

Budget Committee: Acquiring Collections from the Public

Date:	September 8, 2014
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	Budget Committee

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to obtain the Toronto Public Library Board's approval of recommendations of the Library Board's Budget Committee concerning the acquisition of collections from the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Budget Committee recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. initiates a pilot project at the Toronto Reference Library in 2014 to test the practicality and value of purchasing collections materials from the public, reporting back to the Library Board at six months and then one year after implementation; and
2. requests staff to implement the necessary measures to increase the volume of saleable material donated by the public for re-sale by the Library, reporting back to the Library Board one year after implementation.

Implementation Points**Acquiring Collections from the Public:**

- The Toronto Reference Library will be the designated location for the pilot project;
- Staff will prepare a list for the Library's website for the books for which the Library will pay \$5.00, including sales tax if applicable, to acquire additional copies;
- Finance staff will ensure the requisite financial controls are in place and the collections budget is charged for the cost of purchasing copies from the public;
- Staff will track the books purchased, label and link them in preparation for circulation;
- An online and in-print communications plan will be developed.

Increasing the Volume of Saleable Donated Material:

- A generic description of acceptable and unacceptable donations will be listed on the Library's website;
- The books will be sold in-branch, at one of the Library book stores, or online through Better Word Books;

- An online and in-print communications plan will be developed;
- If successful, the opening of a bookstore in the Richview Branch will be investigated.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The pilot project for acquiring collections from the public will provide estimated operating costs and potential relief for the collections budget.

It is estimated that book sale revenue could increase by \$50,000 annually if more saleable material from the public is donated.

Both pilot projects can be accommodated within the operating budget.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

DECISION HISTORY

At its April 17, 2014 meeting, the Budget Committee adopted a number of motions regarding the 2015 Operating Budget Outlook including the following:

Requests staff to report back on the feasibility of leveraging the TPL's digital and innovation competencies and vendor management and logistics expertise to design and launch a pilot project in the 2014 calendar year to test the practicality of acquiring collection materials through new channels such as from the public (similar to how university and college bookstores re-purchase materials from students).

At its July 28, 2014 meeting, the Budget Committee adopted the motion that the Budget Committee:

Defers consideration of the Acquiring Collections from the Public report until the next meeting of the Budget Committee.

At its August 21, 2014 meeting, the Budget Committee considered the Acquiring Collections from the Public report, which recommended:

A pilot project be launched in 2014 to test the practicality and value of increasing the volume of saleable material donated by the public for re-sale by the Library, as an alternative to a pilot project for acquiring books from the public for addition to the Library's collections.

The Budget Committee adopted the following amendments to the report:

1. *initiates a pilot project at the Toronto Reference Library in 2014 to test the practicality and value of purchasing collections materials from the public, reporting back to the Library Board at six months and then one year after implementation; and*

2. *requests staff to implement the necessary measures to increase the volume of saleable material donated by the public for re-sale by the Library, reporting back to the Library Board one year after implementation.*

ISSUE BACKGROUND

At the Budget Committee's request, staff provided a report at the July 28, 2014 meeting that reflected a detailed investigation into the campus bookstore model of textbook buy-backs. The report concluded the complexity involved in implementing and maintaining such a system in the public library context would result in significant overhead, inefficiencies, and reduced service to the public. The report recommended as an alternative that this approach be applied to expand the volume of donated materials from the public for re-sale by the Library with a pilot project to test its success.

After further discussion following the July 28, 2014 meeting, it was determined a more streamlined pilot project with fewer technological requirements for acquiring collections from the public is feasible. It was also confirmed that a pilot project to test increasing the volume of saleable donated material from the public has merit.

COMMENTS

The Acquiring Collections from the Public report deferred at the July 28, 2014 meeting and considered at the August 21, 2014 meeting of the Board's Budget Committee meeting is provided as Attachment 1.

Acquiring Collections from the Public

A pilot project will be launched in 2014 to encourage the public to sell books to the Library in an effort to provide collections budget relief. A list of approximately 100 recent book titles where there are a lot of holds will be listed on the Library's website as a means of communicating to the public the books the Library is interested in purchasing. The public will be directed to bring used copies to the Toronto Reference Library. A flat fee of \$5.00, including sales tax if applicable, will be paid for book copies that match TPL's website listing and are in good condition. Staff at the Toronto Reference Library will track the purchased books, label them, link them to a predetermined branch location, and place them in circulation. Finance staff will ensure that the requisite financial controls are in place and the costs of the purchased copies are charged to the collections budget.

A communication plan, both online and print, will be developed to provide this information to the public.

Measures will be included in the pilot project to ensure the value and practicality of acquiring collections from the public are tested. Reports to the Library Board at six months and one year after implementation will provide assessments of the pilot project's success.

Increasing the Volume of Saleable Donated Material

A pilot project will be launched in 2014 to increase the volume of saleable donated material from the public in an effort to increase book sale revenue in 2015. A generic description of acceptable and unacceptable donations will be listed on the Library's website as a means of communicating to the public the books the Library is interested in re-selling. The books will be sold in-branch, at one of the Library book stores, or online through Better Word Books.

A communication plan, both online and print, will be developed to provide this information to the public.

A Lean Six Sigma review of the donations process concluded that all donations should be sold or recycled as necessary as adding them to the collection is not cost-effective because of the low value of the appropriate material received and the extensive staff handling involved. This is in line with the procedures of other large North American library systems such as Ottawa, Edmonton, Los Angeles and Brooklyn. This does not apply to donations made to Special Collections.

A number of different approaches to increasing book sales will be tested as part of the pilot project. If the pilot is successful, the opening of a bookstore in the Richview Branch would be investigated. This would be a variation on the current Book Ends stores as the volunteers would be youth. The income would flow through the Foundation. Necessary renovations to the Richview space to set up a used bookstore would be covered by the planned 2015 work at Richview under the multi-branch capital program.

A report to the Library Board one year after implementation will provide an assessment of the pilot project's success.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: Acquiring Collections from the Public report to the July 28, 2014 and August 21, 2014 Budget Committee meetings.