



St. Catharines Public Library Board

Regular Meeting

Thursday, February 19, 2026, 6:00 pm
Mills Room, Central Library & Microsoft Teams

AGENDA

Chair calls meeting to order and Janice Coles to read SCPL Land Acknowledgment.

1. **Adoption of Agenda**

1.1 Additions/Deletions to Agenda

1.2 Adoption of Agenda

Motion

2. **Chair's Remarks & Declarations of Interest**

3. **Adoption of Minutes (attachment)**

3.1 Regular Meeting – January 15, 2026

Motion

4. **Monthly Updates (verbal)**

4.1 St. Catharines City Council

4.2 OLS Update – J. Coles

4.3 CEO Update – K. Su

4.4 Department Update – OLA Presentation – Keely Robinson, Training Librarian,
and Lydia Smith, Programming Librarian

5. **Consent Agenda (attachments)**

Motion

5.1 CEO Report – K. Su

5.2 Department Reports – January 2026

5.2(a) Customer Service – J. Spera & M. Haanstra

5.2(b) Innovation, Collections, and Technology – D. Bott

5.2(c) Programming and Promotions – H. Jones

5.2(d) Human Resources – A. Maciukas

5.2(e) ILS Migration – D. Bott

5.2(f) Quarterly Department Reports of Q4 2025

5.3 Financial Reports – L. DiDonato

5.3 (a) 2025 Financial Results for the Year Ended December 31, 2025

5.3 (b) Endowment & Trust Statement at December 31, 2025

5.3 (c) Short-Term Investments Statement at December 31, 2025

6. In-Camera Session

6.1 In-Camera Agenda (attachment)

6.1(a) Additions/Deletions to In-Camera Agenda

6.1(b) Adoption of In-Camera Agenda

Motion

6.2 Motion to Move In-Camera

Motion

6.3 Adoption of In-Camera Minutes

6.3(a) In-Camera Session – January 15, 2026 (attachment)

Motion

6.4 In-Camera Consent Agenda (attachments)

6.4(a) Staffing Update (January 2026) – A. Maciukas

6.5 In-Camera Discussion Reports (attachments)

6.5(a) Labour Relations Matter – A. Maciukas

(Closed Session in accordance with the Public Libraries Act section 16.1(4)(d) labour relations or employee negotiations.)

6.5(b) Planning Matter – K. Su

(Closed Session in accordance with the Municipal Act section 239(2)(k) a position, plan, procedure, criteria, or instruction to be applied to negotiations.)

6.6 Return to Open Session

Motion

7. Motion(s) Arising From In-Camera Session

Motion

8. Discussion Reports (attachments)

8.1 Policy (GOV-01) Succession Planning – J. Coles & G. Riihimaki

Motion

8.2 Policy (G-06) Facilities Closing – K. Su

Motion

8.3 SCPL Incident Report – K. Su & L. DiDonato

Motion

8.4 Community Needs Assessment Funding Request – K. Su & Lisa DiDonato

Motion

9. Motion to Adjourn

Motion

10. Next Meeting / Upcoming Events

- Board Meeting – Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 6:00 pm, Mills Room, Central Library & Microsoft Teams

MOVED BY: G. Riihimaki
SECONDED BY: N. Olmstead
MOTION CARRIED.

2. Chair's Remarks & Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed the Board and thanked staff for setting up virtual meeting. There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes (attachment)

3.1 Regular Meeting – November 20, 2025

MOTION: 2026-02 THAT the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 20, 2025 be adopted.

MOVED BY: Councillor G. Miller
SECONDED BY: G. Riihimaki
MOTION CARRIED.

4. Monthly Updates (verbal)

4.1 St. Catharines City Council – Councillor G. Miller

Councillor G. Miller shared that the City approved the Downtown Stabilization, Safety and Reinvestment Plan to address issues and encourage more people to use the downtown core.

4.2 CEO Update – K. Su

The CEO updated the Board about the following:

- **Central Renovation** – CEO is working with the architect to provide a quote for the updated plans. The architect anticipates the new estimate from the engineers would be available by April.
- **Central Third Floor** – Library staff have relocated from the third floor. Three open houses are scheduled in the coming weeks, with invitations distributed to Niagara non-profit organizations and charities.

5. Consent Agenda

- 5.1 Correspondence
- 5.2 CEO Report – K. Su
- 5.3 Department Reports – November & December 2025
 - 5.3(a) Customer Service – J. Spera & M. Haanstra
 - 5.3(b) Innovation, Collections, and Technology – D. Bott
 - 5.3(c) Programming & Promotions – H. Jones
 - 5.3(d) Health & Safety – L. DiDonato
- 5.4 Quarterly Progress Update on 2025 Work Plan (Q4) – K. Su

5.5 Employee Succession Plan – A. Maciukas

MOTION: 2026-03 THAT the Consent Agenda be received as circulated except for Items 5.1 and 5.3(b) pulled for discussion.
MOVED BY: N. Olmstead
SECONDED BY: S. Dimick
MOTION CARRIED.

6. Discussion Reports

6.1 Correspondence – J. Coles

The Chair raised concerns regarding the graph detailing checkouts by type. The Board directed staff to separate the data to improve specificity. The CEO will circulate the revised version to the Board prior to submission to City Council.

6.2 Innovation, Collections, and Technology Department Report – D. Bott

The Chair requested that an updated Borrowing Policy, incorporating the revised loan periods detailed in the ICT Department Report, be submitted to the Board in February.

6.3 Policy (G-04) Collection Management – D. Bott

The Board received Policy (G-04) Collection Management with amendments recommended from the November Board Meeting. The Board discussed AI material transparency and made additional amendments to the language regarding cataloguing.

MOTION: 2026-04 THAT the Board approve Policy (G-04) Collection Management as amended.
MOVED BY: G. Riihimaki
SECONDED BY: N. Olmstead
MOTION CARRIED.

6.4 Policy (G-13) Occupational Health and Safety – A. Maciukas

The Board received Policy (G-13) Occupational Health and Safety with minor amendments, including the removal of the Terms of Reference appendix.

MOTION: 2026-05 THAT the Board approve Policy (G-13) Occupational Health and Safety.
MOVED BY: S. Dimick
SECONDED BY: N. Olmstead
MOTION CARRIED.

6.5 Policy (P-01) Workplace Violence and Harassment – A. Maciukas

The Board received Policy (P-01) Workplace Violence and Harassment with amendments including additional reference to cyberbullying.

MOTION: 2026-06 THAT the Board approve Policy (P-01) Workplace Violence and Harassment.
MOVED BY: Councillor G. Miller
SECONDED BY: L. Littleton
MOTION CARRIED.

6.6 Policy (G-20) Video Surveillance – D. Bott

The Board received Policy (G-20) Video Surveillance with minor amendments.

MOTION: 2026-07 THAT the Board approve Policy (G-20) Video Surveillance.
MOVED BY: G. Riihimaki
SECONDED BY: S. Dimick
MOTION CARRIED.

7. In-Camera Session

7.1 In-Camera Agenda

7.1(a) Additions/Deletions to In-Camera Agenda
Add 7.5 (a) Legal Matter

7.1(b) Adoption of In-Camera Agenda

MOTION: 2026-08 THAT the In-Camera Agenda be adopted as amended.
MOVED BY: L. Littleton
SECONDED BY: G. Riihimaki
MOTION CARRIED.

D. Bott, H. Jones, and S. Mannella left the meeting at 6:38pm.

7.2 Motion to Move In-Camera

MOTION: 2026-09 THAT the Regular Meeting move to In-Camera Session to discuss personnel and legal matters.
MOVED BY: S. Dimick
SECONDED BY: Councillor G. Miller
MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting moved to In-Camera Session at 6:38pm.

7.6 Return to Open Session

MOTION: 2026-11 THAT the In-Camera Session return to Open Session.

MOVED BY: Councillor G. Miller
SECONDED BY: N. Olmstead
MOTION CARRIED.

L. DiDonato, M. Haanstra, L. Jenter, A. Maciukas, and J. Spera left the meeting at 6:42pm

The Meeting returned to Open Session at 6:45pm.

8. Motion(s) Arising From In-Camera Session

MOTION: 2026-12 THAT the Board receive the information presented during the closed session and that the Board proceed as directed during the closed session.
MOVED BY: S. Dimick
SECONDED BY: L. Littleton
MOTION CARRIED.

9. Motion to Adjourn

MOTION: 2026-13 THAT the Regular Meeting be adjourned.
MOVED BY: G. Riihimaki
SECONDED BY: N/A
MOTION CARRIED.

Meeting adjourned at 6:46pm.

10. Next Meeting / Upcoming Events

Board Meeting – Thursday, February 19, 2026 at 6:00 pm, Mills Room, Central Library & Microsoft Teams

Chair

Secretary

Consent Agenda

Recommendation

THAT the Consent Agenda be received as circulated.

5. **Consent Agenda (attachments)**

Motion

- 5.1 CEO Report – K. Su
- 5.2 Department Reports – January 2026
 - 5.2 (a) Customer Service – J. Spera & M. Haanstra
 - 5.2 (b) Innovation, Collections, and Technology – D. Bott
 - 5.2 (c) Programming & Promotions – H. Jones
 - 5.2 (d) Human Resources – A. Maciukas
 - 5.2 (e) ILS Migration – D. Bott
 - 5.2 (f) Quarterly Department Reports of Q4 2025
- 5.3 Financial Reports – L. DiDonato
 - 5.3 (a) 2025 Financial Results for the Year Ended December 31, 2025
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CEO Report

submitted by Ken Su, CEO (January 2026)

For Information

Central Library Renovation Update

When the CEO met with the Architect in November 2025, the Architect indicated that she hoped to submit a fee proposal in January 2026. Once approved, she would review the original design and develop a revised plan, primarily focusing on the atrium and washrooms, with estimated costs anticipated in March or April 2026. The CEO followed up with the Architect on February 2 and again on February 9, 2026 to request an update on the fee proposal; however, no response had been received at the time of writing this report.

The Library is still waiting for the GICB grant application result. There is no timeline given. Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada will communicate the results in writing as they become available.

2027 Capital Budget

The Library will be meeting with City staff on April 9, 2026 to discuss the Library's 2027 capital budget.

Staff are scheduled to present the Library's 2027 draft budget to City Council on December 2, 2026, so we anticipate to present the 2027 preliminary budget to the Board in June and then the draft budget at its meeting in September/October 2026.

State of the Region and State of the City

State of the Region is scheduled at 11am on Friday, February 27, 2026 at Sheraton Fallsview Hotel.

State of the City is scheduled at 11am on Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at Club Roma.

Board members who are interested in attending, please contact the CEO.

Customer Service

submitted by Marcella Haanstra, Assistant Manager of Customer Service (January 2026)

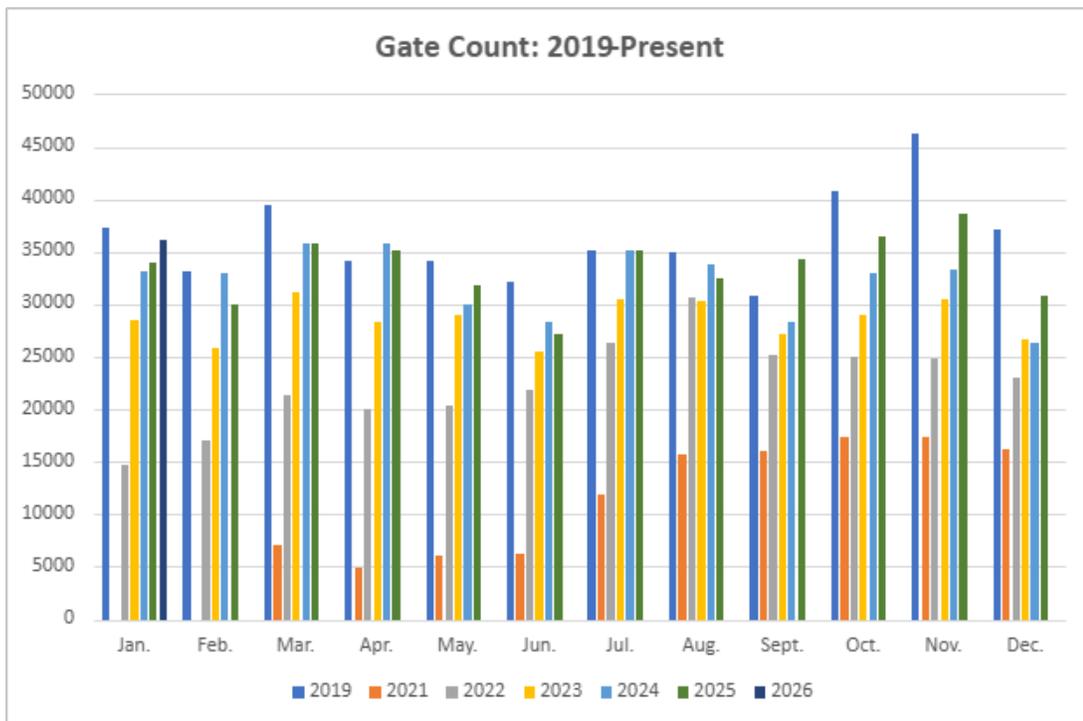
For Information

All data provided is for January 2026 compared to the same month in 2025. The library continues at full operations.

