



St. Catharines Public Library Board

Regular Meeting

Thursday, May 21, 2026, 6:00 pm
Mills Room, Central Library & Microsoft Teams

AGENDA

Chair calls meeting to order and Lori Littleton 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 – April 16, 2026

Motion

4. **Monthly Updates (verbal)**

4.1 St. Catharines City Council

4.2 OLS Update – J. Coles

4.3 CEO Update – K. Su

5. **Consent Agenda (attachments)**

Motion

5.1 Correspondence

5.2 CEO Report – K. Su

5.3 Department Reports – April 2026

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

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

5.3(c) Programming and Promotions – H. Jones

5.3(d) Human Resources – A. Maciukas

5.3(e) ILS Migration – D. Bott

5.3(f) Quarterly Department Reports Q1 2026

5.4 Risk Management Semi Annual Reporting – L. DiDonato

5.5 Valuing SCPL 2025 Update – K. Su

- 5.6 Annual Report 2025 – K. Su
- 5.7 Library Board Recruitment Brochure – K. Su
- 5.8 2027 SCPL Capital Budget Update – L. DiDonato

6. Discussion Reports (attachments)

- 6.1 Policy (G-07) Code of Conduct – H. Jones Motion
- 6.2 CULC Open Letter to Minister Williams - K. Su Motion
- 6.3 Audited Financial Statements, December 31, 2025 – L. DiDonato Motion
- 6.4 2027 SCPL Operating Budget – L. DiDonato Motion
- 6.5 Central Branch Renovation – K. Su and L. DiDonato Motion
- 6.6 Endowment & Trust Request – L. DiDonato Motion

7. In-Camera Session

- 7.1 In-Camera Agenda (attachment)
 - 7.1(a) Additions/Deletions to In-Camera Agenda
 - 7.1(b) Adoption of In-Camera Agenda Motion
- 7.2 Motion to Move In-Camera Motion
- 7.3 Adoption of In-Camera Minutes
 - 7.3(a) In-Camera Session – April 16, 2026 (attachment) Motion
- 7.4 In-Camera Consent Agenda (attachments)
 - 7.4(a) Staffing Update (April 2026) – A. Maciukas
 - 7.4(b) Risk Register Confidential Appendix – L. DiDonato
- 7.5 In-Camera Discussion Reports
 - 7.5(a) Personal Matter – J. Coles (verbal)
(Closed Session in accordance with the Public Libraries Act section 16.1(4)(b) personal matters about an identifiable individual.)
- 7.6 Return to Open Session Motion

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

9. Motion to Adjourn Motion

10. Next Meeting / Upcoming Events

- OneRead, OneSTC: Terry Fallis & The Marionette – Thursday, June 11, 2026 at 6:30pm, Lockview Lounge, St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canal Centre (Registration required)
- Board Meeting – Thursday, June 18, 2026 at 6:00 pm, Room 115, Central Library & Microsoft Teams



St. Catharines Public Library Board

Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 16, 2026, 6:00 pm
Mills Room, Central Library & Microsoft Teams

Present: P. Clausi
J. Coles (Chair)
K. Diiorio
S. Dimick (Vice-Chair)

L. Littleton
N. Olmstead
G. Riihimaki

Regrets: Councillor J. Lindal
Councillor G. Miller

Staff: D. Bott (left at 6:40pm)
L. DiDonato (left at 7:00pm)
M. Haanstra (left at 6:40pm)
L. Jenter (Recording Secretary)
(left at 7:00pm)

H. Jones (left at 6:40pm)
A. Maciukas (left at 7:00pm)
S. Mannella (left at 6:40pm)
K. Su (Secretary)
(left at 7:00pm, returned at 7:33pm)

Chair calls Regular Meeting to order at 6:02pm.

Gail Riihimaki reads the following SCPL Land Acknowledgment:

The land on which the Board meets today is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Peoples. Acknowledging this is a reminder that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.

1. Adoption of Agenda

1.1 Additions/Deletions to Agenda

Pull Item 6.3(c) Short- Term Investment Statement at March 31, 2026 for discussion. Item originally listed as 7.1 was deferred and renumbered as 7.2.

1.2 Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: 2026-39

THAT the Agenda be adopted as amended.

MOVED BY:

N. Olmstead

SECONDED BY:

K. Diiorio

MOTION CARRIED.

2. Chair's Remarks & Declarations of Interest

The Chair thanked staff for organizing the volunteer appreciation event and noted the event is an opportunity to meet and engage with SCPL volunteers. There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Presentation

- 3.1 Audited Financial Statements, December 31, 2025 Motion
Jodie Nesbitt, CPA, CA, Senior Manager, Audit, KPMG LLP

The Board received a presentation of the audited financial statements from KPMG. The Board discussed the final adjustment for employee future benefits, determining to defer approval to the May meeting.

MOTION: 2026-40 THAT the Board receive the presentation and request Staff bring forward the audited financial statements to the May Board Meeting.

MOVED BY: G. Riihimaki

SECONDED BY: L. Littleton

MOTION CARRIED.

4. Adoption of Minutes (attachment)

- 4.1 Regular Meeting – March 19, 2026

MOTION: 2026-41 THAT the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 19, 2026 be adopted.

MOVED BY: P. Clausi

SECONDED BY: N. Olmstead

MOTION CARRIED.

5. Monthly Updates (verbal)

- 5.1 St. Catharines City Council
None

- 5.2 OLS Update – J. Coles
The Chair shared information about an upcoming OLS meeting.

- 5.3 CEO Update – K. Su
The CEO updated the Board about the following:
- **Budget Planning** – Staff met with City of St. Catharines to discuss the capital budget. The Library will present the operational budget in November.

- **Community Needs Assessment** – Nordicity have arranged a focus group meeting for the Board on April 29 and for management on April 23. Interview questions will be sent to Board Members unable to attend the meeting.
- **Municipal Buy Ontario Procurement Directive** – Province has introduced the directive to prioritize Ontario and Canadian made goods and services. Staff will monitor the impact on the Central Renovation project.

5.4 March Break Programming – Melissa Broere, Programming & Outreach Librarian, and Jen Dell, CSA

The Board received a presentation from Staff on March Break programming. Staff reported a 33% increase in attendance compared to the previous year and outlined plans to further expand programming in the coming year.

6. Consent Agenda

- 6.1 CEO Report – K. Su
- 6.2 Department Reports – March 2026
 - 6.2 (a) Customer Service – M. Haanstra & J. Spera
 - 6.2 (b) Innovation, Collections, and Technology – D. Bott
 - 6.2 (c) Programming & Promotions – H. Jones
 - 6.2 (d) Health & Safety – L. DiDonato
 - 6.2 (e) ILS Migration – D. Bott
- 6.3 Financial Reports – L. DiDonato
 - 6.3 (a) 2026 Financial Results and Forecast at March 31, 2026
 - 6.3 (b) Endowment & Trust Fund Statement at March 31, 2026
 - 6.3 (c) Short- Term Investment Statement at March 31, 2026
- 6.4 December 31, 2025 Financial Statement Reconciliation

MOTION: 2026-42 THAT the Consent Agenda be received as circulated except for Item 6.3(c) pulled for discussion.

MOVED BY: K. Diiorio

SECONDED BY: G. Riihimaki

MOTION CARRIED.

7. Discussion Reports

- 7.1 Short-Term Investment Statement at March 31, 2026
Staff confirmed that the Canada Trust Company and TD Bank Short Term Investment Maturity dates are December 2026 not 2025.
- 7.2 Updates to the Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy - K. Su

The Board received the updated Policy (G-19) Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes, aligned with the City of St. Catharines. The Board requested clarification regarding the use of rental spaces for election-related purposes.

MOTION: 2026-43 THAT the Board approve the adoption of the updates to the City's Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy.
MOVED BY: L. Littleton
SECONDED BY: P. Clausi
MOTION CARRIED.

8. In-Camera Session

8.1 In-Camera Agenda

8.1 (a) Additions/Deletions to In-Camera Agenda
Pull Item 8.4(a) Staffing Update for discussion. Items originally listed as 8.4(a), 8.4(b) were deferred and renumbered as 8.4(b), 8.4(c).

8.1 (b) Adoption of In-Camera Agenda

MOTION: 2026-44 THAT the In-Camera Agenda be adopted as amended.
MOVED BY: P. Clausi
SECONDED BY: S. Dimick
MOTION CARRIED.

D. Bott, M. Haanstra, H. Jones and S. Mannella left the meeting at 6:40pm

8.2 Motion to Move In-Camera

MOTION: 2026-45 THAT the Regular Meeting move to In-Camera Session to discuss planning and personal matters.
MOVED BY: L. Littleton
SECONDED BY: G. Riihimaki
MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting moved to In-Camera Session at 6:41pm.

L. DiDonato, L. Jenter, A. Maciukas and K. Su left the meeting at 7:00pm

8.6 Return to Open Session

MOTION: 2026-47 THAT the In-Camera Session return to Open Session.
MOVED BY: S. Dimick
SECONDED BY: K. Diorio
MOTION CARRIED.

The Meeting returned to Open Session at 7:18pm.

9 Motion(s) Arising From In-Camera Session

MOTION: 2026-48 THAT the Board Chair proceed as directed during the closed session, and the Board receive the information presented during the closed session.
MOVED BY: G. Riihimaki
SECONDED BY: N. Olmstead
MOTION CARRIED.

P. Clausi requested that an Other Business item be added. The Board discussed what has happened regarding the closure of the safe injection site, noting that the March 23 delegation to Council presented its position.

K. Su returned to the meeting at 7:33pm.

10. Motion to Adjourn

MOTION: 2026-49 THAT the Regular Meeting be adjourned.
MOVED BY: L. Littleton
SECONDED BY: N/A
MOTION CARRIED.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

11. Next Meeting / Upcoming Events

Board Meeting – Thursday, May 21, 2026 at 6:00 pm, Mills Room, Central Library & Microsoft Teams

OneRead, OneSTC: Terry Fallis & The Marionette – Thursday, June 11, 2026 at 6:30pm, Lockview Lounge, St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canal Centre (Registration required)

Chair

Secretary

Consent Agenda

Recommendation

THAT the Consent Agenda be received as circulated.

