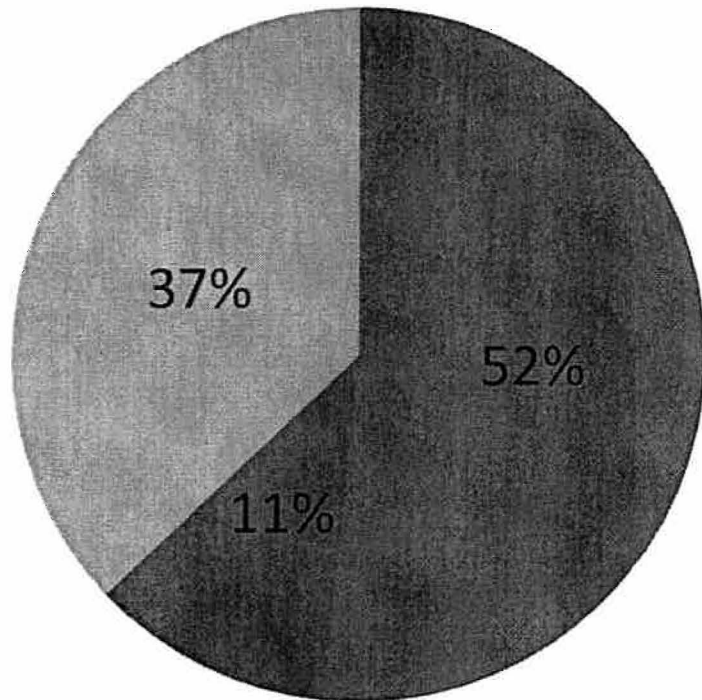


### Information and Research

*In the past 12 months, 31 per cent of those surveyed used information and research services at the Vancouver Public Library (n=156) with the mean respondent accessing these services 4 times in total.*

Now imagine you had been unable access these services. I'd like you to tell me how many times you would have:

- ...sought from places such as schools, university or your workplace
- ...purchased from private companies
- ...just not collected this information or research

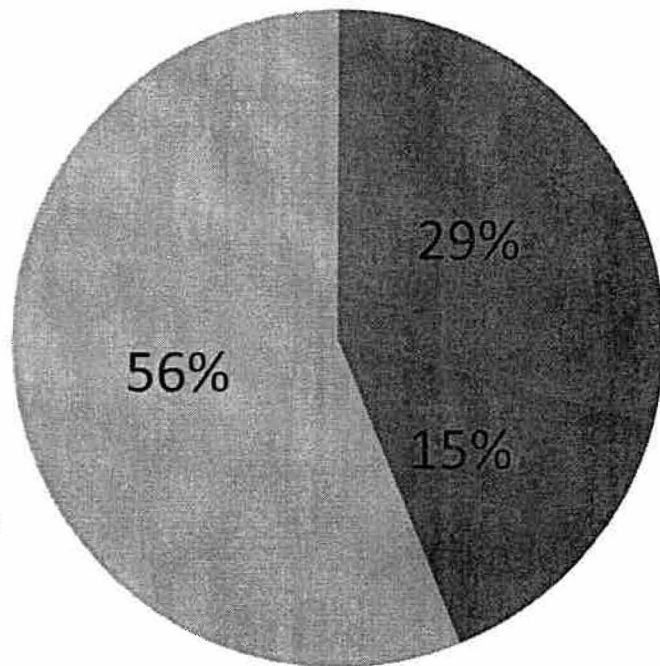


## Programs

*In the past 12 months, 21 per cent of those surveyed attended programs at the Vancouver Public Library (n=104) with the mean respondent attending one program.*

Now imagine the library had not offered these programs. I'd like you to tell me how many times you would have:

- sought these programs from other public institutions such as libraries or community centres
- paid to attend these programs if offered by private companies
- just not attended these programs



## Survey Questions

### Opening statement

As you may know Vancouver Public Library has 22 branches, including the large central branch in downtown Vancouver. These libraries lend books, provide library research services and a wide range of educational programs for children, teens and adults. Almost all Vancouver Public Library services are provided free of charge and are primarily funded by your tax dollars.

Our first question is about funding so I'd like you to think about how much you value Vancouver Public Library services.

First consider the benefits the Library provides to the community, such as literacy promotion, home-bound services and public workspace.

Then, consider the costs to provide these services, keeping in mind all of the other services government must fund, as well as your own spending needs.