	January 2026	% change from 2025
Gate Count	36,112	33,993 (+6%)
Membership	684	654 (+4%)
Holds Placed	15,241	14,233 (+7%)
Questions	7,231	7,017 (+3%)

Gate Count

In January, our system-wide gate count increased by 6% compared to January 2025. Overall, our system-wide gate count continues its steady climb toward pre-pandemic 2020 levels.



Membership

New memberships are steadily rising, with a 4% increase over January 2025, reflecting strong community interest in library services. Our Reciprocal Borrowing initiative continues to perform exceptionally well, now supporting 745 registered customers. This growth demonstrates the value of inter-library collaboration and the increasing importance of flexible access for residents of the Niagara Region.

Holds Placed

The number of holds placed this month was up 7% over January 2025. The Merritton Locker located at the Home Hardware on Hartzel Road continues to serve as a highly effective and convenient site for holds pickups, with a total of 1,146 items retrieved since its launch. The holds system continues to be an integral library service for customers across the city.

Visiting Library Service

The Visiting Library Service continues to provide the joy of reading to St. Catharines residents who are unable to visit the library in person. Housebound SCPL customers may contact the library with their reading and/or listening preferences, and staff will curate a personalized selection of materials to be delivered directly to their home. Currently, 90 customers benefit from this service, and 438 orders were prepared and delivered in 2025 - a 12% increase over 2024.

This service is made possible through the dedication of volunteers who generously contribute their time to deliver library materials. At present, SCPL partners with 20 volunteers for the Visiting Library Service, four of whom are SCPL staff members. The library continues to receive highly positive feedback about the service, including one customer who expressed appreciation for the straightforward registration process and for the prompt preparation and delivery of her order.

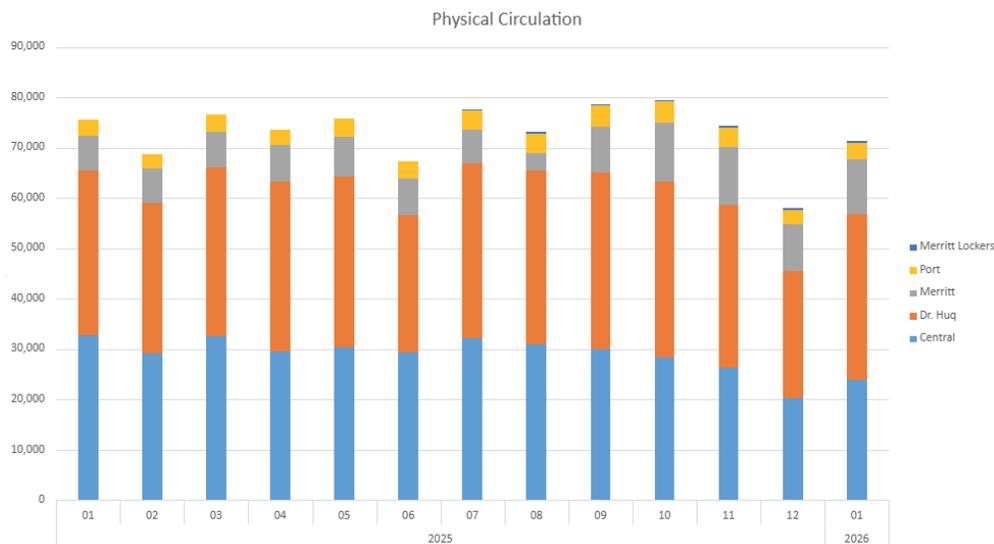
Innovation, Collections & Technology

submitted by David Bott, Manager Innovation, Collections & Technology (January 2026)

For Information

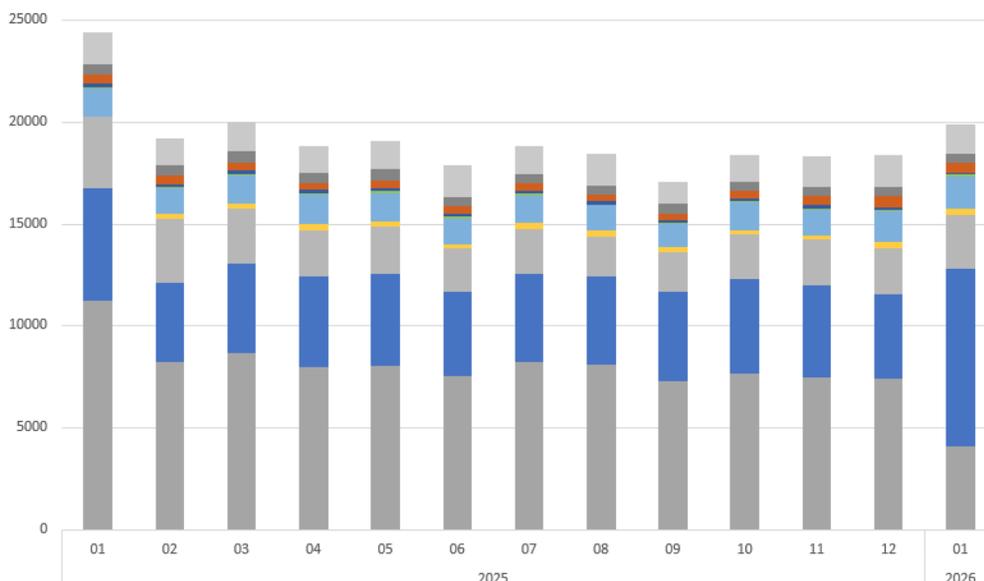
Physical Circulation

Physical circulation increased by 23% in January 2026 from that of December 2025.



Digital Circulation

Digital circulation of eBooks, eAudiobooks, digital magazines, and streaming content increased by 7% from December 2025 to January 2026.



New Collection – “Lucky Day” Express Adult Fiction

An express collection for Adult Fiction titles was introduced in January. The collection will be known as “Lucky Day” based on the shamrock sticker placed on the books. Customers can borrow popular adult fiction titles on a first-come first-serve basis without placing a hold similar to the DVD Express Collection.

Library of Things

The 12 Ontario Park Passes and 8 Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Natureplus Park Passes were updated for 2026.

Over 100 holds have been placed on the Radon Gas Detectors, so additional units were purchased to meet demand.

Gamerspace

Two Nintendo Switch 2 Consoles were purchased for the Gamerspace. All previous games from the original Switch consoles were transferred to the new Nintendo Switch 2 consoles and will allow SCPL to expand the collection to include Nintendo Switch 2 games as well.

Programming and Promotions

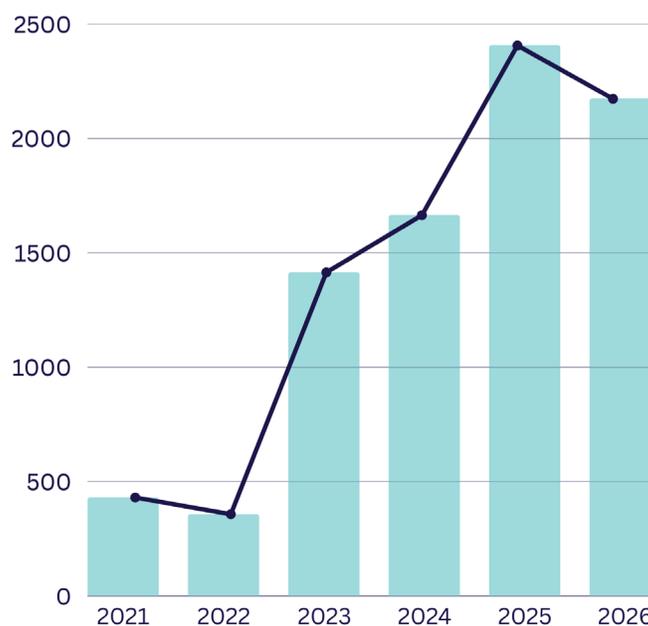
submitted by Holly Jones, Manager Programming & Promotions (January 2026)

For Information

Programming Highlights

In January, a total of 2,174 customers attended or participated in library programming, representing a 10% decrease compared to the same period in 2025. This decline is attributed to persistently colder-than-average weather, program cancellations due to snowstorms, and a seasonal slowdown following the holiday period. It is also noted that January 2025 experienced unusually high attendance; despite the year-over-year decrease, January 2026 attendance remains 30% higher than January 2024.

January Program Attendance, 2021-2026



Of special programming note in January:

1. **Ontario Career Labs Outreach:** SCPL staff participated as "Career Coaches" in Ontario Career Labs sessions at high schools across St. Catharines. Staff engaged with Grade 9–10 students in conversations about career pathways and

workforce experiences. A total of 160 student engagements were recorded in January, with additional sessions scheduled to continue throughout the winter.

2. **Storytime with the IceDogs:** SCPL launched a new partnership with the Niagara IceDogs through collaborative *Storytime with the IceDogs* programs. These sessions featured reading and interactive activities led by members of the local hockey team, creating an engaging literacy experience for children and families. Additional sessions are planned to continue throughout the winter.
3. **Family Literacy Day Celebration:** SCPL hosted an all-ages drop-in *Literacy Day Celebration* at the Merritt Branch, featuring literacy-themed activities and crafts. Participants were invited to engage in hands-on experiences including LEGO, colouring, and other creative activities designed to promote literacy and family participation.
4. **St. Catharines at 150: Mixed Media Retrospective Art:** As part of the Library's contribution to the City's "STC 150" celebrations, participants were invited to explore local history through creative expression. Using historical photographs from the library's collection, attendees created mixed media art pieces incorporating a variety of materials, including paint, pastels, and crayons, to reflect on the significance of St. Catharines' 150th anniversary.
5. **Finding Calm: The Basics of Meditation:** Led by Michelle MacIntosh, MSW, RSW, and a meditation teacher with 15 years of experience, this program was designed to introduce participants to practical mindfulness and meditation techniques to support stress reduction, resilience, and overall well-being.

There were no formal submissions received via the *Request for Program Reconsideration* form during this period.

Communication Highlights

The Communications Specialist was involved in several key initiatives this month:

- Successfully launched a new line of "Read Your Heart Out, St. Catharines" notebooks for the SCPL Shop
- Launched the 2026 Q1 Membership Reactivation Campaign
- Finalized marketing assets for upcoming high-visibility initiatives, including Tax Clinics, the "Lucky Day" collection, and 2026 Olympics programming
- Developed promotional strategies for new additions to the Library of Things, ensuring the community is aware of expanded non-traditional lending options

- Initiated the development of comprehensive Website Procedures to standardize digital content management and ensure long-term site sustainability

Social media engagement in January was characterized by high engagement and positive sentiment. Key highlights included:

- Appreciation for SCPL's digital collections, new Radon Gas Detectors, and continued access to Parks Passes
- Positive feedback on the Port Branch book drop and promotions for the SCPL Shop
- Praise for family-focused programming, including the "Stuffie Sleepover"

Media Mentions

09-Jan	CKTB-The Drive	Topics: Storytime with the IceDogs, Memory Care Kits and Connections First series for Alzheimer's Awareness Month, Radon Gas Detectors
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Human Resources

submitted by **Albertina Maciukas, Manager, Human Resources (January 2026)**

For Information

Negotiations

The negotiation committee completed four productive days of bargaining with the union, most recently on January 29 and 30.

Recruitment

Since the beginning of 2026, SCPL has posted six positions, conducted 22 interviews, and successfully filled nine vacancies, with additional hires currently in progress.

Staff Development Day 2026

A call for staff volunteers to join the Staff Development Day planning committee was distributed via SharePoint in January. We are also in discussions with a neighbouring library regarding a potential partnership opportunity for Staff Development Day.

Training

We are partnering with the City to expand employee training opportunities while maintaining cost efficiency.

Integrated Library System (ILS) Migration

submitted by David Bott, Manager, Innovation, Collections and Technology (January 2026)

For Information

The ILS migration project is now underway. Staff from Niagara Falls and St. Catharines met with Clarivate for a series of meetings to configure the Polaris system profile for the new ILS. This consists of various system-wide and individual library settings for the various modules including circulation, cataloguing, online searching, acquisitions, collections, library locations, borrowers and much more. SCPL staff will continue to meet with NFPL weekly to complete the profiling process by the first week of March.