5. **Consent Agenda (attachments)**

Motion

- 5.1 Correspondence
- 5.2 CEO Report – K. Su
- 5.3 Department Reports – April 2026
 - 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) Human Resources – A. Maciukas
 - 5.3 (e) ILS Migration – D. Bott
 - 5.3 (f) Quarterly Department Reports Q1 2026
- 5.4 Risk Management Semi Annual Reporting – L. DiDonato
- 5.5 Valuing SCPL 2025 Update – K. Su
- 5.6 Annual Report 2025 – K. Su
- 5.7 Library Board Recruitment Brochure – K. Su
- 5.8 2027 St. Catharines Public Library Capital Budget Update – L. DiDonato

Correspondence

(as of May 15, 2026)

For Information

To be sent on May 22, 2026

SCPL Impact Report & Social Return on Investment – May 2026 to email to St. Catharines City Council



SC
PL



Impact Report

May 2026

1,300

people

visited the Central Library on March 28 during the book sale.



607

people

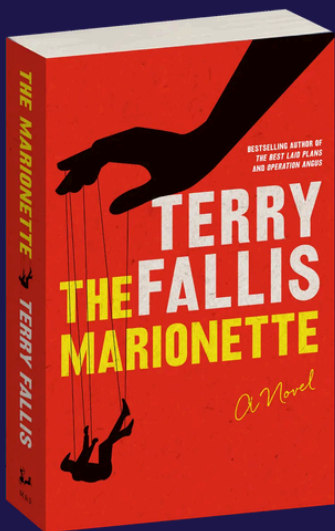
accessed free tax clinic services at SCPL.



2,385

seed packets

distributed to the community through the Seed Library.



OneRead, OneSTC: Terry Fallis & The Marionette

Thursday, June 11, 2026

6:30-8:30pm

Lockview Lounge, St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canals Centre

St. Catharines Public Library and the City of St. Catharines present OneRead, OneSTC with Terry Fallis and his latest novel, The Marionette.

Registration is required. Register online at events.myscpl.ca



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE



CULTURE



EDUCATION



INCLUSION & WELLBEING



SPACE



814

attendees
participated in March
Break programming
at SCPL.



50

volunteers
recognized during
Volunteer
Appreciation week.



**“I’m so thankful
that the library has
study rooms to
book and use. I
wish I knew about
them sooner!”**

- SCPL Customer

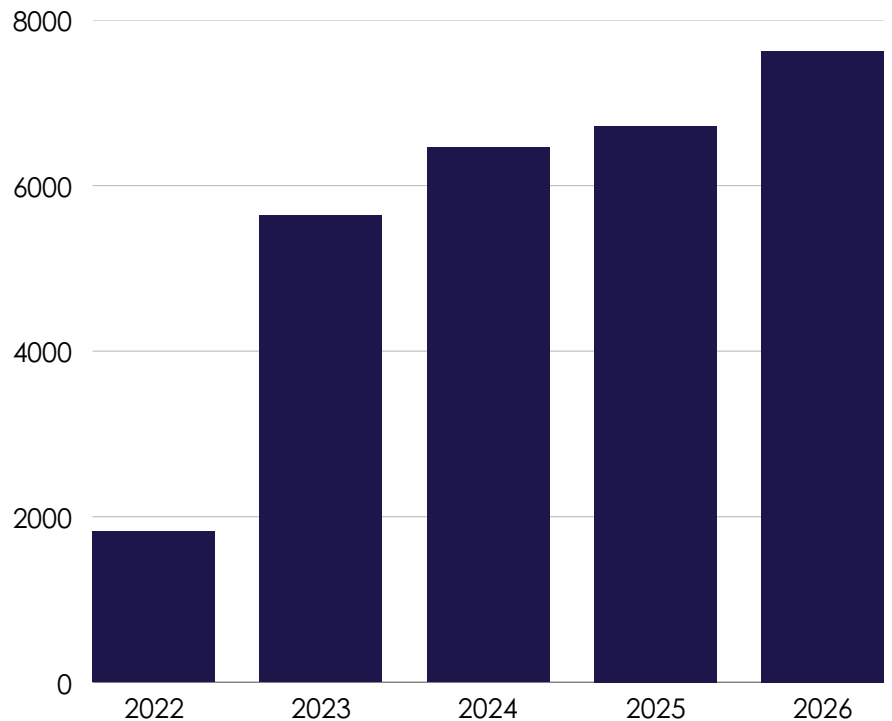
772

people

studied or attended
meetings in our free
study rooms in Q1 2026.



**Q1 Program Attendance by Year,
2022-2026**





2025 SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT



Total economic benefit to St. Catharines that SCPL produced in 2025 across the seven domains of impact:

\$46,364,707



\$5,364,541
CULTURE



\$7,633,599
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



\$763,563
INCLUSION & WELLBEING



\$22,076,822
ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE



\$71,764
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



\$5,185,071
EDUCATION



\$5,269,347
SPACE



\$6.61

of economic benefit for every \$1.00 the City invests in SCPL.



\$3338.91

of economic benefit to each resident.



\$787.11

of economic benefit to each household.



\$1,320.99

of economic benefit to the community for every hour SCPL is open.

Based on calculations using the Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit developed by the Ontario Library Service and NORDIK Institute.

In 2025, the Toolkit was revised to reflect economic changes and refine data reporting. Updated calculations were applied across all seven domains of impact.

CEO Report

submitted by Ken Su, CEO (April 2026)

For Information

Enhancing Access to Spaces for Everyone Grant

Staff has been actively looking for grants that can help renovate the Central Library and improve accessibility. The CEO, the Business Administrator and the Manager of Facilities met with a Regional Development Advisor from the provincial government on April 22 to discuss the possibility of applying for the 2026 Enhancing Access to Spaces for Everyone grant. Staff shared a tentative plan and goals with her, and discussed the scope of the proposed project and the timeline.

Staff submitted the application on May 6, and if successful, the Library will receive up to \$60,000 to renovate the washrooms at the Central Library. The construction would need to be completed by October 31, 2027.

Community Needs Assessment Update

Community Needs Assessment continued throughout April and May. The consultants conducted focus group meetings with Management on April 23, the Board on April 28, and staff on May 7. They also received guided tours at all library locations from staff on May 7 and 8.

The community needs survey was kicked off on May 4. Three pop-up stations were held on May 7 and 8 at the Farmers Market, Dunlop Drive Older Adults Centre, and Niagara Pen Centre.

Once the consultants complete the data collection phase, they will start analysis phase at the end of May. Interim findings are scheduled to be presented to the Library at the end of June.

CULC Meeting and AI Policy

The CEO attended the Spring 2026 CULC meeting in Calgary on April 27 and 28.

CEOs from 51 large libraries devoted the entire day of April 27 to discussing CULC's role within the national context and brainstorming priorities, challenges, and strategic directions of CULC. The insights gathered from this session will form a strong foundation for the next CULC Strategic Plan.

On April 28, Dr. Soroush Sabbaghan from University of Calgary gave a keynote presentation on the *Ethical Integration of Generative AI into Teaching and Learning Practices*. CULC has made a commitment that all its member libraries will have an AI policy in place and provide related training to their leadership and staff by the end of 2026.

SCPL's AI Policy was developed last year and was recently evaluated by the CULC AI Policy group. The Policy is strong in "Policy Statement", "Governance" and "Relevant Legislation", while staff will work to improve the sections on "Guiding Principles", "Non-Compliance" and "Privacy". A revised policy will be presented to the Board in September.

Customer Service

submitted by Joanna Spera, Manager of Customer Service (April 2026)

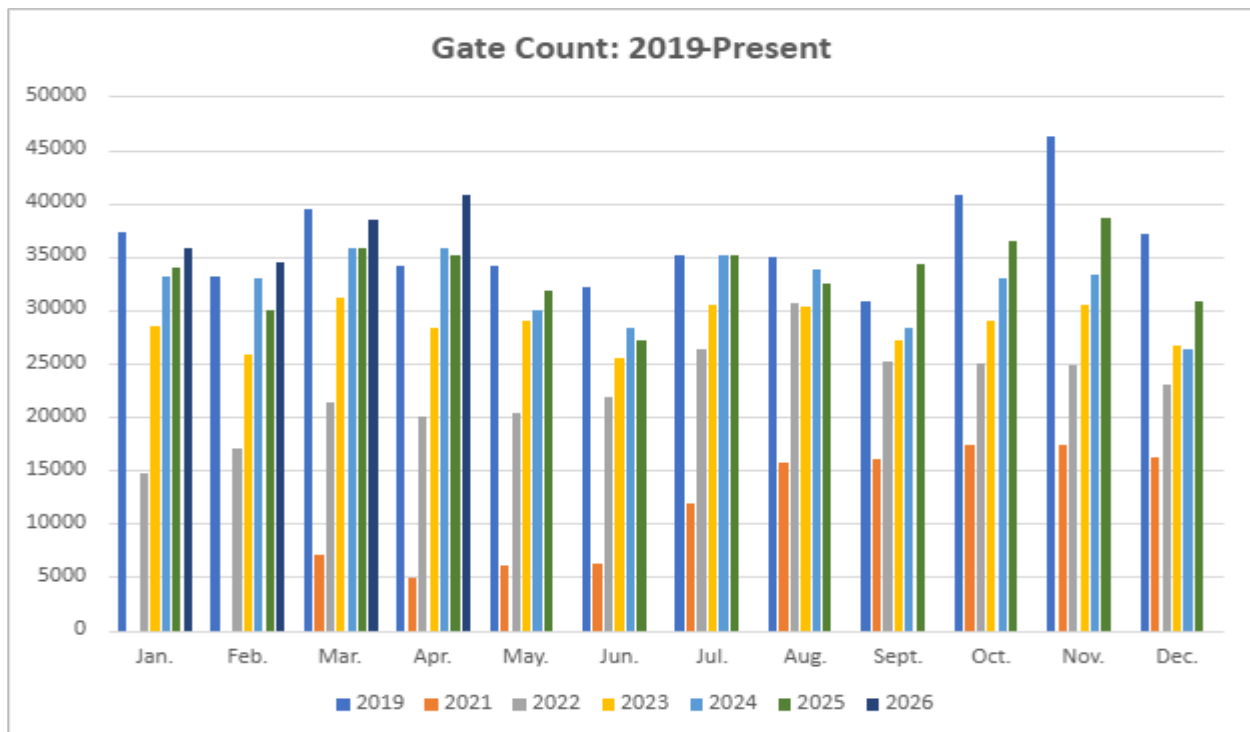
For Information

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

	April 2026	% change from 2025
Gate Count	40,805	35,165 (+16%)
Membership	593	556 (+6%)
Holds Placed	13,181	12,136 (+8%)
Questions	7,576	7,222 (+5%)

Gate Count

In April, our system-wide gate count was significantly higher than in 2025, increasing by 14%, surpassing our pre-pandemic levels.