### Willingness to Pay

In light of this:

Q1. Do you support spending \$[random amount between \$20 and \$300 in 10 dollar increments] of your tax dollars per year to enable the Vancouver Public Library to continue to provide these services?

- 1. YES
- 2. NO
- 98. DON'T KNOW
- 99. REFUSED

Q2. Do you support spending [one-half the random value from above] of your tax dollars per year to enable the Vancouver Public Library to continue to provide these services?

- 1. YES
- 2. NO
- 98. DON'T KNOW
- 99. REFUSED

Q3. Would you support spending this amount even if you do not use the library yourself – in other words solely because of the benefits the library provides to the community.

- 1. YES
- 2. NO
- 98. DON'T KNOW

99. REFUSED

**Library Usage**

The next few questions are about your personal library use and what you might do if the library changed the services it currently provides.

Q4. In the past twelve months, approximately how many times have you visited any branch of the Vancouver Public Library?

Q5. And in the past twelve months, approximately how many times have you visited the Vancouver Public Library's website?

Q6. Still thinking of the past twelve months, approximately how many books or e-books you have borrowed from the Vancouver Public Library?

Now imagine you had been unable to borrow those books or e-books from the library.

I'd like you to tell me how many of those you would have:

Q6a) borrowed from friends or somewhere other than the public library?

Q6b) how many would you have purchased?

Q6c) How many would you have just not read?

Q7. And in the past twelve months, approximately how many DVDs, CDs or video games if any have you borrowed from the Vancouver Public Library?

Now imagine you had been unable to borrow those DVDs, CDs or video games from the library.

I'd like you to tell me how many of those you would have:

Q7a) borrowed from friends or somewhere other than the public library?

Q7b) how many would you have purchased or rented?

Q7c) How many would you have just not enjoyed?

Q8. In the past twelve months, approximately how many times you have used information and research services at the Vancouver Public Library?

Now imagine you had been unable access these services.

I'd like you to tell me how many times you would have:

Q8a) sought these services from places such as schools, university or your workplace?

Q8b) How many times would you have purchased these services from private companies?

Q8c) How many times would you have you just not collected this information or research?

Q9. Over the past year, please tell me approximately how many times you have attended programs at the Vancouver Public Library?

Now imagine the library had not offered these programs.  
I'd like you to tell me how many times you would have:

Q9a) sought these programs from other public institutions such as libraries or community centres?

Q9b) How many times would you have paid to attend these programs if offered by private companies?

Q9c) How many times would you have you just not attended these programs?

### **Demographic Questions**

A. GENDER:

1. MALE
2. FEMALE

B. Into which of the following age categories do you fall:

1. 18-24
2. 25-34
3. 35-44
4. 45-54
5. 55-64
6. 65+
99. REFUSED

C. Which of the following best describes your current household:

1. SINGLE NO CHILDREN
2. COUPLE NO CHILDREN
3. FAMILY

99. REFUSED

D. Do you have any children under the age of 18 living at home?

- 1. YES
- 2. NO
- 99. REFUSED

E. What is the highest level of school/Education you have completed?

- 1. PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (GRADE 1 TO 7)
- 2. SOME HIGH SCHOOL
- 3. GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL (GRADE 12 OR 13)
- 4. VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL/COLLEGE/CEGEP
- 5. SOME UNIVERSITY
- 6. GRADUATED UNIVERSITY
- 7. POST GRADUATE
- 99. REFUSED

F. Into which of the following broad groupings does your Household Income fall:

- 1. <\$30k
- 2. \$30k to <\$60k
- 3. \$60k to <\$90k
- 4. \$90k to <\$120k
- 5. \$120k or more
- 98. DON'T KNOW
- 99. REFUSED

G. Are you currently employed?

- 1. YES
- 2. NO
- 99. REFUSED

H. Is English the language spoken most often at home?

- 1. YES
- 2. NO
- 99. REFUSED

I. Do you rent or own your current place of residence?

- 1. RENT
- 2. OWN



OWNER) 3. OTHER (E.G., LIVE WITH PARENTS/ RENT FREE BUT NOT AN

99. REFUSED

J. AREA OF CITY

1. EAST OF MAIN STREET
2. WEST OF MAIN STREET

K. LANGUAGE OF INTERVIEW

1. ENGLISH
2. CANTONESE
3. MANDARIN