Internally, our ILS Project Management Team is meeting weekly to define roles and responsibilities so that we can deliver a cohesive, seamless Integrated Library System. We are also in the process of developing a communication portal for staff that provides access to weekly updates, training dates, FAQs, talking points and a simplified schedule of milestones for staff to follow the project.

Quarterly Department Reports of Q4 2025

submitted by SCPL Librarians (October, November, December 2025)

For Information

Each quarter, SCPL Librarians from Customer Service, Innovation, Collections and Technology, and Programming and Promotions prepare departmental reports for their peers summarizing key library activities, statistics, and feedback from the previous quarter. This year, these reports will be included into the Board package to provide the Board with additional insight into departmental statistics and initiatives.

CUSTOMER SERVICE SUMMARY

Q4 2025

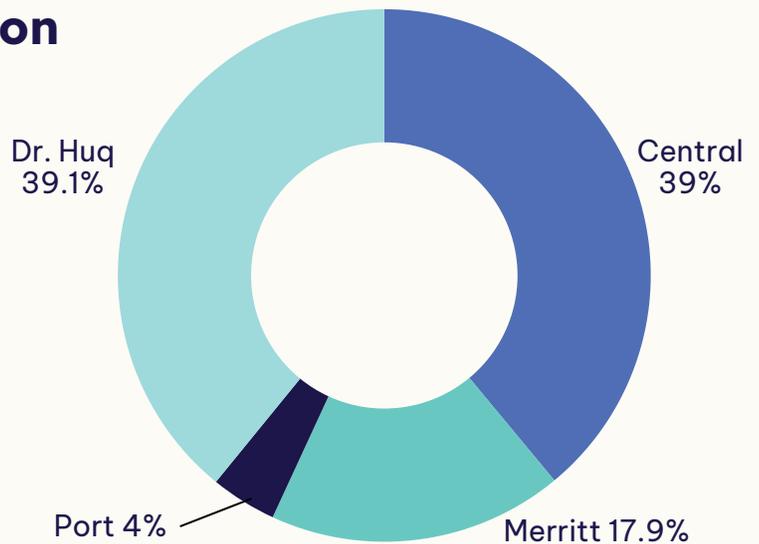
From October to December 2025, SCPL's total gate count was 105,983. This number represents an increase of 14% from Q4 2024.

Q4 Gate Count vs LY



Q4 Gate Count by Location

- Dr. Huq - 41458
- Central - 41312
- Merritt - 18971
- Port Dalhousie - 4242



Q4 Circulation

1765 New Memberships +7.3% vs LY • 35,001 Holds Processed +8.4% vs LY

Q4 Training

In November, SCPL held its 4th annual Staff Development Day, which featured training workshops led by the following organizations: Quest Community Health Care, the Alzheimer Society, Community Care St. Catharines, and Bridges Niagara. The schedule also featured a talk by Adam Shoalts and a presentation on AI in libraries led by SCPL staff.

Corresponding to the domains established in the Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit (VOLT), the following numbers demonstrate how Customer Service has contributed to the overall social value impact provided by SCPL to the community.

**civic
engagement**

**378
volunteer
hours**

space

**105,983
visits**

**economic
development**

**635
staff training
hours**

education

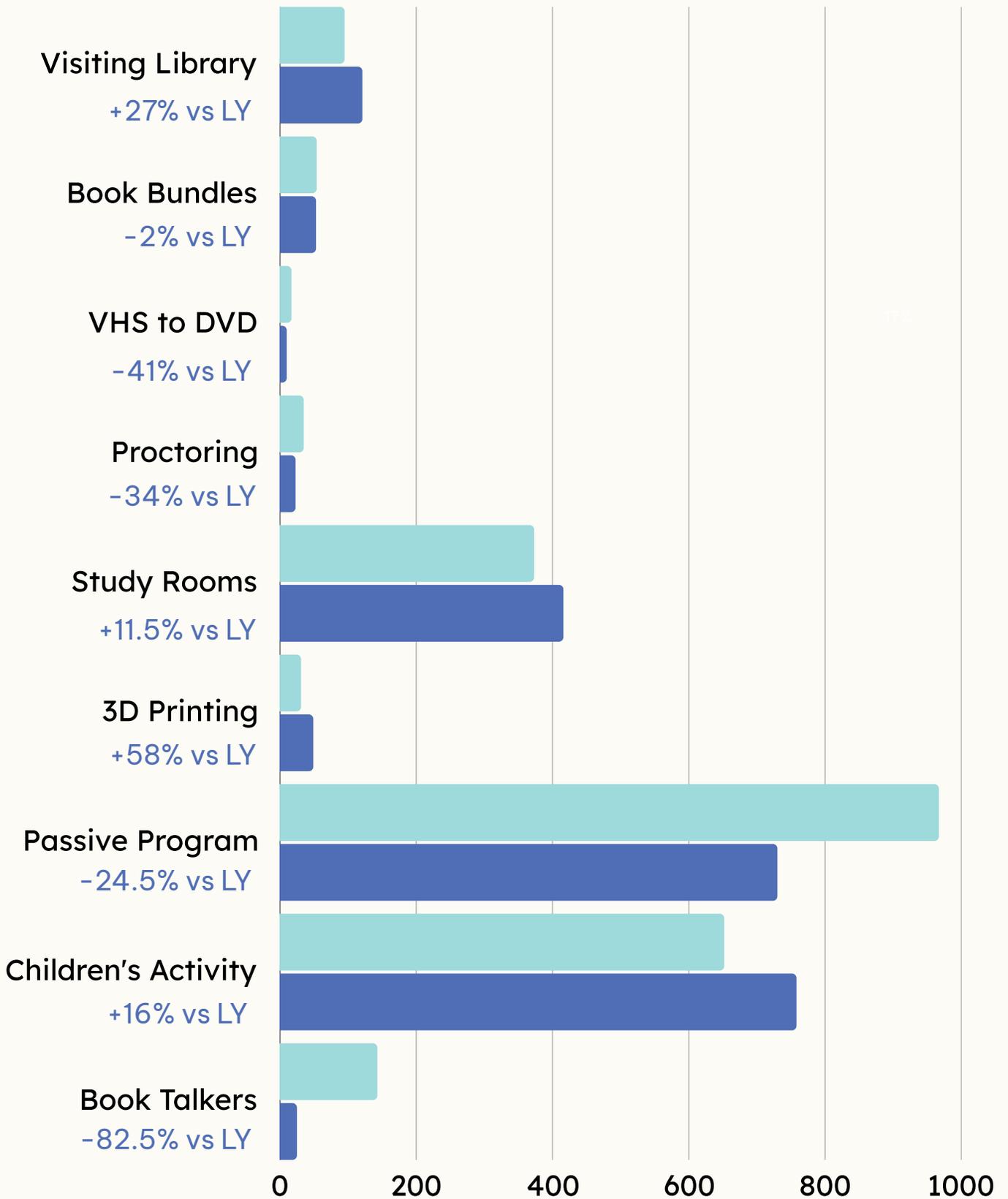
**20,781
information
requests**

**entertainment
& leisure**

**65,893
active
borrowers**

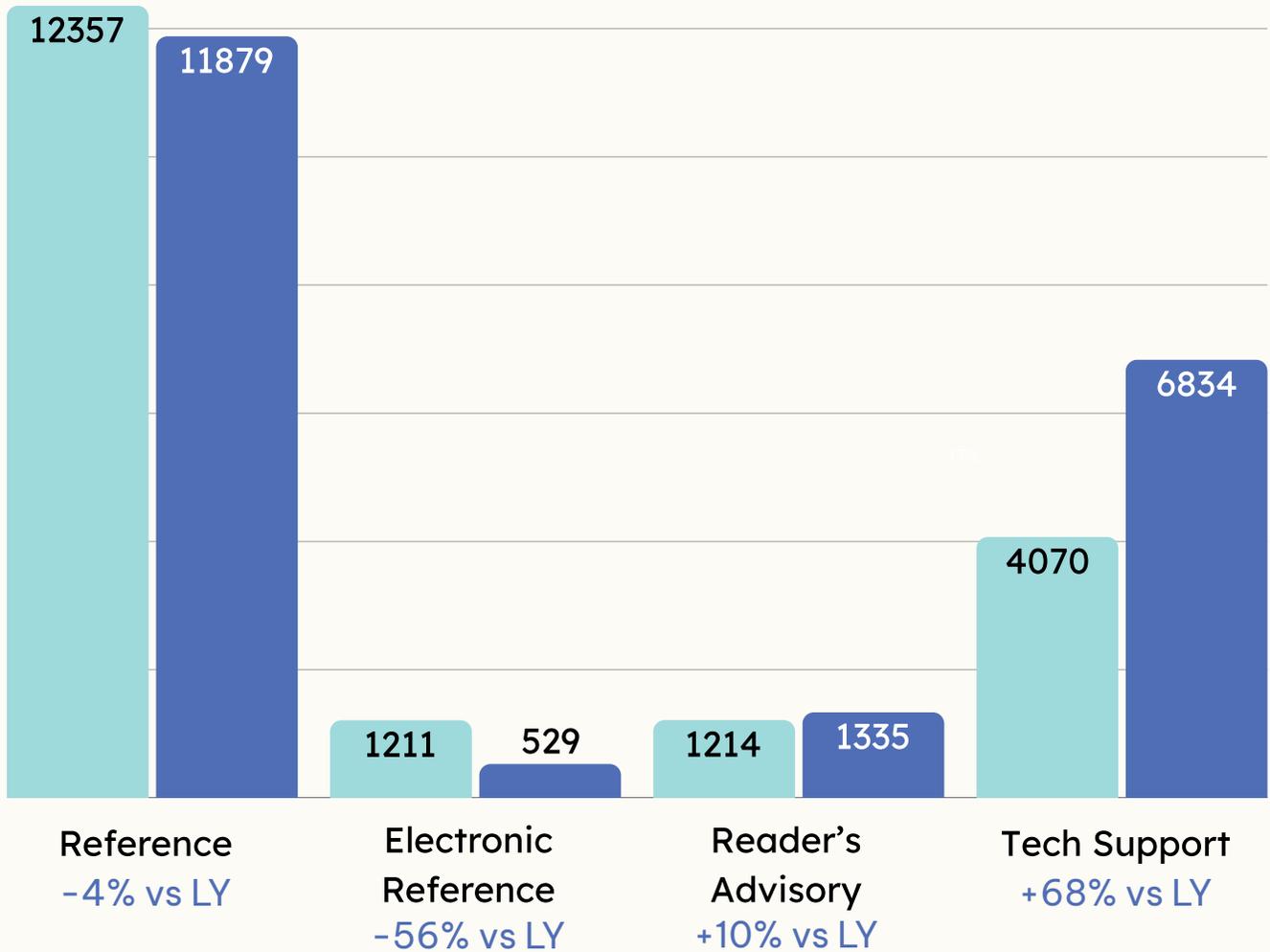
Q4 Services

2024 2025



Q4 Information Requests

● 2024 ● 2025



- Average time per tech support interaction: 6.6 minutes, +16% vs LY
- Special Collections requests: 204, -30% vs LY
- Accessibility requests: 201, -8% vs LY

Q4 Customer Feedback

A customer at the Port Dalhousie Branch was happy that it has an external drop box as it makes it easier to return items during unstaffed hours and on holidays.

A customer picked up her book bundle and shared how much she loves them. She said they're so convenient because she doesn't have time to search for all the books she wants, and this saves her time since she can just pick up the books [at Merritt] when she's shopping.

At the Central Library, a customer told staff that he and his daughter come to the library every Saturday and it's her favourite thing to do. He said she really loves the play and craft areas, and he's really grateful the library has these resources.

A gentleman who frequents the study rooms at Merritt expressed just how thankful he is for the library and library staff. He said the fact that he can come into a nice, cozy, quiet place to do his meetings is amazing. He also said that the staff is so nice and helpful and he is so grateful for them.

A customer was very happy with the Indigenous book display near the front of the library. They were coming in for a book to read to their daughter's kindergarten class and found one on the display right when they walked in. They said the display was perfect and thanked us for showcasing Indigenous reads.

"Greetings! Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the AMAZING service that I receive from the folks at the Huq branch and from the library in general. Please forward this to the folks at the City that the Library reports to."