Membership

New memberships continue to grow with a 6% increase over April 2025 and are up 5% this year to date. Our outreach and promotion initiatives, class visits, and the continued expansion of collections and services are contributing factors to our strong membership growth.

Holds Placed

The number of holds placed this month was up 8% from April 2025 and are up 5% this year to date. The holds system remains a core library service, providing equitable and convenient access to materials for customers across the city.

Tax Clinics

The Tax Clinics hosted at SCPL in March and April, in partnership with the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, have concluded. The library hosted 19 clinics, compared to 18 in 2025, serving a total of 607 customers, an increase of 1% over the previous year. Merritt's new larger meeting room was utilized to expand service capacity at that location, accommodating seven clinics compared to three in 2025. In addition, the no-show rate improved by 13% year over year system wide.

Training Highlights

SCPL's Mentorship Program continues to be a successful asset to our Onboarding process with consistently positive feedback from its participants. Since its formation in 2022, 24 staff members have completed one full year of the program and there are an additional 8 mentor/mentee matches meeting monthly.

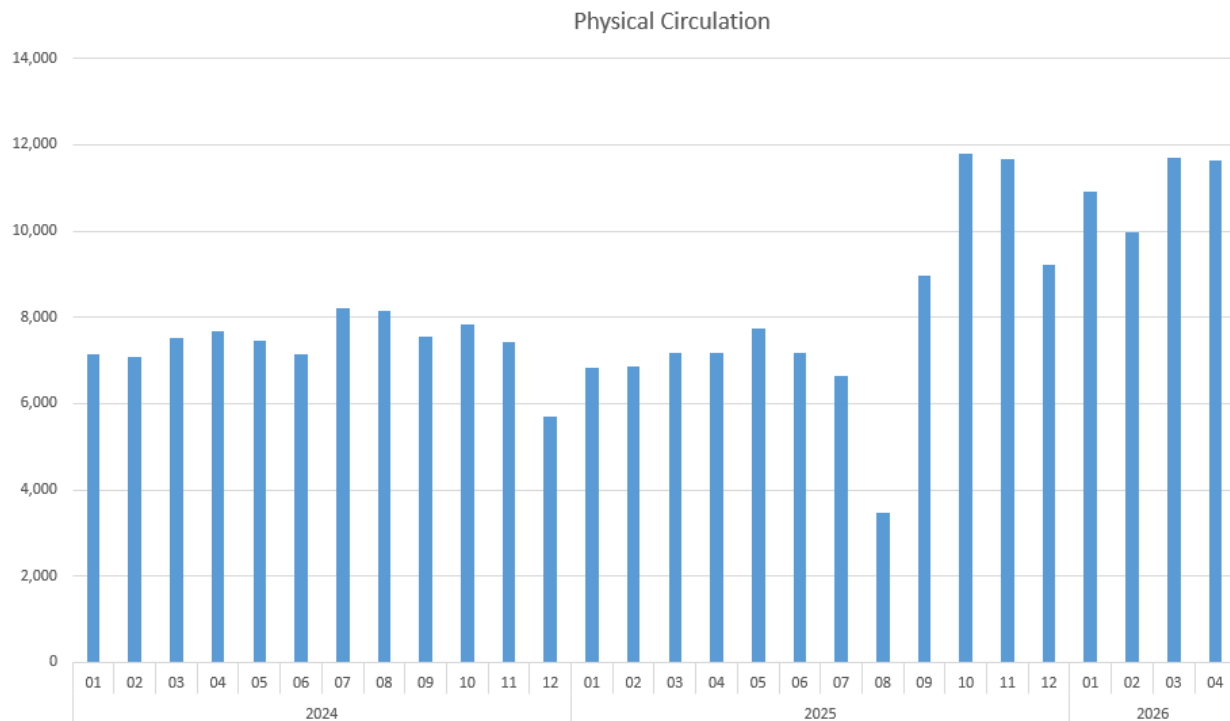
Innovation, Collections & Technology

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

For Information

Physical Circulation

Total physical circulation increased by 0.5% from March to April 2026. Physical circulation at Merritt for April increased by 62% over April 2025. Since re-opening in September 2025, Merritt circulation has increased 52% over the same time period (September 2024 to April 2025 vs. September 2025 to April 2026).



Digital Circulation

Digital circulation of online resources decreased by 5% from March to April 2026. This appears to be a common trend throughout previous years.

Library of Things

Replacement Bicycle Repair Kits were purchased for the collection as these kits remain a popular item for borrowing in the Spring.

VOX Collection

A new VOX Collection was launched to replace the Wonderbook collection. VOX books are similar to Wonderbooks as they have a built-in player that reads aloud as the reader follows along. Simply press a button to listen to the story.

The VOX Collection will consist of picture books, easy readers, children's chapter books, and children's graphic novels at all locations.

Technology Upgrades

Meeting Room 115 was upgraded with a new wireless LCD display, as well as additional data and power receptacles. Additionally, 2 hi-resolution security cameras were installed along Church Street.

Programming and Promotions

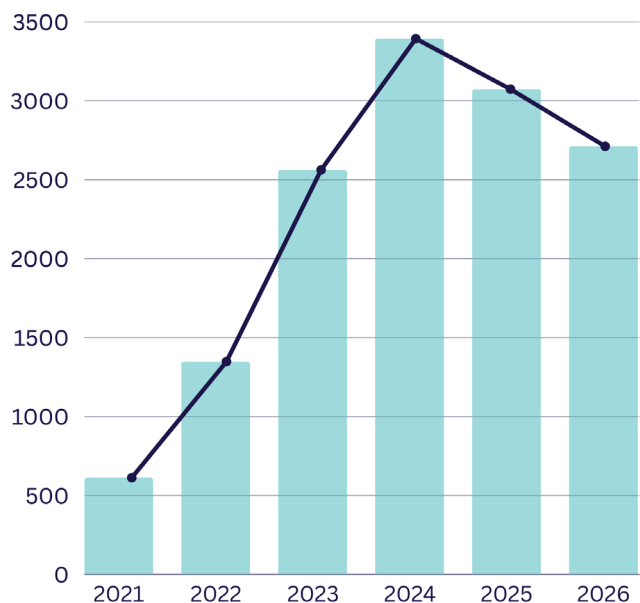
submitted by Holly Jones, Manager Programming & Promotions (April, 2026)

For Information

Programming Highlights

A total of 2,712 customers participated in or were reached through programs and outreach initiatives in April, representing a 12% decrease compared to the same period last year. April program attendance has been trending down following the move of the Seed Library launch and related programming to March. While this shift has resulted in lower April attendance, it has fueled a significant upward trend in March engagement, as reported last month (36% increase in 2026 over 2025).

April Program Attendance, 2021-2026



Children's and family programming continues to be a primary driver of community engagement, anchored by the consistent popularity of our early literacy storytimes across the system. Programming for older children and teens focused on social skill-building, arts & crafts, literacy and STEM exploration. Chess Club, Dungeons & Dragons Club, and reading-centred Lemonade Club remain popular. STEM workshops such as Slime Science and Exploring Snap Circuits continue to spark engagement. Seasonal

and special interest events, including an Uno Tournament and Pysanky Paper Eggs, further diversified our offerings. The Teen Reviews volunteer program maintained high participation levels, providing valuable youth-led content for our digital platforms.

Adult programming in April featured a diverse mix of health, culture, and community programs. Partnership programs such as the "Dementia Education Series" with the Alzheimer's Society and "Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting" with the Niagara Region performed well. The library celebrated National Poetry Month and Canadian National Film Day with poetry workshops and a film screening, while also fostering interest in local history and supporting financial literacy through sessions like "The Brown Homestead: Past, Present and Future" and "Explore Your Relationship with Money". A key success this month was the "Free Shopping Event" held at Central in collaboration with Niagara's Mobile Closet and attended by 176 community members.

Community outreach and class visits represented a significant portion of April's engagement. Highlights included outreach to Governor Simcoe High School, a visit to Prince of Wales Public School, and the Bridges Niagara Resource Fair. SCPL welcomed several schools and community organizations to the library as well, including Community Addictions Services of Niagara and Community Living at the Central Library, Niagara Children's Centre at the Dr. Huq Branch, and St. Peter's Catholic Elementary School and Ferndale Public School at the Merritt Branch.

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 projects this month:

- Prepared promotions for Summer Reading Club 2026
- Launched Membership Activation Campaign Q2 2026 and developed a plan for continuing membership during the Polaris launch
- Supported the Community Needs Assessment and the ILS migration project
- Successfully completed the Design a Bookmark Contest
- Executed the 2026 "One eRead Canada" social media campaign

April's social media highlights included strong engagement with our 3D printing features, the One eRead Canada campaign, curated book lists, and our poetry workshops.

Media Mentions

There were no media mentions to report in April.

Human Resources

submitted by **Albertina Maciukas, Human Resources Manager**

For Information

Recruitment

We are currently recruiting for two summer student positions as well as a part-time Facilities role. All positions have been posted, applications reviewed, and interviews scheduled. Overall, recruitment has progressed smoothly, with a strong pool of qualified candidates for most roles. However, the Facilities position has proven more challenging to fill.

Staff Development Day 2026

We have confirmed that the 2026 Staff Development Day will be held jointly with the Niagara Falls Public Library. The program is being designed to focus on key areas including change management, resilience, social connection, and artificial intelligence (AI).

This collaboration will provide a valuable opportunity to connect with colleagues, exchange ideas, and build relationships that can support future partnerships. As a small community, having a network of like-minded professionals to connect with helps strengthen both our sense of community and overall workplace wellness.

Training

To support the continued growth of our employees and better understand organizational needs, a survey was distributed to managers and staff to identify training and skills gaps. The results are currently being reviewed by the Training Librarian and will inform the development of a targeted training plan.

Several staff members have enrolled in training opportunities offered through the City of St. Catharines. Some employees participated in sessions earlier in March, and additional staff are scheduled to attend training throughout the remainder of the year.

Annual Employee Survey

This year, we will be conducting an employee survey to gather feedback and assess overall staff engagement. The survey will focus on areas where meaningful action can be taken, such as workplace culture, leadership, and professional growth.

SCPL Connects Committee

To date, the committee has organized a monthly activity, including initiatives such as Secret Cupid cards, an Olympic medal count guessing contest, a board game night, and an upcoming picnic. Each event is designed to appeal to a range of interests and accommodate varying comfort levels of employee engagement. Participation has varied across activities but has remained consistently strong overall.

Performance Reviews

As we approach the one-year mark of the new performance review document, managers will be invited to provide feedback outlining any challenges encountered and recommended improvements. This input will be incorporated into a revised version of the document, with the updated version scheduled for rollout in September.

Integrated Library System (ILS) Migration

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

For Information

During April, staff from SCPL and Niagara Falls Public Library (NFPL) worked with Clarivate's Data Analyst to complete the data mapping for the import. Clarivate is expected to complete importing library data into the test server by the end of the first week of May. During the 2nd week of May, Clarivate will update our system to version 8.1 and provide access to both libraries by mid-May.

NFPL and SCPL CEOs have provided an update of the project to the Niagara Library CEOs (attached) and are also in the process of issuing a press release to the public.

The Management Team continues to meet weekly with NFPL counterparts to provide project oversight and ensure the project remains on schedule.



Joint Statement from NFPL and SCPL

Dear Colleagues,

We are writing to share the exciting next steps in our joint Integrated Library System (ILS) initiative. Following our previous communications, NFPL and SCPL are pleased to announce that we have now officially begun the migration process to our new shared system, Clarivate's Polaris ILS.

This initiative builds upon years of dedicated effort. Starting in 2023, our two libraries began discussing the possibility of moving to a shared ILS, laying the essential groundwork by standardizing our cataloging and processing procedures. This preparation allowed us to develop shared criteria and issue a joint RFP in January 2025. Together, our teams reviewed submissions, interviewed short-listed candidates, and officially signed the contract in September 2025.

With this solid groundwork in place, our project teams began preliminary work, including system profiling and data mapping, in March and have just recently confirmed our final project timeline. This partnership allows us to maximize our resources and share costs, with the goal of delivering enhanced services and a better user experience for our customers.

To keep you informed of our progress, we wish to share our key milestones for the coming months:

Date	Milestone
Mid-to-Late May	A test server for the new ILS will be set up.
Mid-May - October	Configuration and testing of the various modules, including Vega Discovery Layer, Innovative Phone Alerts and Mobile App
June – August	Comprehensive staff training on the new system will be

conducted.

Week of Nov 10

System Downtime: Both NFPL and SCPL systems will be offline for approximately one week to perform the final data migration and configuration.

November 18

The new shared ILS is scheduled to officially launch.

Throughout this process, our core priorities of collaboration, transparency, and service quality are unchanged. We are confident that this new shared system will be a significant improvement for our customers.

Thank you for your continued support as we move forward with this ILS migration project. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Alicia Subnaik Kilgour
CEO
Niagara Falls Public Library



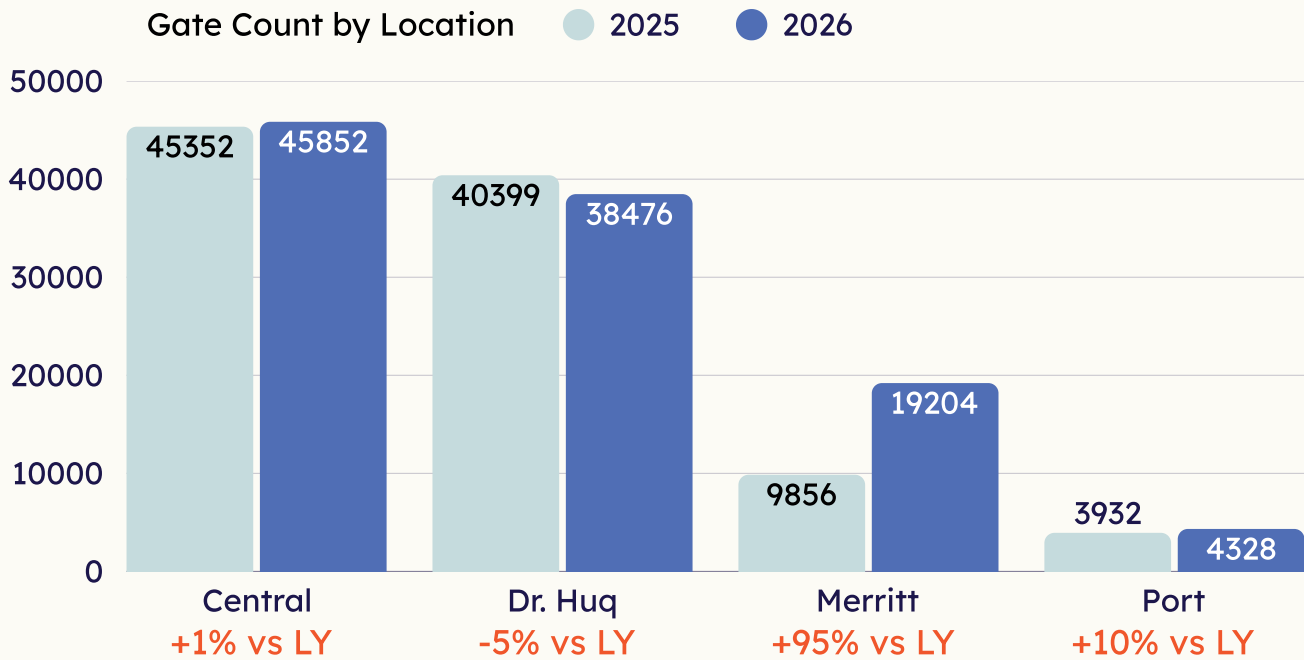
Ken Su
CEO
St. Catharines Public Library

CUSTOMER SERVICE SUMMARY

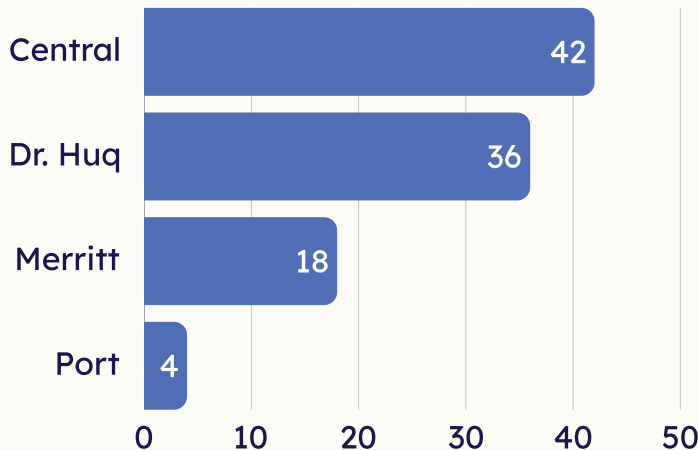
Q1 2026

Q1 Foot Traffic

From January to March of 2026, SCPL's total gate count was 107,860. This number represents an increase of 8.4% from Q1 last year.



Percentage of Total Foot Traffic by Location Q1 2026

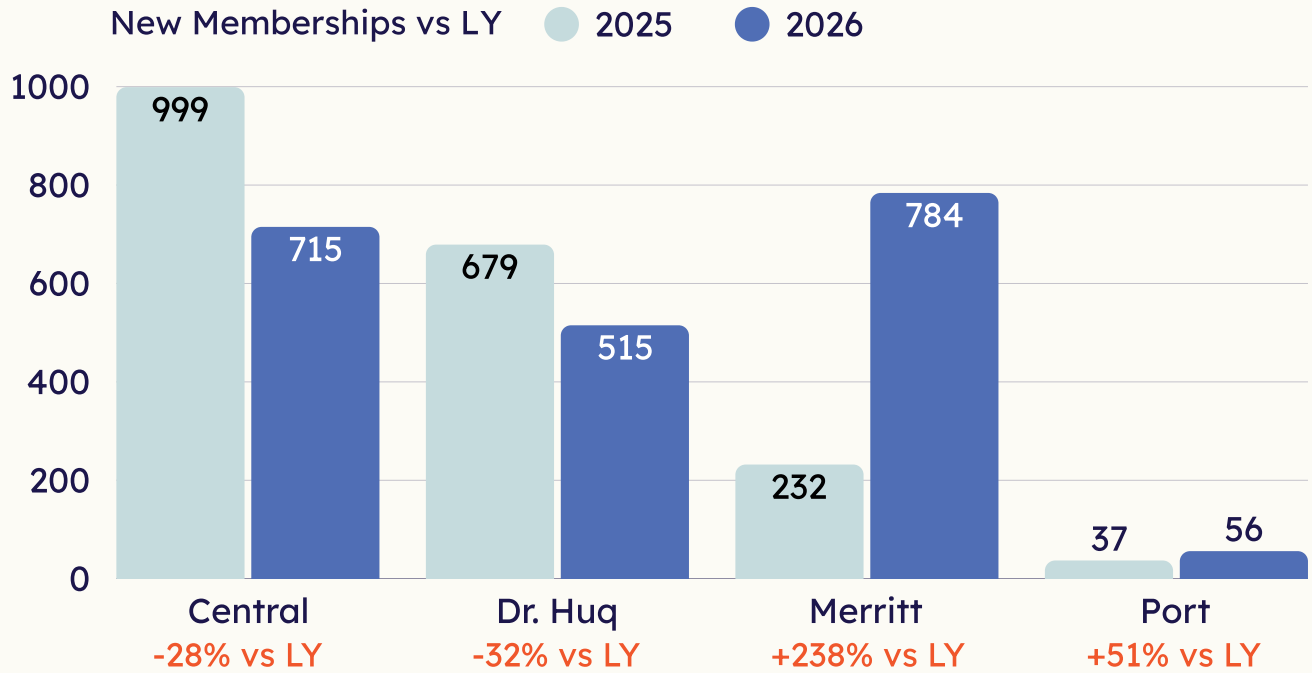


Compared to last year, each branch's percentage of the library's total foot traffic differed by:

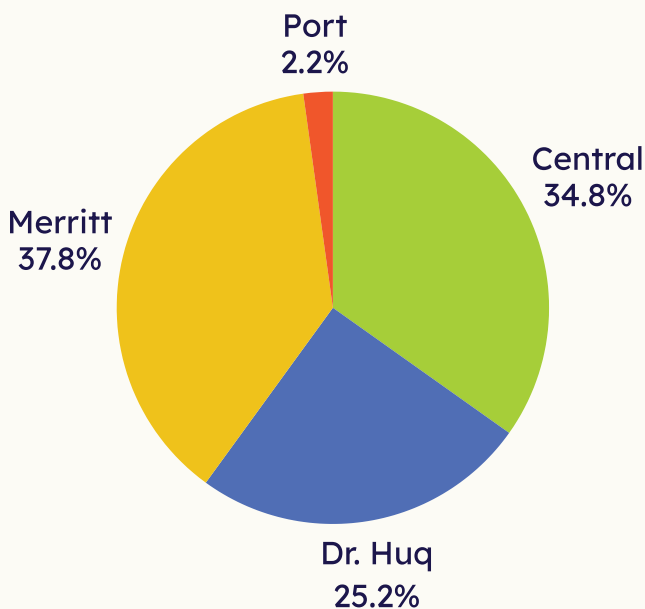
- Central: -9%
- Huq: -12%
- Merritt: +80%
- Port: no change

Q1 Memberships

System-wide, there was a 6.3% increase in new memberships in Q1 2026, from 1,947 in 2025 to 2,070 this year. The Merritt Branch experienced a significant increase in new membership registration with an increase of 238%.