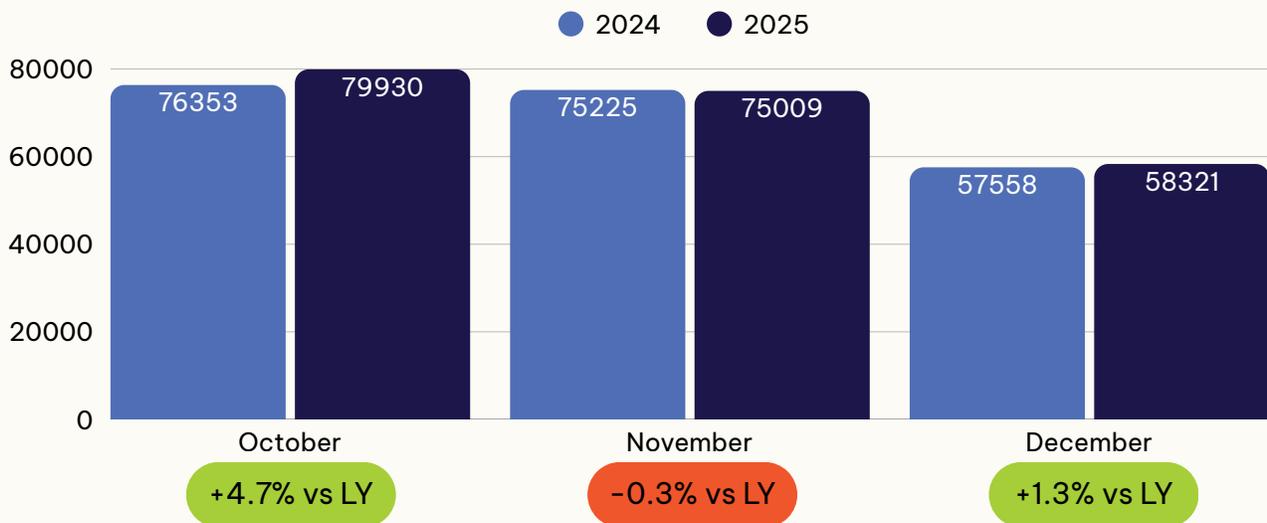
Emailed to a staff member who helped the customer with an email request: "You are such a dear for helping me with the articles. Thank you. I am older and the internet and computer are difficult for me to navigate. I value and appreciate you and what you do at the library. The library is my favourite place, next to being at church. I appreciate the service and kindness and generosity of all who work at the library. I am also impressed with the abundant resources and how easily and quickly everyone can access the information."

ICT SUMMARY

Q4 2025

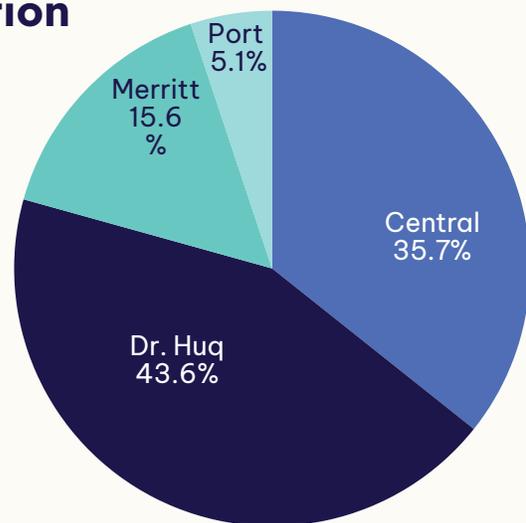
Q4 Physical Circulation

From October to December 2025, physical checkouts and in-house uses of materials totaled 213,260. This marks a decrease of 8% from that of Q3 2025. Overall, 2025 physical circulation increased by approximately 1.4% compared to 2024. This total is influenced by reduced August circulation during the Merritt Branch relocation. When August data are excluded from both years to account for this temporary service disruption, total physical circulation for 2025 increases by 2.7% over 2024.



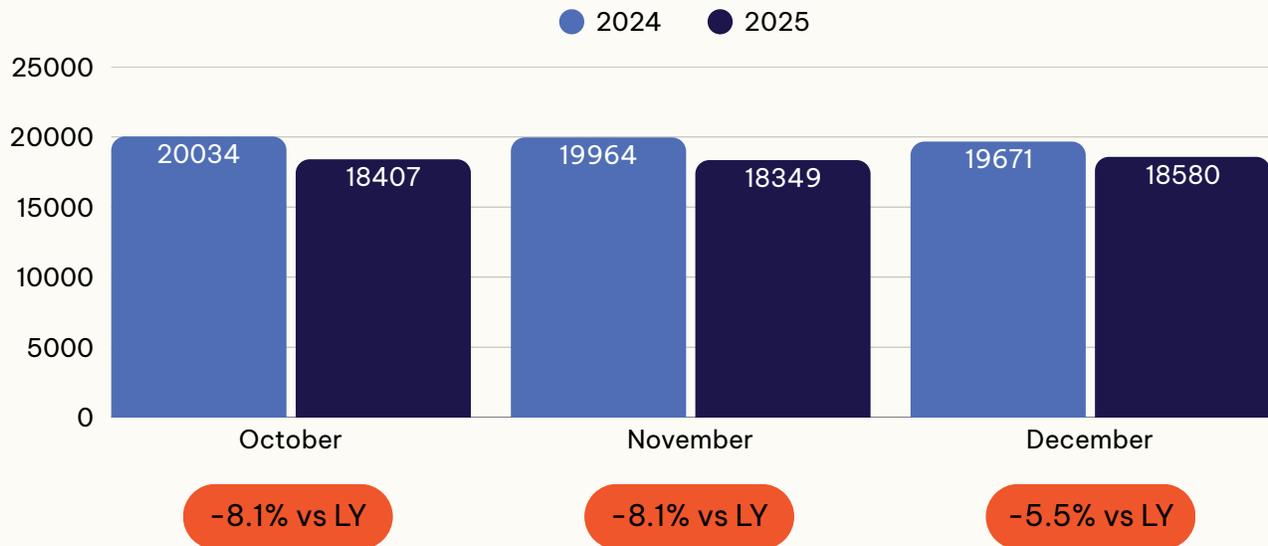
Q4 Physical Circulation by Location

- Central
- Dr. Huq
- Merritt
- Port Dalhousie



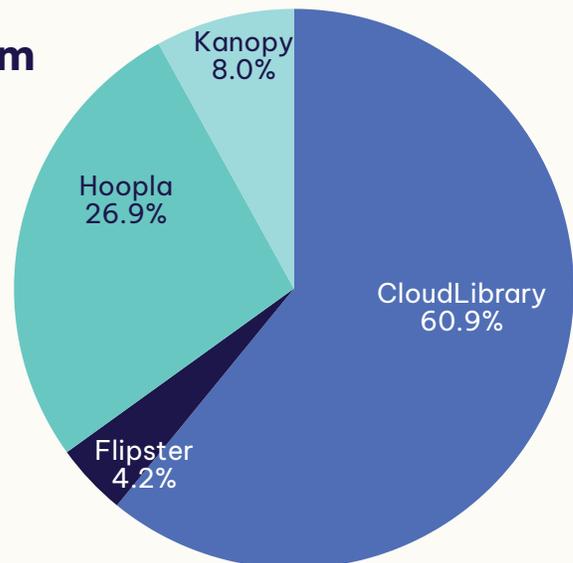
Q4 Digital Circulation

Digital circulation across CloudLibrary, Flipster, Hoopla, and Kanopy in Q4 remained on par with that of Q3, increasing by about 1%. Overall, digital circulation in 2025 declined by approximately 6% compared to 2024, a change largely attributable to the introduction of Hoopla and Kanopy pay-per-use thresholds in the second quarter of the year.



Q4 Digital Circulation by Platform

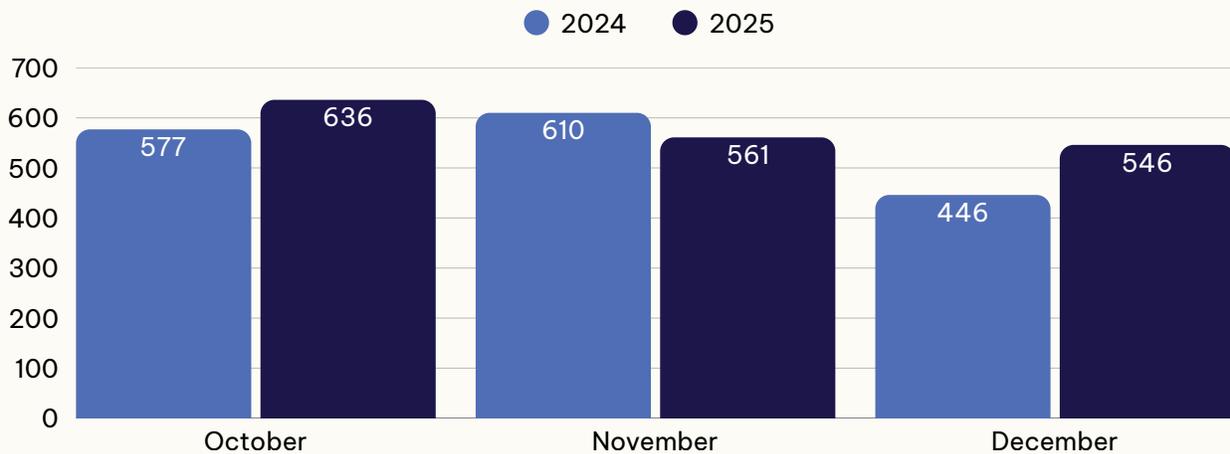
- CloudLibrary
- Flipster
- Hoopla
- Kanopy



Q4 Library of Things

Supporting SCPL’s strategic goals of “Literacy in Bloom” and “Experiences in Bloom,” the Library of Things continues to offer interactive learning opportunities and access to distinctive resources. Radon gas detectors were launched in December 2025, and additional units have since been ordered to keep up with their demand. Overall, the Q4 circulation of the Library of Things collection for 2025 was up 6.7% compared to that of 2024.

Q4 Library of Things Circulation



Gamerspace & PC Usage

Consoles within the gamerspace were used 477 times in Q4, marking a 17% increase from Q4 of 2024. Additionally, gaming PCs were used 773 times, representing a 9.5% decrease from their usage in Q4 2024.

Across all SCPL locations, internet computers were used 11,290 times in Q4. This represents a 21.6% increase from Q4 in 2024.

VOLT

The Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit (VOLT) provides several categories used to calculate the the social return on investment of libraries. The following circulation numbers represent the Q4 usage of physical and digital/online resources associated with those categories.

education

75,902
uses

culture

7,196
uses

inclusion & wellbeing

8,982
uses

entertainment &
leisure

213,537
uses

economic
development

3,891
uses

Q4 Collections Feedback

A customer stated through an email that “Last year I read 170 books, most of these from your ebook collection. Reading has not just been an entertainment, but has literally kept me sane in a world of endless days of being stuck on the couch or in bed... And being able to borrow and return ebooks from the comfort of my own bed has been an accessibility blessing for me.”

A customer shared that she’s just started using the library and is thrilled that she can see a book on TV, place a hold and have the book to read fairly quickly. She tells everyone how much she loves the library and how much she appreciates it.

A staff member was talking to a customer about how we recently changed the loan period for new adult fiction books to 21 days and she said “it’s so nice how the library really cares about the community”

Customers were very happy that DVDs are now 21 days and that Express DVDs are now 7 days.

Customer loves our cookie cutter collection and had fun making Halloween cookies.

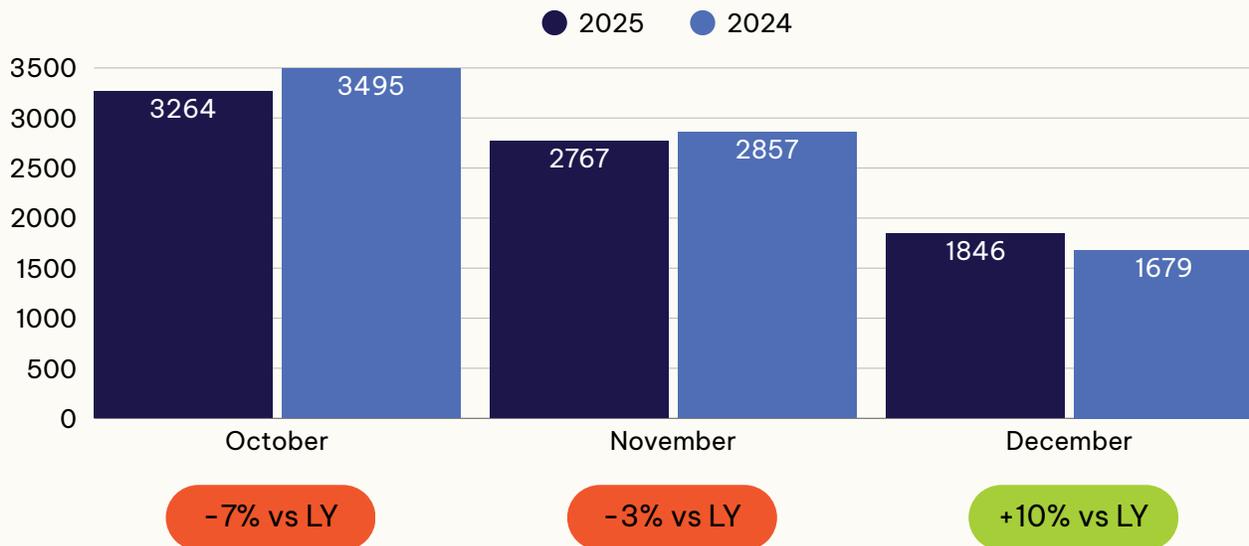
A customer expressed that she was really happy with the express DVD collection. She said that she had really been wanting to see a certain movie and was glad that we had it available.