Q1 2026 Percentage of Total New Memberships by Location



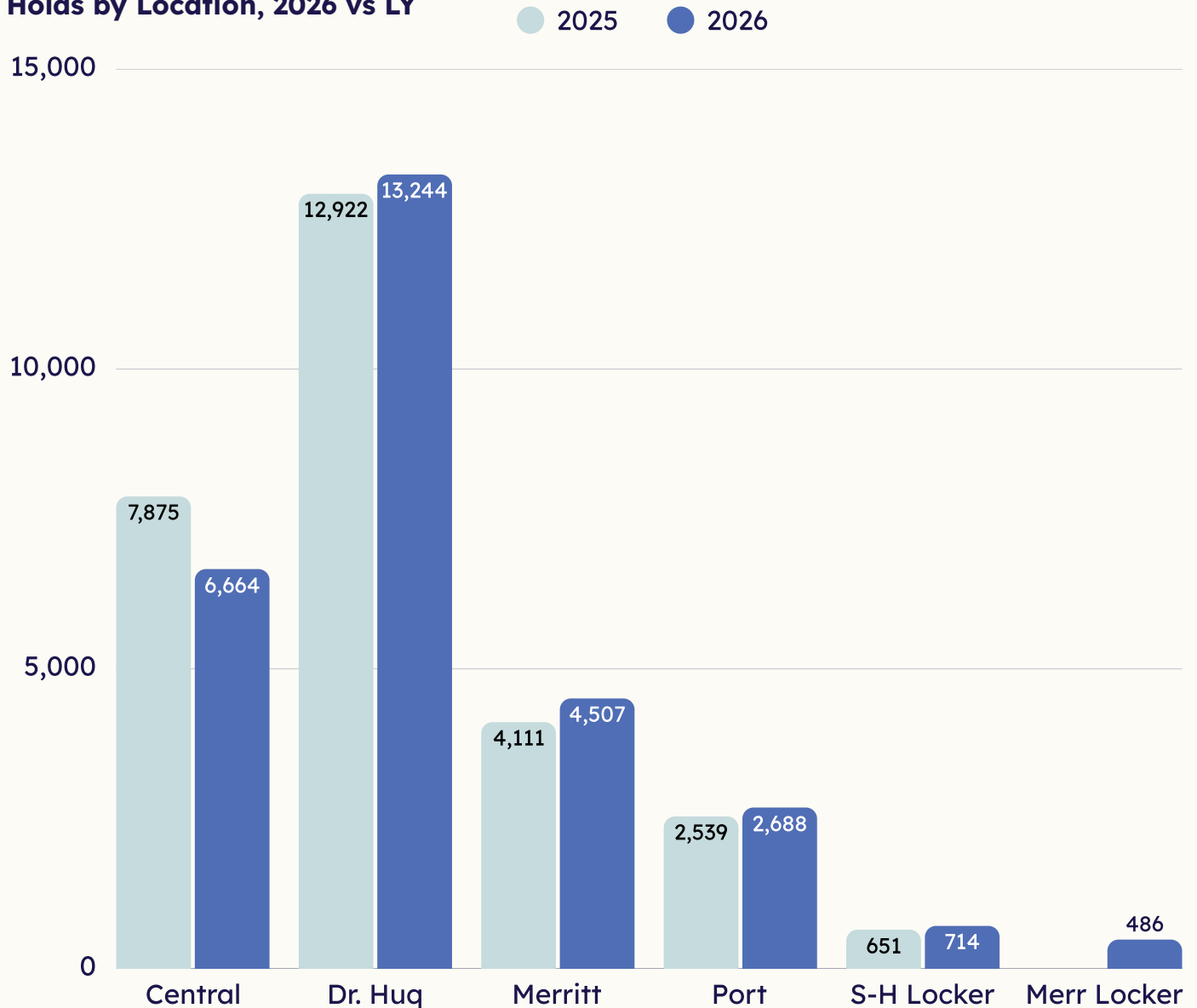
Compared to last year, each branch saw the following percentage change of system-wide new memberships:

- Central: -31%
- Huq: -29%
- Merritt: +217%
- Port: no change

Q1 Holds

In Q1 2026, SCPL customers picked up 28,303 holds, which is on par with last year's total of 28,098. The Dr. Huq Branch continues to be the location where the majority of holds are picked up.

Holds by Location, 2026 vs LY

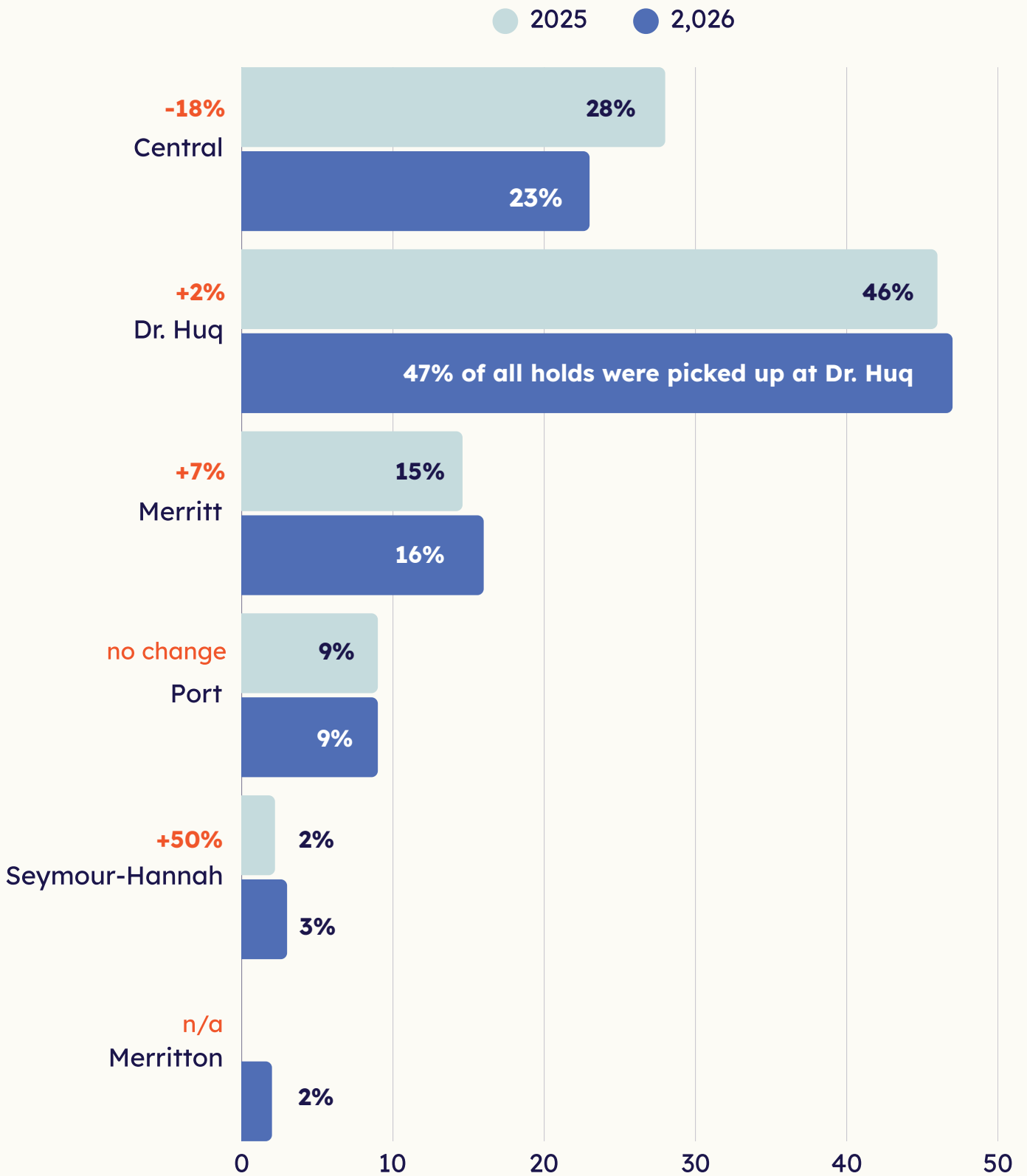


Compared to LY, the percentage change in each location's share of total holds:

- Central: -15%
- Dr. Huq: +2.5%
- Merritt: +10%
- Port: +6%
- Seymour-Hannah: +10%
- Merrittton: not applicable