PROGRAMMING SUMMARY

Q4 2025

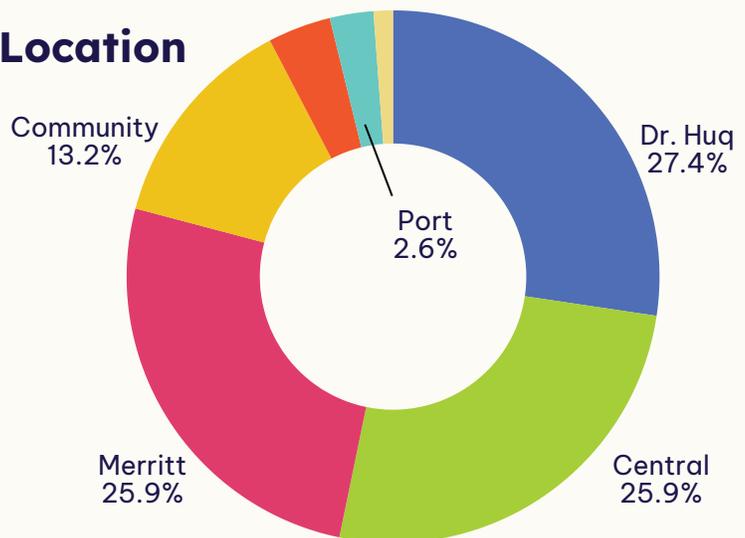
SCPL provided 340 programs to 7,877 attendees from October-December 2025. This represents an overall decrease in attendance of 2% from Q4 of 2024. Programming focus for Q4 included One Book, One Niagara, the second annual LitFest event, Culture Days partnerships with the City of St. Catharines and holiday-centric programs.

Q4 Program Attendance vs LY



Q4 Program Sessions per Location

- Dr. Huq - 93 programs
- Central - 88 programs
- Merritt - 88 programs
- Community - 45 programs
- System-Wide - 13 programs
- Port Dalhousie - 9 programs
- Virtual - 4 programs



Q4 Partnerships & External Presenters

In alignment with the “Community in Bloom” goal in the Strategic Plan, the Programming & Promotions department has engaged with a variety of organizations and community members in order to provide learning opportunities for our larger community. Partners and external presenters in Q4 include:

- Adam Boyd (D&D Club)
- Alzheimer Society of Niagara
- Bridges Niagara
- Brock University
- The Brown Homestead
- City of St. Catharines, Culture Days
- David Coruzzi (Musician)
- Downtown Business Association
- DSBN EarlyON
- FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre
- Indigenous Dreams
- Jacob Finch (Modular Origami)
- Master Gardeners of Niagara
- Melissa Sticca (Red Cross)
- Prashanth Krishnakumar (Meditation)
- P.U.L.S.E. Poetry
- Ronnie O’Byrne (St. Andrew’s Day)
- St. Catharines Museum
- YMCA EarlyON

Corresponding to the domains established in the Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit (VOLT), the quarterly program attendees provides a snapshot of how programming contributes to the overall social value impact provided by SCPL to the community.



Q4 Program Participant Feedback



Suggestions for Future Programs ...

- “More collaborative storytimes with local groups and locations.”
 - Action: Upcoming storytime partnerships include the Niagara IceDogs and continuing storytimes with EarlyON locations across the city.
- “Definitely another [session] of the beading [program] I attended, and another Dreamcatcher as I was not able to get on the list.”
 - Action: Programming Librarians are continuing to work with Indigenous artists to facilitate additional Dreamcatcher and Beading programs.
- “Please continue these meditation classes!”
 - Action: Additional meditation classes will continue to be added to upcoming schedules.
- “More toddler classes would be great. My kid is too young for Lego or stem activity or science one but too old for baby classes.”
 - Action: Early literacy programs are regularly evaluated for potential expansion or adjustment.

Q4 Testimonials from Program Participants ...

“We absolutely loved the [LitFest] panel discussion with the amazing writers! The loot bags were unexpected and super cute! Thank you so much!”

“This program was at the Brown Homestead—really nice to go do a storytime somewhere there is other things to do as well. We always love story time but it made the trip feel more ‘worth it.’”

“This [beading] program was fantastic - the instructors were incredible and the participants were fun and engaged. It was a full group and yet the room still seemed large, in all honesty it far exceeded my expectations and means I will definitely sign up for more in the future.”

“Thank you to [Culture Days external artist] for such an inspirational hour of ART, I learned so much!!! Please do this class again, it was amazing!! 😊🎨🖌️”

“The Christmas book decoration [program] is awesome. [The library facilitator] did a really great job. Definitely will attend something like this again!!”

“We attended A Night of Mystery [LitFest author panel] and it was wonderful. We would love to do it again next year.”

“Upon waiting for the tour to start, the special collections room felt big and intimidating. After the tour the room felt accessible and interesting, I really enjoyed learning how things are organized and how to go about finding different topics”

“I discovered that I was born to bedazzle books!! Loved it!”

Financial Results for the Year Ended December 31, 2025

submitted by Lisa DiDonato, Business Administrator

Recommendation

That the St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) Board approve the transfer of the net surplus for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2025, to the SCPL Stabilization Reserve. These funds will be designated, subject to Board approval, to offset any unforeseen future expenditures or revenue shortfalls, in accordance with the SCPL Reserve Policy.

Report

The purpose of this report is to present the unaudited financial results for the SCPL for the year ended December 31, 2025. Subject to adjustments during the preparation of the audited financial statements, the net expenditure surplus for the year is \$3,969. A summary of the results is provided in Appendix A.

Revenue

For the year ended December 31, 2025, revenue exceeded the budgeted amount, primarily due to an accessibility grant that helped offset leasehold improvement costs at the new Merritt Branch. Transfers from reserves included \$350,000 from the Capital Reserve and \$120,000 from the Stabilization Reserve to fund costs associated with the Merritt Branch relocation.

Salaries and Benefits

Salary and benefit costs were generally in line with the budget for year ended December 31, 2025.

Library Materials

Library materials are actively managed to balance fiscal responsibility with meeting customer demand for desired materials. For 2025, expenditures were in line with budget.

Occupancy Costs

The net surplus in Occupancy Costs includes the reversal of historical payable accruals identified by management and the auditors as uncollectible. These funds were used to offset costs related to professional fees for project consulting and architectural services, including website redesign, fundraising feasibility, asset management, and the Central renovation.

Supplies and Services

The net deficit in Supplies and Services primarily reflects professional fees for project consulting and architectural services, which were offset by the surplus in Occupancy Costs.

Operating Costs

Operating Costs include leasehold improvement costs incurred in connection with the relocation of the Merritt Branch to the Pen Centre.

Surplus/Transfer to Reserve

The SCPL Stabilization Reserve serves to mitigate the impact of unforeseen expenditures and revenue shortfalls. It is funded through annual contributions or transfers from the operating surplus. Currently, the projected balance of the reserve falls significantly below the target threshold of 10% of the operating budget, as shown in Appendix B. In light of this, SCPL recommends that the Board approve the transfer of the net surplus for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025, to the Stabilization Reserve.

Appendix A - 2025 Financial Results & Forecast at December 31, 2025

	Actual	Budget	%	Variance
REVENUE				
City Contribution	7,010,502	7,010,502	100.0	-
Miscellaneous	458,193	323,156	141.8	135,037
Transfer from Reserves	470,000	470,000	-	-
Total Revenue	<u>7,938,695</u>	<u>7,803,658</u>	<u>101.7</u>	<u>135,037</u>
EXPENDITURES				
Salaries	4,354,888	4,372,340	99.6	17,452
Benefits	990,902	1,015,746	97.6	24,844
Salaries & Benefits	<u>5,345,790</u>	<u>5,388,086</u>	<u>99.2</u>	<u>42,296</u>
LIBRARY MATERIALS				
Books	430,580	476,411	90.4	45,831
Visual Materials	69,254	68,310	101.4	- 944
Microfilm	3,256	3,623	89.9	367
Periodicals	280,650	244,778	114.7	- 35,872
Sound Recordings	3,645	3,830	95.2	185
Library Materials	<u>787,385</u>	<u>796,952</u>	<u>98.8</u>	<u>9,567</u>
Occupancy Costs				
Communications	35,480	41,900	84.7	6,420
Insurance	52,753	47,555	110.9	- 5,198
Rent/Taxes & Debt Interest	63,563	219,901	28.9	156,338
Repairs & Maintenance	137,908	148,398	92.9	10,490
Utilities	218,780	228,155	95.9	9,375
Occupancy Costs	<u>508,484</u>	<u>685,909</u>	<u>74.1</u>	<u>177,425</u>
SUPPLIES & SERVICES				
General Supplies	66,594	48,226	138.1	- 18,368
Audio Visual Supplies	16,980	4,242	400.3	- 12,738
Professional Fees	160,711	59,095	272.0	- 101,616
Staff Training & Development	30,455	44,940	67.8	14,485
Rental of Equipment	12,008	13,276	90.4	1,268
Software Maintenance	158,006	144,614	109.3	- 13,392
Transportation	13,656	33,835	40.4	20,179
Sundry	11,843	14,214	83.3	2,371
Printing and Stationary	686	2,222	30.9	1,536
Public Relations	27,445	25,110	109.3	- 2,335
Account Collection	1,069	1,400	76.4	331
Programs	19,804	19,625	100.9	- 179
Data Processing	25,057	28,846	86.9	3,789
Supplies & Services	<u>544,314</u>	<u>439,645</u>	<u>123.8</u>	<u>- 104,669</u>
OPERATING CAPITAL COSTS				
Furniture & Equipment	650,688	395,000	164.7	- 255,688
Debt - Aquatic Centre	98,066	98,066	100.0	-
Operating Capital Costs	<u>748,753</u>	<u>493,066</u>	<u>151.9</u>	<u>- 255,687</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>7,934,726</u>	<u>7,803,658</u>	<u>101.7</u>	<u>- 131,068</u>
UNEXPENDED BALANCE	<u>3,969</u>	<u>-</u>		<u>3,969</u>

Appendix B - SCPL Reserves

SCPL Capital Reserve									
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Balance, Beginning of Year	2,673,789	2,323,789	2,332,577	1,343,457	1,206,428	1,321,492	1,438,648	457,896	579,236
Contributions from Operating	-	8,788	110,880	112,972	115,064	117,156	119,248	121,340	123,432
	2,673,789	2,332,577	2,443,457	1,456,428	1,321,492	1,438,648	1,557,896	579,236	702,668
Dr. Huq Family Branch	-	-	-	250,000	-	-	-	-	-
Merritt Branch	350,000	-	-	-	-	-	1,100,000	-	-
Central Branch	-	-	1,100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Spending	350,000	-	1,100,000	250,000	-	-	1,100,000	-	-
Estimated Balance, End of Year	2,323,789	2,332,577	1,343,457	1,206,428	1,321,492	1,438,648	457,896	579,236	702,668

SCPL Stabilization Reserve									
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Balance, Beginning of Year	319,844	203,813	53,813	53,813	53,813	53,813	53,813	53,813	53,813
Contributions	3,969	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	323,813	203,813	53,813	53,813	53,813	53,813	53,813	53,813	53,813
Transfer to Operating:									
Approved ILS One Time Project Costs	-	90,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Approved Merritt Relocation Budget Mitigation	120,000	60,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Spending	120,000	150,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Estimated Balance, End of Year	203,813	53,813							

Endowment & Trust Fund Statement at December 31, 2025

submitted by Lisa DiDonato, Business Administrator

Income/Expenditures

Donations	\$	9,912
Used Books Sale		4,431
Interest		64,542
Total Income	\$	<u>78,885</u>

Less Expenditures	-	<u>403,624</u>
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Current Year, Net Expenditures	-\$	324,740
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Fund Balance, Beginning of Year		<u>1,790,544</u>
Fund Balance	\$	<u><u>1,465,804</u></u>

Net Assets

Cash And Cash Equivalent	\$	17,267
GIC's		1,430,355
Receivables		18,182
Total Current Assets		<u>1,465,804</u>

Less Current Liabilities		<u>-</u>
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Net Assets	\$	<u><u>1,465,804</u></u>
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Encumbered Amount		245,063
Unencumbered Amount		1,220,741
Fund Balance	\$	<u><u>1,465,804</u></u>

Short-Term Investments Statement at December 31, 2025

submitted by Lisa DiDonato, Business Administrator

Broker	Due	Yield	Market Value
The Canada Trust Company	Dec 15, 2025	2.700%	\$440,862.63
TD Bank	Dec 15, 2025	2.700%	\$176,788.86
TD Bank	Dec 15, 2025	2.700%	\$290,079.47
Community Trust	Aug 20, 2027	3.540%	\$100,000.00
Concentra Bank	Apr 15, 2026	4.910%	\$62,300.00
Fairstone Bank of Canada	Aug 20, 2027	3.540%	\$100,000.00
General Bank of Canada	Aug 20, 2027	3.540%	\$100,000.00
Home Trust Company	Aug 20, 2026	3.450%	\$100,000.00
Home Equity	Aug 20, 2026	3.450%	\$75,000.00
ICICI Bank Canada	Apr 15, 2026	4.920%	\$100,000.00
Royal Bank of Canada	May 1, 2028	4.632%	\$75,404.00
Versa Bank	Aug 20, 2027	3.540%	\$100,000.00

Discussion Reports

8. **Discussion Reports (attachments)**

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------|
| 8.1 | Policy (GOV-01) Succession Planning – J. Coles & G. Riihimaki | Motion |
| 8.2 | Policy (G-06) Facilities Closing – K. Su | Motion |
| 8.3 | SCPL Incident Report – K. Su & L. DiDonato | Motion |
| 8.4 | Community Needs Assessment Funding Request – K. Su & L. DiDonato | Motion |

Policy (GOV-01) Succession Planning

submitted by Janice Coles, Board Chair, and Gail Riihimaki, Board Member

Recommendation

THAT the Board approve amended Policy (GOV-01) Succession Planning and its accompanying Appendix.

Background

In June of 2024, the Board discussed Board self-evaluation and reviewed the self-assessment questions presented. It was suggested that the questions be more actionable and opinion-based, and so we present this updated version. As before, we propose that these questions be answered both mid-term and at the end of term, online and anonymously, with the results shared with the Board in an aggregate format.

The Succession Planning policy has been amended to include Board self-assessment.



Policy Name	Succession Planning		
Section & Number	Board – GOV-01	Effective Date	2021-11-18
Motion Number	2026-XX	Last Review	2026-02-19
Author	Library Board	Next Review	2029
Policy Maintenance	Reviewed by the Board		

Policy Statement

An effective Library Board is comprised of people who collectively have the knowledge and skills and competencies necessary to govern with excellence and to lead the St. Catharines Public Library (the Library) in the realization of its vision. Municipal Council appoints members to the Library Board, and through this policy, the Library Board supports the planning process for Board succession.

Scope

This policy applies to the Board and the CEO.

Regulations

Public Libraries Act

Municipal Act

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Responsibility

The Board is responsible for planning, organizing, and leading the successful transition from the outgoing Library Board to the incoming Board.

The CEO provides assistance and support.

Operational Guidelines

1. The Library Board recognizes that the Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P44, s. 10(4) requires that the Municipal Council appoint Library Board members.

2. The Library Board members will complete a Board Self Assessment mid-way through their term and during the final year of their term. (Appendix 1 Board Self Assessment)
3. During the final year of their term, the members of the outgoing Library Board will collaborate on the production of a Board Legacy Document (a sample is attached as Appendix 1-2). This is to be completed prior to the end of the term. This document will subsequently be provided to the members of the incoming Board at their initial meeting by the Library CEO to assist in the transition process.
4. During the final year of their term, the members of the outgoing Library Board will collaborate on a review of the Board Roles & Competencies document (a sample is attached as Appendix 2-3). This is to be completed prior to the end of the term. This document will subsequently be provided to the Office of the City Clerk to assist the nominating panel in its selection process.
5. At the end of the term, the Office of the City Clerk will publish their notice of vacancies and inform the community of the appointment process. This information may also be publicized within the Library system by various means such as physically within the branches and/or electronically via the Library website. The manner in which this information is made available would be determined by the Library CEO in conjunction with the Office of the City Clerk.
6. Prior to the notice of vacancies being published, information about Library governance and services may be made available to the public. This could include:
 - a. information on the role, structure, code of conduct and function of the Library Board
 - b. information on the Public Libraries Act
 - c. a copy of the current strategic plan

The manner in which this information is made available would be determined by the Library CEO in conjunction with the Office of the City Clerk.

7. Subsequent to the application deadline, the nominating panel, consisting of the Board's Municipal Council representatives, available outgoing Board members not seeking re-appointment (appointed by the outgoing Board), and others appointed by the Office of the City Clerk, will vet applications received and provide Municipal Council with a list of recommended candidates to consider.

Implementation

~~The Board and the CEO will implement the policy.~~

Appendix

Appendix 1	Board Self Assessment
Appendix 2	Board Legacy Document Template
Appendix 3	Board Roles & Competencies

Appendix 1 - Board Self Assessment

Suggested Scale

- Strongly Agree,
- Agree,
- Neither Agree nor Disagree,
- Disagree,
- Strongly Disagree.

Self-Assessment Questions

General Knowledge

1. Members demonstrate their understanding of their roles and responsibilities through their participation and decision-making.
2. Members demonstrate a clear understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer in their interactions and expectations.
3. Members actively support and reference the library's vision, mission, values and strategic plan when making decisions.
4. Members stay informed and comply with all relevant local bylaws and provincial and federal laws affecting libraries, including the governmental/library reporting structure.
5. Members are familiar with library issues at the local, provincial and federal levels.
6. Members understand the structure and bylaws of the Board and act in accordance with the structure and bylaws when conducting Board business.
7. The Board maintains up-to-date policies and Members use them to guide governance decisions.

Comments:

Effective Board Meetings

1. Members foster a respectful and inclusive working environment where differing views can be expressed openly without prejudice.
2. The Board maintains a relationship with the CEO that reflects mutual trust and respect.
3. The Board actively identifies, discloses and manages conflicts of interest.
4. Members consistently distinguish between governance responsibilities and operational matters.
5. The Board Chair sets a clear agenda that includes all necessary details to complete meetings in a timely manner and ensures it is circulated to Members prior to each meeting.
6. The Board receives a Board package with accurate and up-to-date information in order to make sound and effective decisions, and it is received one week in advance of meetings.
7. Members regularly attend meetings and assigned committee meetings.
8. Members review the agenda and the supporting information prior to the meeting to contribute meaningfully to discussions and decisions.
9. The Board considers in detail the options available and examines their impact before making decisions.
10. All Members participate in the decision-making process
11. Meetings are run in accordance with the Board's By-law number 1 and the Public Libraries Act.
12. The minutes of Board meetings adequately capture all relevant issues, discussion and decisions.

Comments:

Advocacy

1. The Board builds and maintains a constructive relationship with municipal council and demonstrates awareness of the political environment.
2. Members support and respect that the Chair (or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair) is the lead spokesperson for the Board
3. Members advocate the library's services in the community and advocate the community's need with the library.
4. Members attend library special events.

Comments:

Strategic Planning

1. The Board develops and formally adopts a formal Strategic Plan aligned with the library vision, mission and values.
2. The Strategic Plan clearly communicates priorities, goals and desired outcomes.
3. The Board regularly monitors and reviews progress toward achieving the Strategic Plan.

Comments:

Finance

1. The Board aligns the budget with the library's vision, mission and strategic priorities.
2. The Board reviews and uses full and accurate information regarding the library's finances and budget throughout the year
3. The Board considers the financial impact of decisions on services, operations and infrastructure.
4. The Board ensures that stakeholders, including the public, staff, funders and donors, are kept aware of the library's financial position.
5. The Board is prepared and motivated to defend and promote the budget to Council and other funders.
6. The Board ensures that the proper financial control measures are in place to expend the budget with due diligence, according to board priorities and as approved by Council.

Comments:

Personnel

1. The Board establishes and maintains clear criteria and processes for evaluating the CEO.
2. The Board, or a committee of the Board, formally evaluate the CEO on an annual basis.
3. The Board regularly provides the CEO with feedback and recognition.

Comments:

Professional Development

1. The Board provides a structured Board orientation for new members on their roles and accountabilities.
2. The Board ensures that Members receive education on matters of importance such as changes to legislation governing library services and operations.
3. Members participate in learning opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills as library Board Members.
4. Members share relevant learning and insights with the rest of the Board.

Comments:

General Comments:

Appendix 12 - Board Legacy Document Template

This document provides an opportunity for the outgoing Board to review its work over the past term. The document is to be used as a communiqué to the incoming Board.

We achieved success in the following areas...
We faced the following challenges....
Outstanding issues or future areas of concern include...
We participated in the following Board development activities...
We suggest the following development activities for the incoming Board...

Appendix 23 - Board Roles and Competencies				
Roles	Breakdown of Roles	Competencies	Weight	Other Considerations
Strategic Direction				<i>The Board should be representative of the community it serves including diversity in age, gender, orientation and cultural representation.</i>
	Strategic planning – setting the direction for the Library	Strategic thinking, planning and policy development skills	Core	
	Monitoring & evaluation of Strategic Plan – to ensure progress towards achieving the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan	Good decision making skills	Core	
	Establishing the library as an essential community service	Leadership qualities and experience	Important	
		Experience serving on volunteer boards or advisory committees	Important	
		Knowledge of the community's social and economic conditions	Important	
Stewardship				
	Provides oversight – for personnel (CEO)	Ability to accept accountability	Core	
	Provides oversight – financial	Financial planning and management	Important	
	Policy development and oversight	Organizational skills	Optional	
	Risk mitigation and management	Legal expertise	Optional	
	Being aware of the municipal planning context	Human Resources/Labour Relations	Optional	
Relationship Building				
	With the community, City Council & Ontario Public Library Partners	Ability to approach people and problems with an open mind	Core	
	Establishing the library as an essential service	Ability to actively participate in discussion and deliberation, and to attain positive outcomes	Core	
	Building community pride in the library	Good communication skills, ability to seek and listen to input from all stakeholders	Important	
	Maintain an open dialogue with the community	Experience with community development and engagement	Important	
	Advocating the library's role in the community	Interpersonal skills	Important	
	Developing strategic partnerships with community groups and leaders	Expertise in marketing and public relations	Optional	
Board Renewal and Succession Planning				
	Professional development of Board Members, continuing education	Open to continuous learning	Important	
	Board recruitment and self renewal	Management expertise	Important	
	Board transition planning			



Policy Name	Succession Planning		
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Appendix

Appendix 1 Board Self Assessment

Appendix 2 Board Legacy Document Template

Appendix 3 Board Roles & Competencies

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11. Meetings are run in accordance with the Board's By-law number 1 and the Public Libraries Act.
12. The minutes of Board meetings adequately capture all relevant issues, discussion and decisions.

Comments:

Advocacy

1. The Board builds and maintains a constructive relationship with municipal council and demonstrates awareness of the political environment.
2. Members support and respect that the Chair (or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair) is the lead spokesperson for the Board
3. Members advocate the library's services in the community and advocate the community's need with the library.
4. Members attend library special events.

Comments:

Strategic Planning

1. The Board develops and formally adopts a formal Strategic Plan aligned with the library vision, mission and values.
2. The Strategic Plan clearly communicates priorities, goals and desired outcomes.
3. The Board regularly monitors and reviews progress toward achieving the Strategic Plan.

Comments:

Finance

1. The Board aligns the budget with the library's vision, mission and strategic priorities.
2. The Board reviews and uses full and accurate information regarding the library's finances and budget throughout the year
3. The Board considers the financial impact of decisions on services, operations and infrastructure.
4. The Board ensures that stakeholders, including the public, staff, funders and donors, are kept aware of the library's financial position.
5. The Board is prepared and motivated to defend and promote the budget to Council and other funders.
6. The Board ensures that the proper financial control measures are in place to expend the budget with due diligence, according to board priorities and as approved by Council.

Comments:

Personnel

1. The Board establishes and maintains clear criteria and processes for evaluating the CEO.
2. The Board, or a committee of the Board, formally evaluate the CEO on an annual basis.
3. The Board regularly provides the CEO with feedback and recognition.

Comments:

Professional Development

1. The Board provides a structured Board orientation for new members on their roles and accountabilities.
2. The Board ensures that Members receive education on matters of importance such as changes to legislation governing library services and operations.
3. Members participate in learning opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills as library Board Members.
4. Members share relevant learning and insights with the rest of the Board.

Comments:

General Comments:

Appendix 2 - Board Legacy Document Template

This document provides an opportunity for the outgoing Board to review its work over the past term. The document is to be used as a communiqué to the incoming Board.

We achieved success in the following areas...
We faced the following challenges....
Outstanding issues or future areas of concern include...
We participated in the following Board development activities...
We suggest the following development activities for the incoming Board...