Q1 Holds

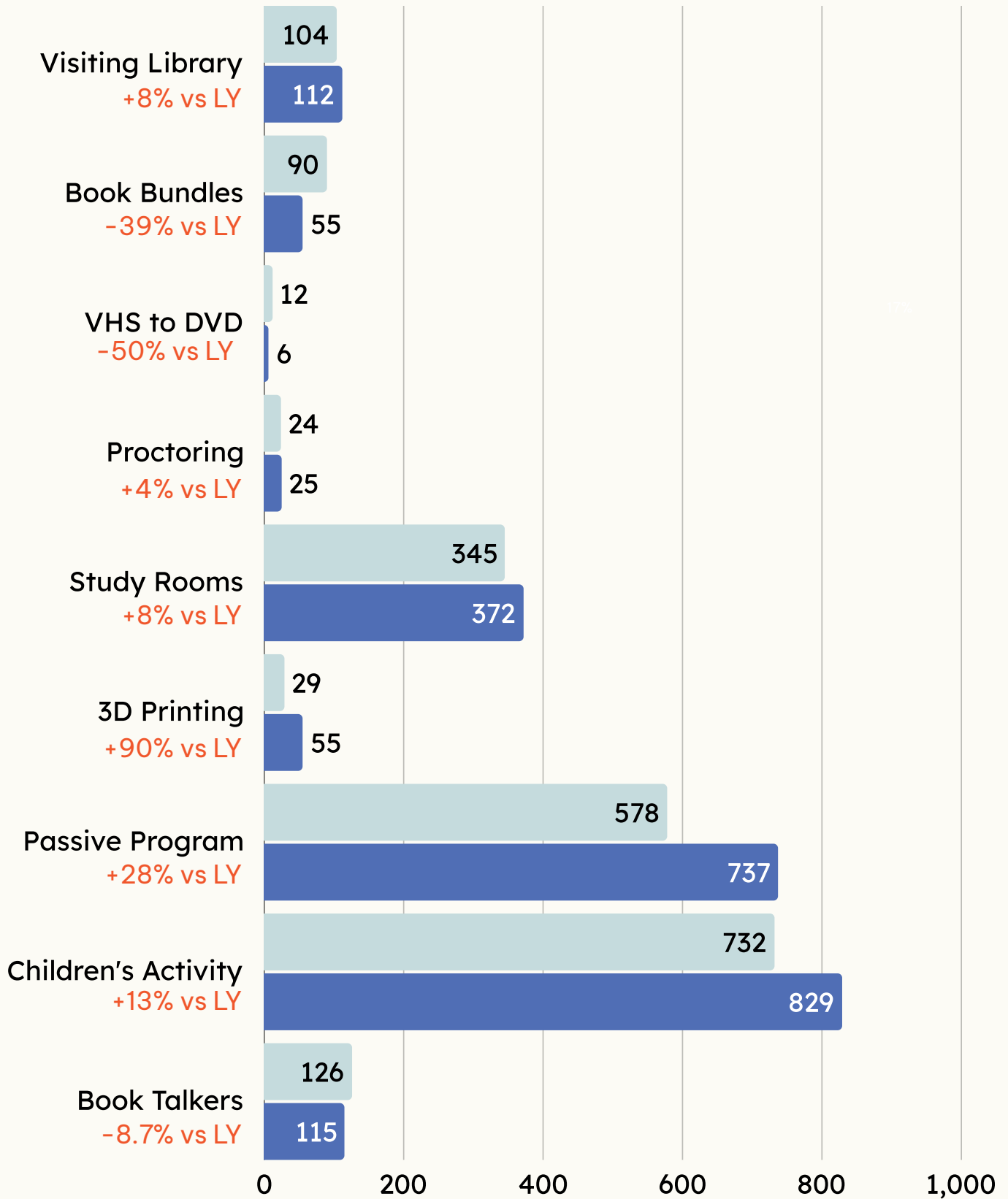
Change in each location's percentage of system-wide holds vs LY



Q1 Services System-Wide

● 2025

● 2026

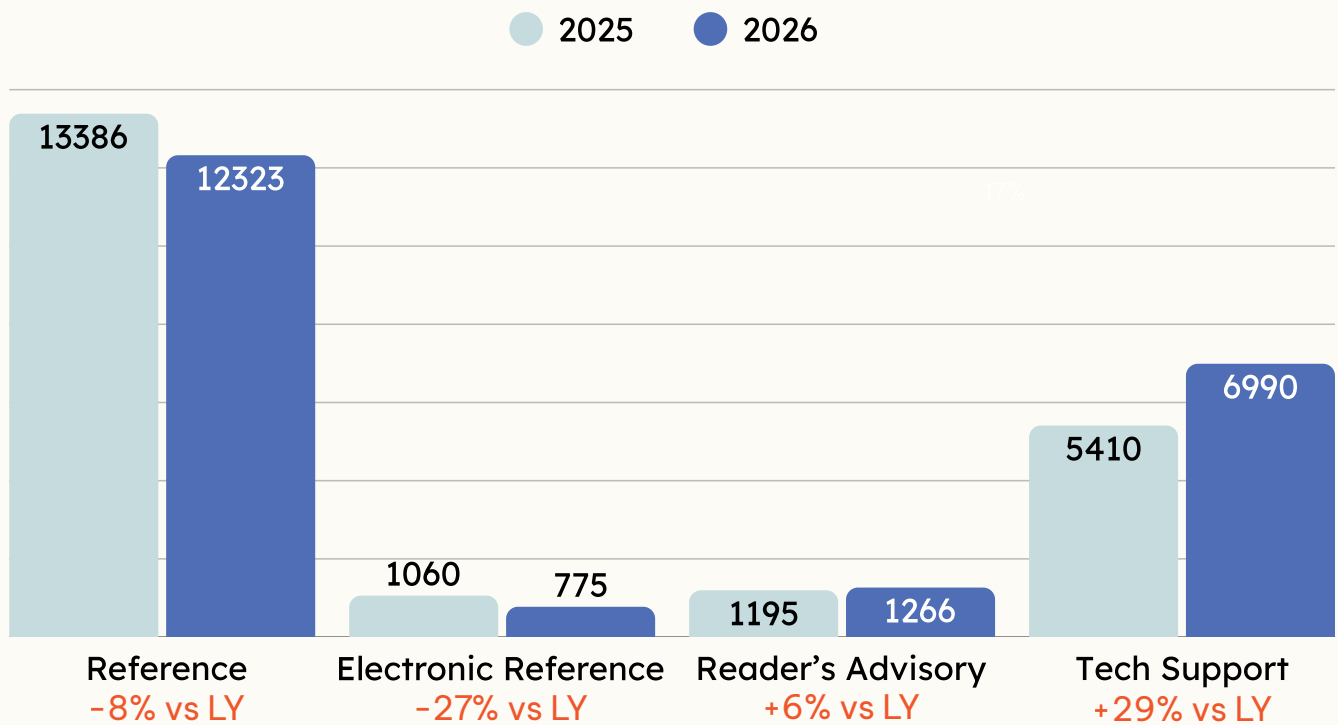


Q1 Services

Tax clinics began in March with some significant changes in the number of attendees by location.

	Central	Dr. Huq	Merritt	Total
2025	239	54	17	310
2026	113	116	118	347
Percentage Change	- 53%	+ 155%	+594%	+ 12%

Q1 Information Requests System-Wide



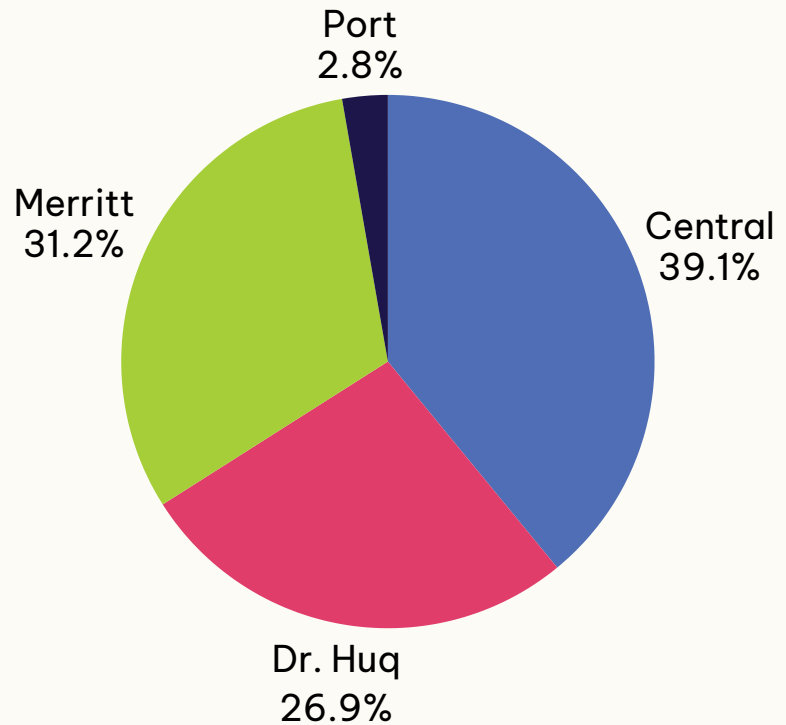
Average time per tech support interaction: 6.2 minutes, **+29% vs LY**

Special Collections requests: 227, **-7% vs LY**

Accessibility requests: 178, **+19% vs LY**

Q1 Total Information Requests by Branch

- Central: 8497
- Dr. Huq: 5864
- Merritt: 6799
- Port: 599
- Total = 21,759
+1% vs LY



Q1 Training

- Citation Canada training sessions completed: 110, +267% vs LY
- Ryan Dowd Homeless training completed: 193, -49% vs LY
- Staff completed 47 shared training opportunities

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**
457
**volunteer
hours**

space
107,860
visits

**economic
development**
208
**staff training
hours**

education
21,759
**information
requests**

**entertainment
& leisure**
65,985
**active
borrowers**

Q1 Customer Feedback

A customer at an outreach event was surprised and pleased to learn about the Merritton holds lockers in Home Hardware. She is a Merritton resident that hadn't been able to make her way to the Pen Centre branch yet and liked the idea of using the holds lockers for quick and easy access.

A customer shared with staff that a shelf talker popsicle stick caught their eye, and then they realized the book was by the same author they were currently reading and enjoying. They were looking forward to another book by that author!

A visitor from Hamilton used Central's printing services and shared high praise for our offerings. As a lifelong library user, he was impressed by the range of services and specifically complimented the helpful way staff interacted with other patrons.

A customer praised automatic renewals, saying it really takes the stress out of borrowing from the library with 5 kids' books to keep track of!

At the Dr. Huq Branch, staff helped a customer with an online Amazon return. She was grateful for their help and praised their patience. On her way out, she remarked that she wishes retail experiences were as pleasant as library experiences and that stores could learn a thing or two from us. She also said it's clear that staff here receive excellent training as they are able to help with so many needs, technology and beyond.

The library received an email from a customer who wrote to say thank you for her new membership (created through the website) and complimented how fast staff responded to her request.

Multiple customers praised the library for the services it provides. In Q1, customers especially expressed their appreciation for the free income tax clinics and for the study rooms at Merritt and Central.