Appendix 3 - Board Roles and Competencies				
Roles	Breakdown of Roles	Competencies	Weight	Other Considerations
Strategic Direction				<i>The Board should be representative of the community it serves including diversity in age, gender, orientation and cultural representation.</i>
	Strategic planning – setting the direction for the Library	Strategic thinking, planning and policy development skills	Core	
	Monitoring & evaluation of Strategic Plan – to ensure progress towards achieving the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan	Good decision making skills	Core	
	Establishing the library as an essential community service	Leadership qualities and experience	Important	
		Experience serving on volunteer boards or advisory committees	Important	
		Knowledge of the community's social and economic conditions	Important	
Stewardship				
	Provides oversight – for personnel (CEO)	Ability to accept accountability	Core	
	Provides oversight – financial	Financial planning and management	Important	
	Policy development and oversight	Organizational skills	Optional	
	Risk mitigation and management	Legal expertise	Optional	
	Being aware of the municipal planning context	Human Resources/Labour Relations	Optional	
Relationship Building				
	With the community, City Council & Ontario Public Library Partners	Ability to approach people and problems with an open mind	Core	
	Establishing the library as an essential service	Ability to actively participate in discussion and deliberation, and to attain positive outcomes	Core	
	Building community pride in the library	Good communication skills, ability to seek and listen to input from all stakeholders	Important	
	Maintain an open dialogue with the community	Experience with community development and engagement	Important	
	Advocating the library's role in the community	Interpersonal skills	Important	
	Developing strategic partnerships with community groups and leaders	Expertise in marketing and public relations	Optional	
Board Renewal and Succession Planning				
	Professional development of Board Members, continuing education	Open to continuous learning	Important	
	Board recruitment and self renewal	Management expertise	Important	
	Board transition planning			

Policy (G-06) Facilities Closing

submitted by Ken Su, CEO

Recommendation

THAT the Board approve Policy (G-06) Facilities Closing as amended.

Background

The Facilities Closing Policy has been reviewed in accordance with the St. Catharines Public Library's policy review schedule.

Minor language revisions were made to improve clarity and update the policy to the new brand format.

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD**POLICY**

Section: General Number: G06	Subject: Facilities Closing	Motion#: 1993-97 2022-21
Policy Level: Library Board	Author: Business Administrator	Review: 4 years
Approval Date: 1993-12-16	Last Review: 2022-02-17	Next Review: 2026
Notes: Approved at the Board Meeting of December 16, 1993 Amended at the Board Meeting(s) of: February 17, 2022.		

POLICY STATEMENT

The mission of the St. Catharines Public Library (the Library) is to provide spaces, resources, and experiences for all citizens to learn, grow, and connect. As such, the Library endeavors to be open during regular hours of operation whenever possible. The purpose of this Policy is to allow for timely and appropriate decision-making for **regarding the temporary closure** closing Library facilities in order to protect the **health and** safety of **Library staff**, customers and the general public staff.

Scope

This policy applies to all physical Library locations.

Definitions

~~Board Chair~~ – the Chair of the Board, or a Vice-Chair of the Board in circumstances where the Chair is not available.

~~Chief Executive Officer (CEO)~~ – chief librarian appointed by the Board, or their designate, as applicable.

Emergency means a situation or an impending situation that constitutes a danger of major proportions that could result in serious harm to persons or substantial damage to property and that is caused by the forces of nature, a disease or other health risk, an accident or an act whether intentional or otherwise. a present or imminent event or circumstance that (a) is caused by accident, fire, explosion, technical failure, infectious disease outbreak/pandemic, war, riot, terrorism, or the forces of nature, and (b) requires prompt action to protect the health, safety or welfare of a person or to limit damage to property. Emergencies may range in scope from individual branch flooding caused by a burst water pipe to an earthquake that results in a government-declared state of emergency.

~~System wide closure~~ – closure of all or a majority of the Library's physical locations to the public for any period.

~~Temporary closure~~— closure for a finite period, where the Library fully intends to reopen as soon as feasible, and maintains the annual operating budget associated with the location.

Inclement weather means weather conditions of sufficient severity to create unsafe conditions for travel, occupancy, or the continued operation of Library facilities. ~~—a potentially dangerous weather condition, particularly a severe winter storm or blizzard.~~

Major Facility Issue means conditions affecting a Library facility that substantially disrupt operations or create unsafe conditions.

Security Incident means an event that poses a risk to personal safety or facility security, including but not limited to violence or threats of violence, unauthorized access, suspicious behaviour or objects, or situations requiring lockdown or shelter-in-place measures.

Regulations

The CEO or designate ~~have the authority~~ is authorized to close Library facilities in the event it becomes necessary of an emergency or other circumstances requiring closure, including ~~This may include~~ but is not limited to the following:

- Inclement weather
- Major facilities issues
- Security Incidents (e.g.: lock-down, shelter in place)
- ~~Significant facility maintenance or repair issue~~
- ~~Emergency (e.g.: fire)~~
- ~~Pandemic and health related restrictions~~

Procedural Operational Guidelines

1. Temporary System-Wide Closure

- 1.1. Emergencies may arise in which a rapid system-wide closure is needed to ensure necessary to protect the health and safety of Library staff, customers, or the general public. Such emergencies may or may not be accompanied by coincide with a government declaration of a state of emergency.
- 1.2. Decisions about regarding which locations, if any, will remain open, if applicable, will consider take into account community impacts, usage trends patterns, accessibility, geographical distribution, and the ability of the facility to offer a broad range of services.
- 1.3. During an emergency, the Board delegates to the CEO the authority to determine whether a temporary system-wide closure is required necessary and to implement this decision. Prior to Before exercising this authority, the CEO will consult with the City of St. Catharines as appropriate, and will make reasonable efforts to consult with the Board Chair.
- 1.4. If a system-wide closure is required as a result of a government order or in other legal requirements circumstances where the Library is required by law to close its facilities, the CEO will implement the closure for the duration mandated required and will inform the Board as soon as possible. The prior consultation requirements

~~set out in section 1.3 of this policy do not apply to a system-wide closure necessitated by law or government order or by law.~~

1.5. The implementation of facilities closures due to inclement weather shall be conducted in accordance with the inclement weather procedure.

2. Temporary Closures of Individual Locations

The CEO has the authority to temporarily close individual locations as required for location-specific emergencies, and for operational reasons, including facilities issues, related to facilities maintenance, health and safety, security incidents, and inadequate staffing. The CEO will promptly inform the Board of any such closures.

3. Procedures and Communication

The CEO or designate will have establish and maintain procedures in place for closing the Library related in response to likely events. The procedures will include protocol for notifications and communication, that needs to occur including with the Board of Directors and the City of St. Catharines.

Implementation

The Policy shall be implemented by the CEO or designate.



Policy Name	Facilities Closing		
Section & Number	Board – G-06	Effective Date	1993-12-16
Motion Number	2026-XX	Last Review	2026-02-19
Author	Business Administrator	Next Review	2030
Policy Maintenance	Reviewed by Management.		

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for timely and appropriate decision-making regarding the temporary closure of Library facilities in order to protect the health and safety of Library staff, customers, and the general public.

Scope

This policy applies to all physical Library locations.

Definitions

Emergency means a situation or an impending situation that constitutes a danger of major proportions that could result in serious harm to persons or substantial damage to property and that is caused by the forces of nature, a disease or other health risk, an accident or an act whether intentional or otherwise.

Inclement Weather means weather conditions of sufficient severity to create unsafe conditions for travel, occupancy, or the continued operation of Library facilities.

Major Facility Issue means conditions affecting a Library facility that substantially disrupt operations or create unsafe conditions.

Security Incident means an event that poses a risk to personal safety or facility security, including but not limited to violence or threats of violence, unauthorized access, suspicious behaviour or objects, or situations requiring lockdown or shelter-in-place measures.

Regulations

The CEO or designate is authorized to close Library facilities in the event of an emergency or other circumstances requiring closure, including but not limited to the following:

- Inclement weather
- Major facilities issues
- Security Incidents

Operational Guidelines

Temporary System-Wide Closure

1. Emergencies may arise in which a rapid system-wide closure is necessary to protect the health and safety of Library staff, customers, or the general public. Such emergencies may or may not coincide with a government declaration of a state of emergency.
2. Decisions regarding which locations, if any, will remain open will take into account community impacts, usage patterns, accessibility, geographical distribution, and the ability of the facility to offer a broad range of services.
3. During an emergency, the Board delegates to the CEO the authority to determine whether a temporary system-wide closure is required and to implement this decision. Before exercising this authority, the CEO will consult with the City of St. Catharines as appropriate and will make reasonable efforts to consult with the Board Chair.
4. If a system-wide closure is required as a result of a government order or other legal requirements, the CEO will implement the closure for the duration mandated and will inform the Board as soon as possible. The consultation requirements do not apply to closure required by law or government order.
5. The implementation of facilities closures due to inclement weather shall be conducted in accordance with the inclement weather procedure.

Temporary Closures of Individual Locations

The CEO has the authority to temporarily close individual locations as required for location-specific emergencies, and for operational reasons, including major facilities issues, security incidents, or inadequate staffing. The CEO will promptly inform the Board of any such closures.

Procedures and Communication

The CEO or designate will establish and maintain procedures for closing Library facilities in response to likely events. The procedures will include protocol for notifications and communication, including with the Board of Directors and the City of St. Catharines.

SCPL Incident Report

submitted by Ken Su, CEO and Lisa DiDonato, Business Administrator

Recommendation

THAT the St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) Board approve staff recommendations.

Report

Background

Library staff discussed strategies to tackle health and safety issues at the Library with the Board and the Mayor in late 2023 and early 2024. The City and the Library worked together to address health and safety concerns at the Library by making facility improvements, offering support to staff, working collaboratively with partners, and tracking incidents.

Update

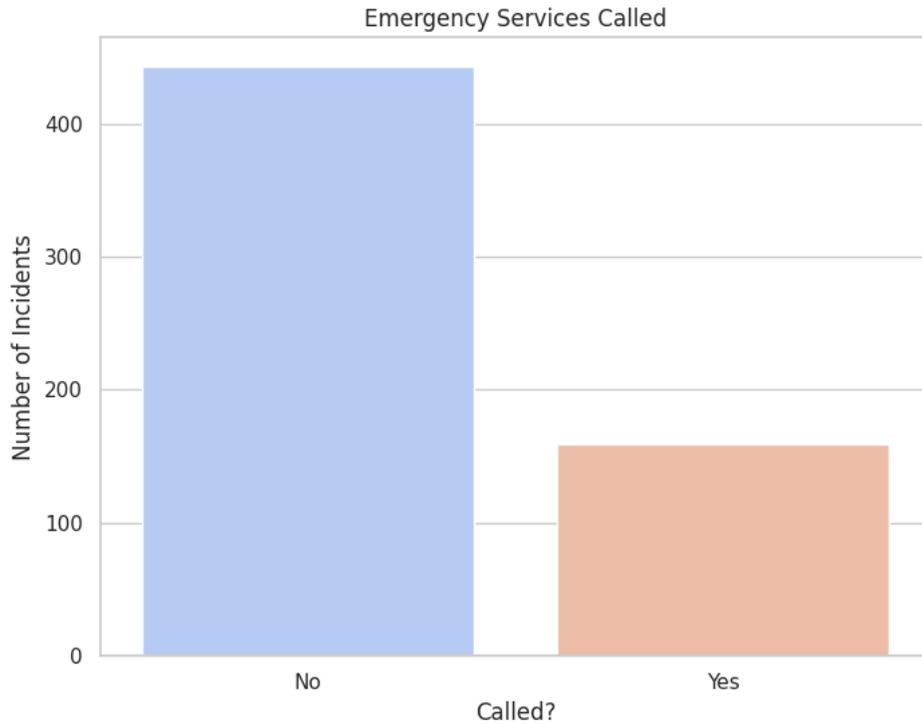
Following the implementation of these strategies, the Library has seen improvements, particularly in exterior facility-related incidents, however, we continue to experience an increase in the number and the severity of incidents within library facilities, particularly at the Central Library during the winter months. This seasonal pattern aligns with historical trends and increased indoor use during colder weather, reflecting the Library's role as a designated warming and cooling centre.

Similar patterns have been observed at other public libraries in Ontario and across Canada, where increases in safety incidents, particularly those connected to mental health concerns and substance misuse, have coincided with increased demand for indoor space during cold weather. For example, Hamilton Public Library has experienced safety challenges that prompted temporary service adjustments. These broader trends suggest that what we are observing at SCPL reflects larger societal and seasonal pressures on public library spaces.

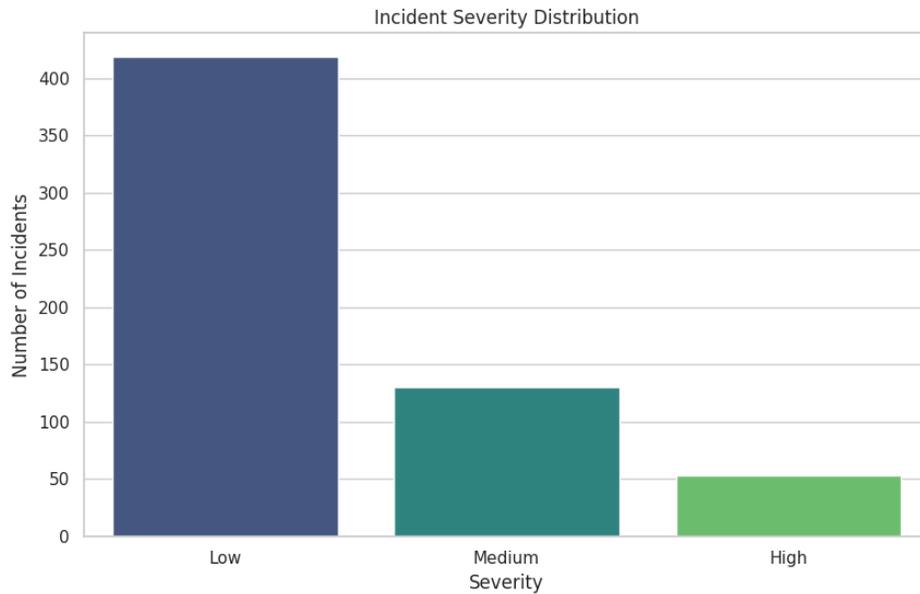
This report provides a summary of the incident data from December 2024 to January 2026, outlines measures implemented to address identified trends, and presents recommendations for further action.

During that period, a total of 602 incident reports were submitted across the library system, and in January 2026 alone, 95 incident reports were filed. This represents an increase of 69.6% and 156.8% respectively compared to the previous month and the same month in 2025.

Many incidents were resolved by staff and security in accordance with established policies and procedures, but 26.4% incidents resulted in calling Emergency Services (Police, EMS, and/or Fire).

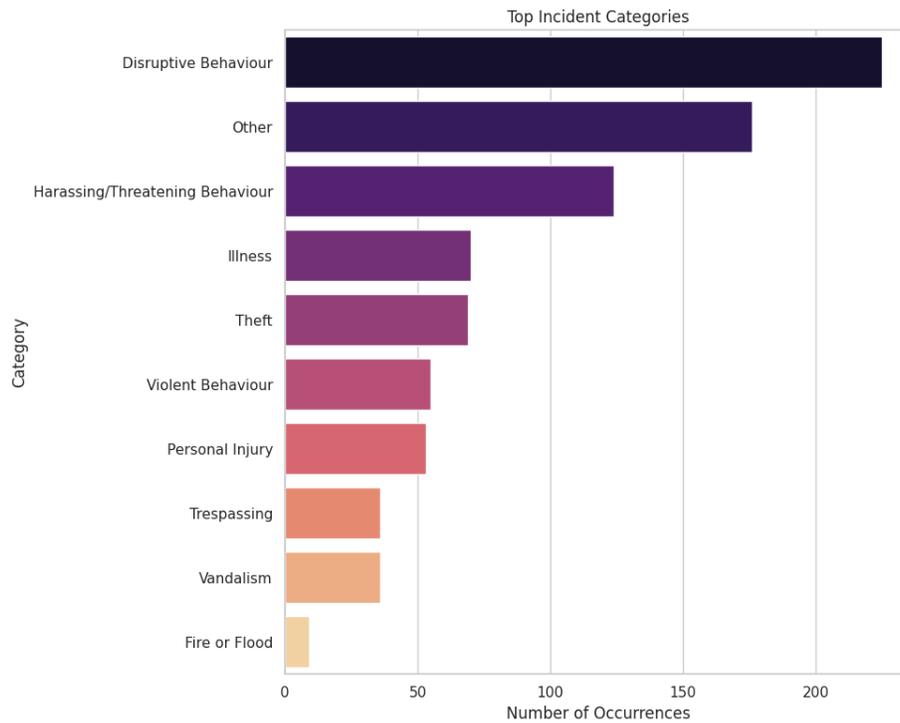


A large number of incidents was classified as "Low" severity, indicating minimal impact on customers, staff, and/or property, but there were still over 20% of the incidents classified as "Medium" while 9% of the total was categorized as "High".

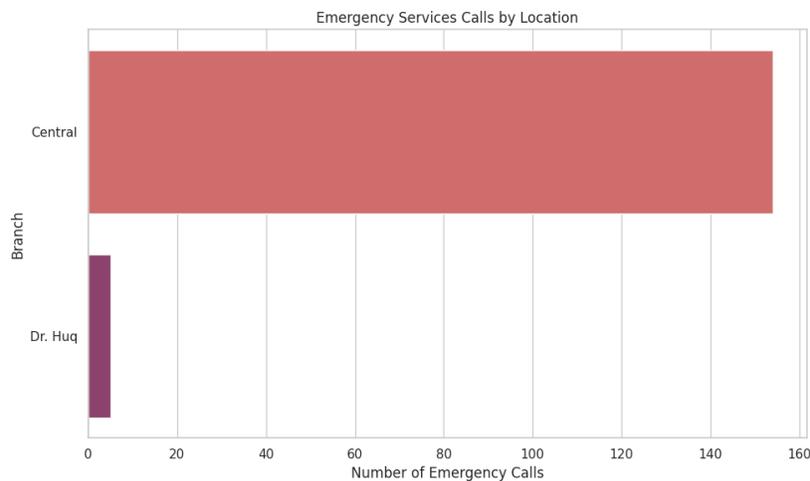


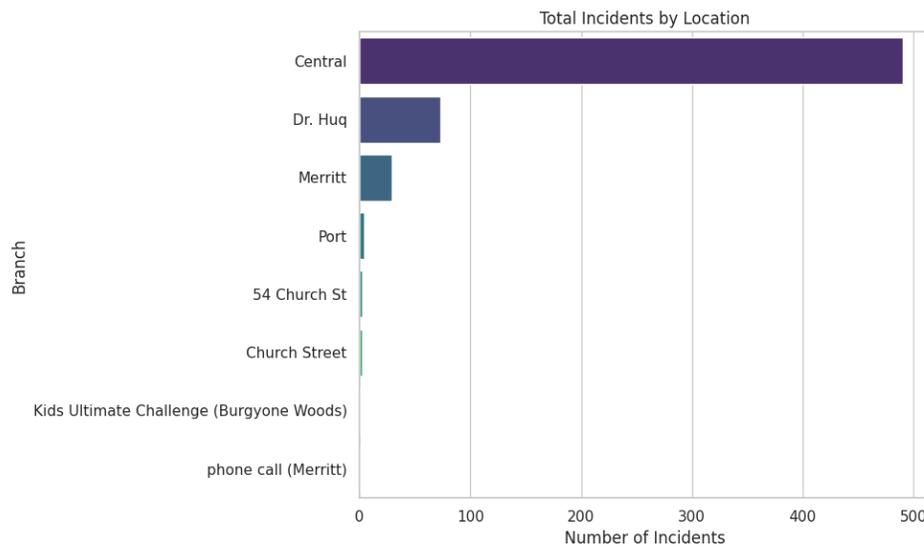
The top three incident categories reported are:

- Disruptive Behaviour: 225 (37.4%)
- Other (General Health/Safety/Damage): 176 (29.2%)
- Harassing/Threatening Behaviour: 124 (20.6%)

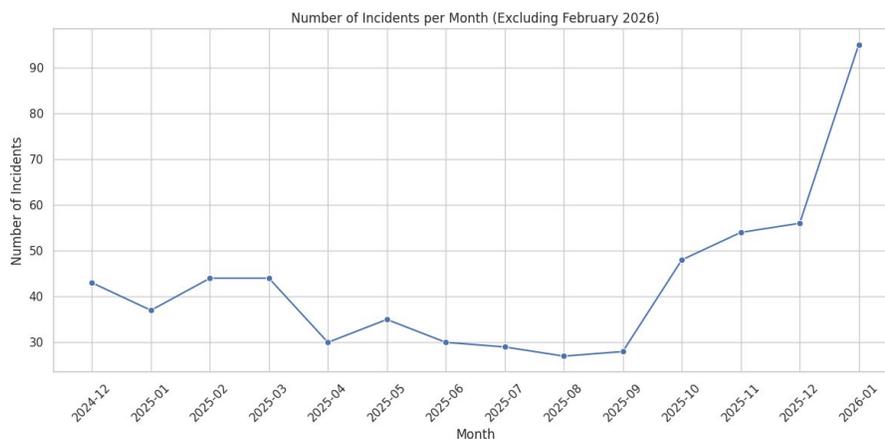


Incident volumes and emergency service calls vary by location. Higher volumes are generally associated with the Central Library in the downtown core. This concentration is primarily attributable to the library's location, the size and configuration of the space, the availability of the only public washrooms in the downtown core, and its role as a designated warming and cooling centre.





Looking at the monthly statistics, we can identify that the number of incidents was relatively steady throughout 2025, averaging between 30 and 50 incidents reported per month, however, a sharp increase was observed starting in October 2025, peaking at 95 incidents in January 2026.



Conclusion

Incident data indicates a steady increase in the number of incidents, with a more pronounced rise during winter and colder months. A significant proportion of reported incidents at the Central Library relate to disruptive behaviour and harassment, much of which is directed toward security. Contract security personnel play a key role in supporting library staff and are available to respond when assistance is required. In addition, staff and security continue to respond to an increasing number of substance-misuse-related incidents, including overdoses.

While improvements in facility conditions have been observed, the growing volume and nature of incidents occurring inside library spaces place added pressure on staff and may negatively affect the experience of customers who expect the library to be a safe and welcoming environment. Customers have also raised concerns about attending programs and borrowing materials at the Central Library. These trends are consistent with patterns observed at other public libraries and reflect broader social and seasonal factors rather than isolated operational issues.

To mitigate and address these challenges, the Library has implemented the following measures:

1. **Support staff through existing and enhanced measures**, including training, de-escalation supports, and access to appropriate resources such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), as well as a newly established debriefing procedure to address the emotional and operational impacts of incidents.
2. **Strengthen collaboration with community partners**, including initiatives such as Welcoming Streets. The Library is also currently partnering with Niagara Region's Public Health outreach team, which conducts weekly visits at the Central Library, as well as other social service organizations, such as NASO and Positive Living, to support coordinated responses to complex social issues presenting in library spaces.
3. **Maintain ongoing monitoring and reporting of incidents**, with a continued focus on trends, seasonality, and severity to inform evidence-based decision-making.

Management will continue to monitor incident trends closely and assess impacts on service delivery, staff safety, and public confidence.

Recommendation

Building on the measures currently in place, the following recommendations are intended to further strengthen the Library's capacity to respond to evolving challenges within its spaces. These suggestions focus on enhancing staff and customer safety, improving coordination with community partners, and ensuring the Library remains a welcoming and accessible environment. They also emphasize the importance of regular communication and reporting to the City and the Library Board to support transparency, shared understanding, and informed decision-making as situations evolve.

1. **Provide regular updates to the Board three to four times per year** on incident trends, emerging risks, and mitigation measures, to ensure ongoing oversight.
2. **Keep the City and Council informed** of emerging trends and risks, particularly where incident volumes and severity may have broader community or resource implications.

3. **Explore potential financial support** from the City for enhanced security and cleaning measures, as needed, to support a safe and welcoming environment for both staff and the public.
4. **Consider operational adjustments**, including a review of Central Library hours, should incident patterns and staffing pressures warrant further mitigation measures.

2026 Community Needs Assessment Funding Request

submitted by Ken Su, CEO and Lisa DiDonato, Business Administrator

Recommendation

That the St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) Board approve the use of up to \$50,000 from the SCPL Stabilization Reserve for the one-time Community Needs Assessment project costs.

Report

Background

SCPL launched its Strategic Plan (2025 – 2028) last year, relocated its Merritt branch to the Niagara Pen Centre, and is currently partnering with the Niagara Falls Public Library to migrate to a shared Integrated Library System. A community needs assessment would be a natural next step, building on the success of these recent initiatives and its current Strategic Plan, to develop an actionable roadmap that will guide future investment, program and service delivery, branch location, space design, and resource allocation.

Report

On January 2, 2026, SCPL issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Community Needs Assessment. Submissions were evaluated on February 3, 2026, and the Committee subsequently shortlisted proponents for interviews, which were held on February 10 and 11.

The selected submission was identified as the strongest overall proposal based on the proponent's demonstrated experience working with public libraries and municipalities, a robust and clearly defined research methodology, and a strong understanding of the local context supported by established community knowledge and connections. The proposal also distinguished itself through a thoughtful and inclusive approach to community and stakeholder engagement, ensuring broad and meaningful participation throughout the process. While not the lowest-priced submission, the proposed cost is balanced and reasonable given the proponent's experience, the quality of the proposal, and the scope of work outlined.