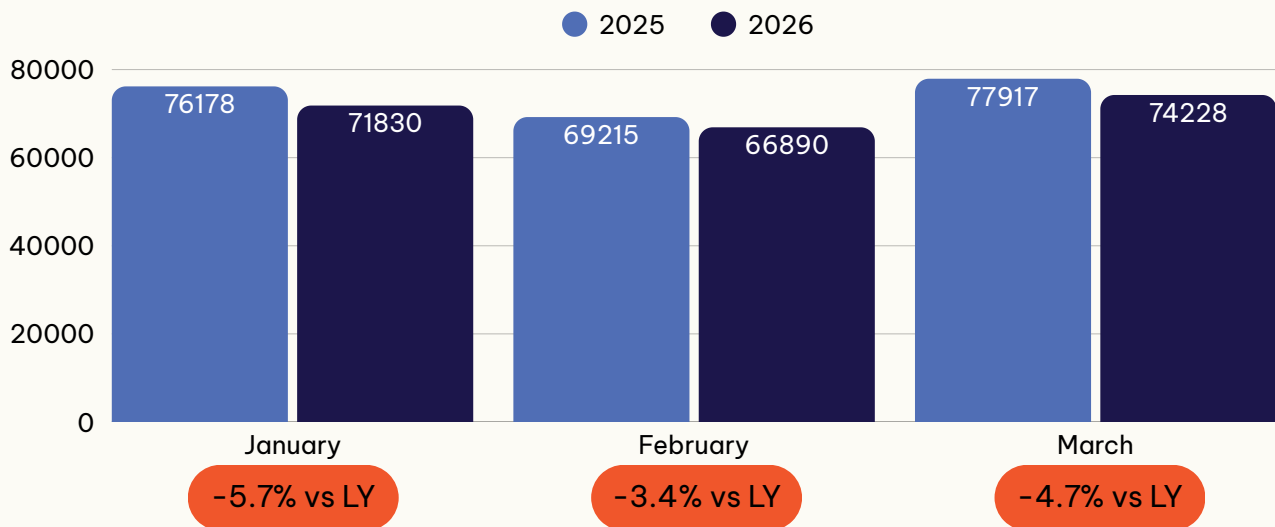
Customers offered suggestions for the Merritt Branch, asking for a water bottle filling station and for book sale items to be made available for Merritt customers like they are at the Dr. Huq and Central branches.

ICT SUMMARY

Q1 2026

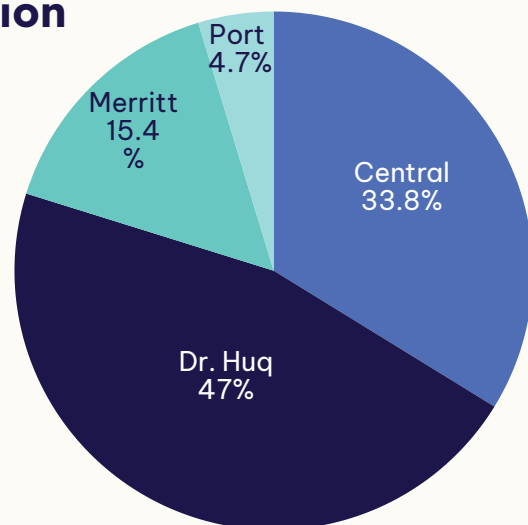
Q1 Physical Circulation

From January to March 2026, physical checkouts and in-house uses of physical materials totaled 212,948. This marks a decrease of 4.6% from that of Q1 2025. Significant differences were noted at Central and Merritt. Physical circulation at Central decreased by 25% compared to Q1 last year, while Merritt's circulation increased by 56%. In contrast, Q1 2026 circulation at Huq and Port remained virtually the same as Q1 2025.



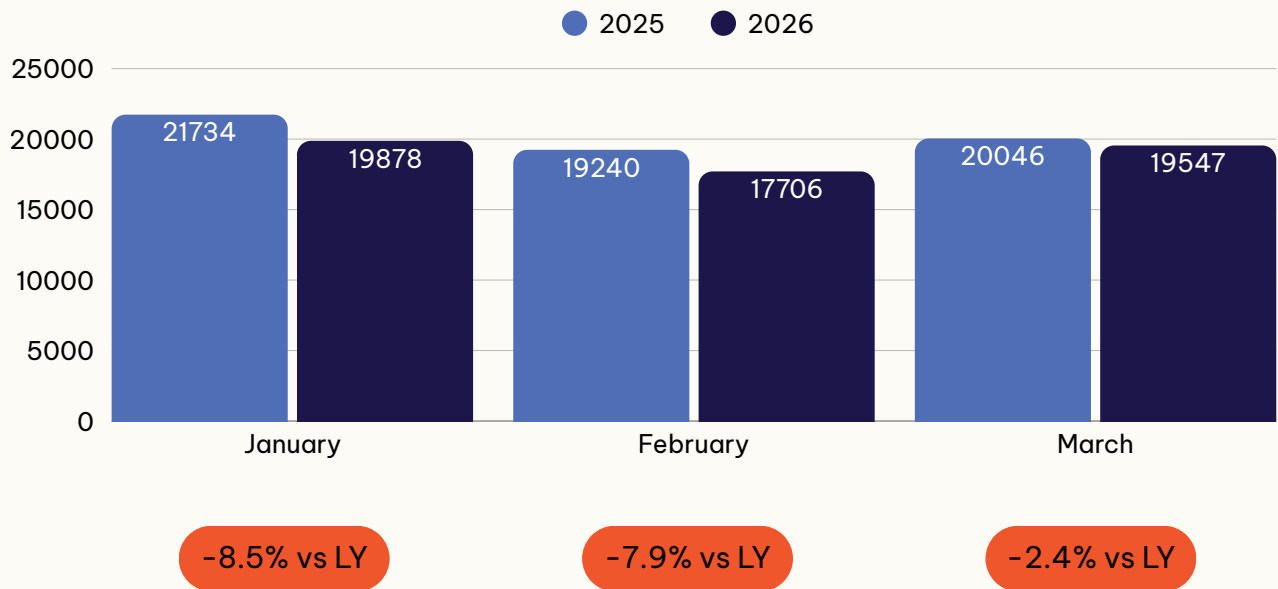
Q1 Physical Circulation by Location

- Central
- Dr. Huq
- Merritt
- Port Dalhousie



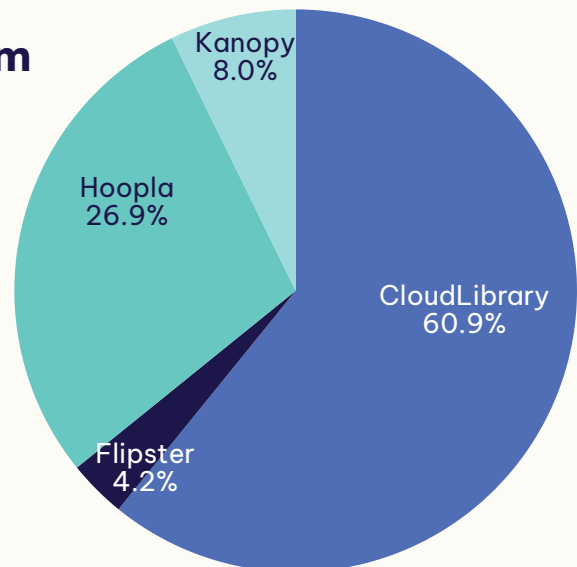
Q1 Digital Circulation

Digital circulation across CloudLibrary, Flipster, Hoopla, and Kanopy in Q1 2026 decreased overall by 6.3% compared to Q1 2025. However, digital circulation increased in Q1 2026 by 3.2% compared to Q4 2025.



Q1 Digital Circulation by Platform

- CloudLibrary
- Flipster
- Hoopla
- Kanopy



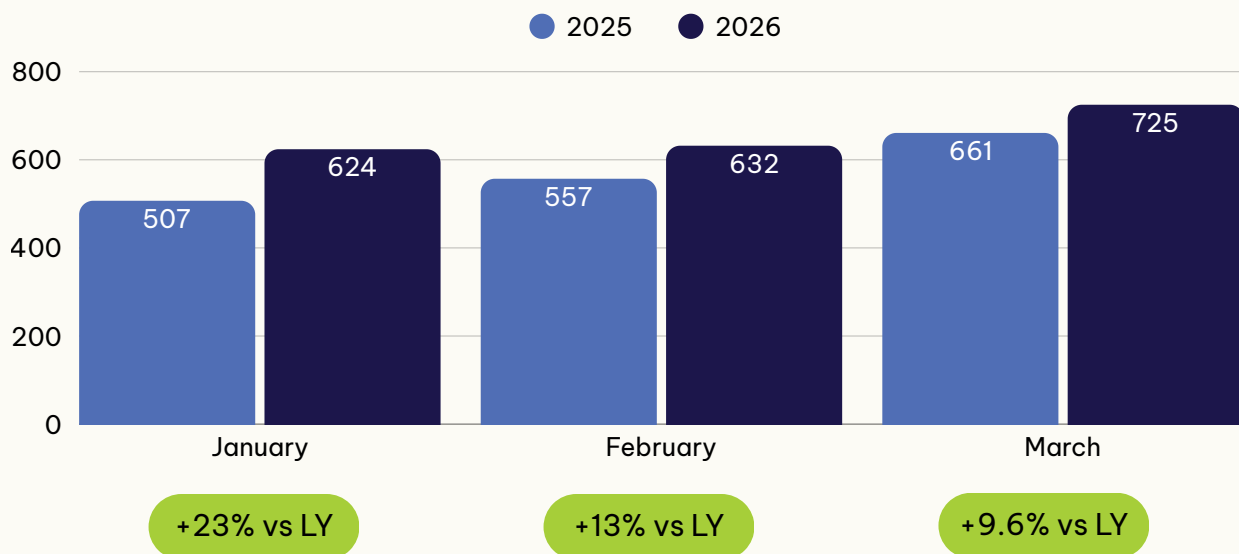
Q1 Library of Things

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. Circulation of Library of Things items in Q1 2026 increased by 15% compared to that of Q1 2025.

Four new items were added to the Library of Things collection in Q1 2026:

1. Nex Playground – An active, motion-based home video game console designed to encourage physical activity and interactive play for families.
2. Thermal Camera – A device that detects heat and produces a visual image of temperature differences, helping users identify cold spots that may require additional insulation in their homes.
3. Drawing Tablet – A versatile digital tool suitable for drawing, photo editing, visual communications, notetaking and other creative tasks.
4. C-Pen – A portable, text-to-speech scanning device that reads printed text out loud as it is moved across the page, supporting accessibility and reading assistance.

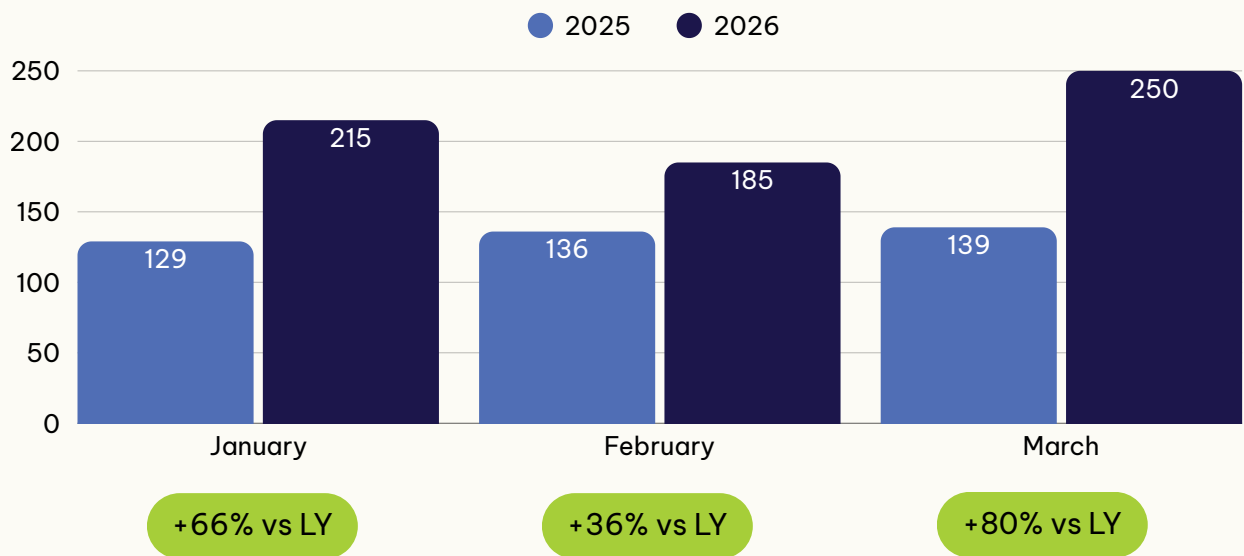
Q1 Library of Things Circulation



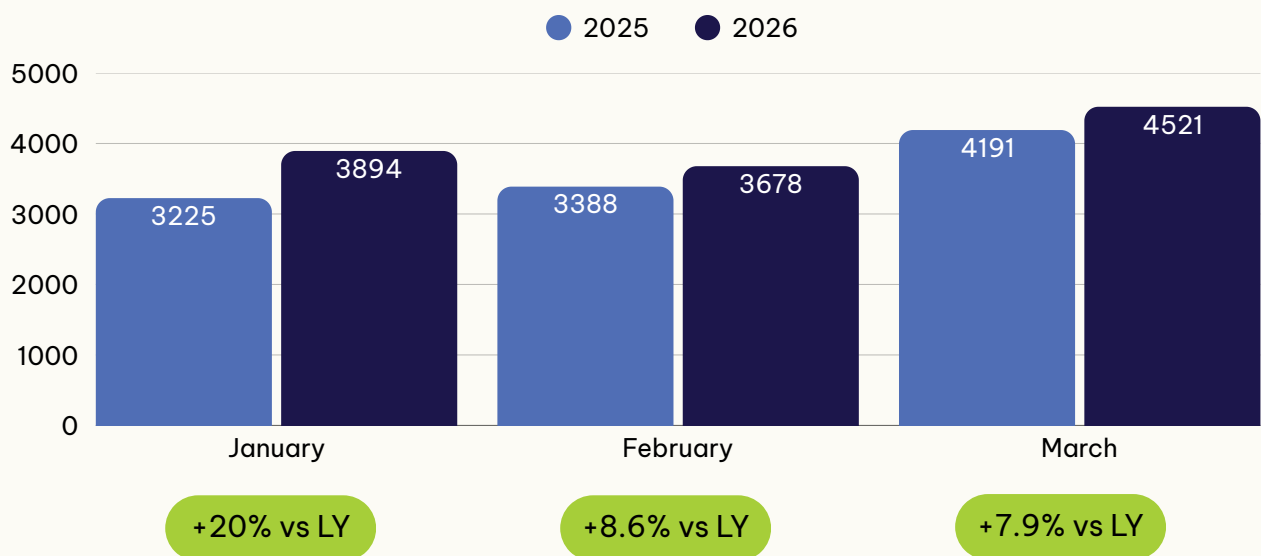
Gamerspace & PC Usage

Consoles within the gamerspace were used 650 times in Q1 2026, marking a 61% increase from Q1 2025. Across all SCPL locations, internet computers, including the Gaming PCs, were used 12,093 times in Q1 2026. This represents a 12% increase from Q1 2025. The gaming PCs were used 913 times, representing a 7.4% increase from their usage in Q1 2025.

Q1 Gamerspace Console Usage



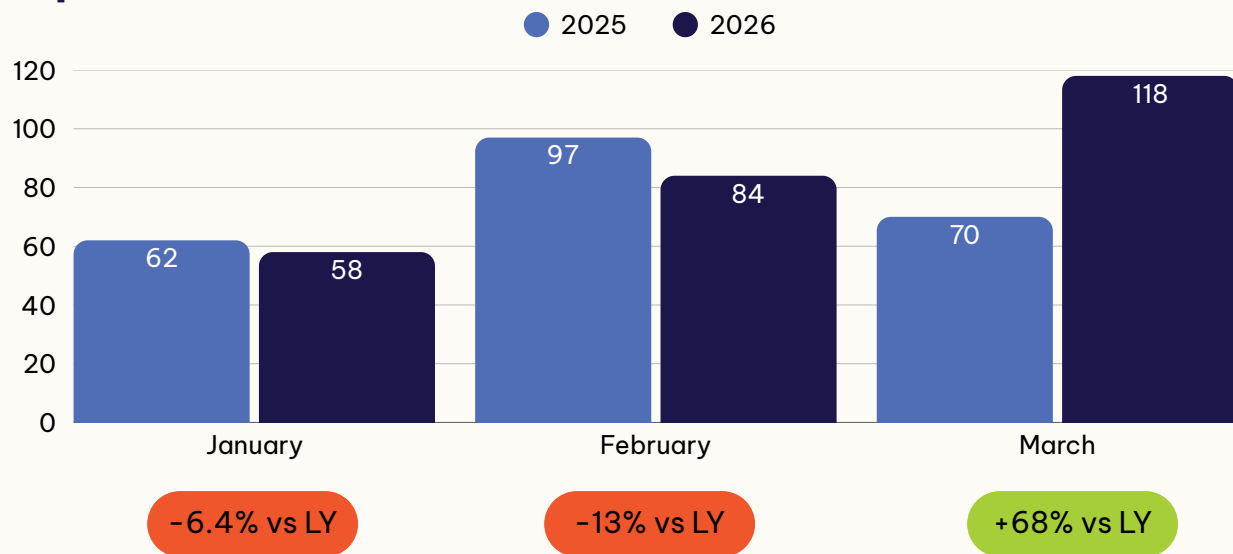
Q1 Gamerspace PC & Internet PC Usage



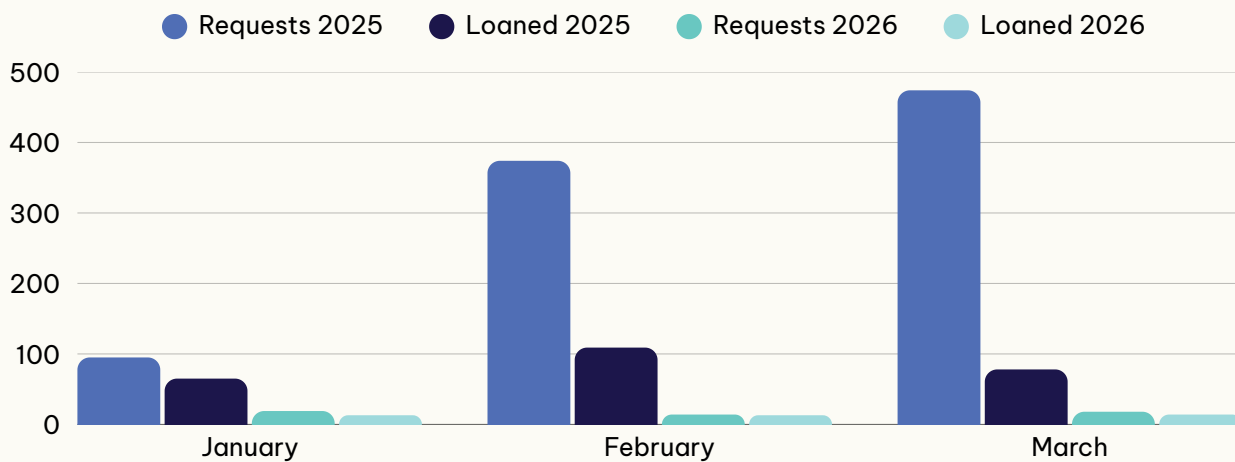
Interlibrary Loan

The Interlibrary Loan service resumed in Q1 2026 after being suspended in Q4 2025 due to a Canada Post Strike. From January to March 2026, SCPL customers borrowed 260 items from other Ontario Libraries. This marked an 13% increase overall compared to Q1 2025. In 2026, SCPL is receiving 94% fewer requests for our material to be loaned to other libraries; however, we are fulfilling 80.4% of the loaning requests that we do receive.

Requests Borrowed from other Libraries



Requests Loaned to other Libraries



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 Q1 2026 usage of physical and digital/online resources associated with those categories.

education

77,318
uses

culture

7,723
uses

inclusion & wellbeing

8,919
uses

entertainment &
leisure

191,868
uses

economic
development

4,772
uses

Q1 Collections Feedback

The customer wanted us to pass on his personal thank you for having guitars available to borrow. He currently doesn't have his own guitar, and he said it was so nice to be able to play and practice for a while. He loved the program. He earnestly repeated this sentiment a number of times in our conversation.

After returning a Memory Care Kit, the customer said that these items are "just the best".

A customer was extremely pleased with the amount of children's national geographic books we have because they are too expensive for her to buy for her classroom but all her students love them and get so excited when she brings them in!

A customer checked out the ozobot that their child learned about from a class visit, and mentioned that their child really enjoyed it!

A young customer asked if we had any Warrior Cats books so I took her to the shelf where they are. She exclaimed, "This is dream come true, I love this series!"

A customer was checking out books on German and a staff member mentioned that we have Mango Languages. The customer was very happy to learn that and was very excited!

A customer was very happy to see that the library now loans Yoto cards. Customer would like to see more cards added, specifically longer stories and chapter books such as the Chronicles of Narnia.

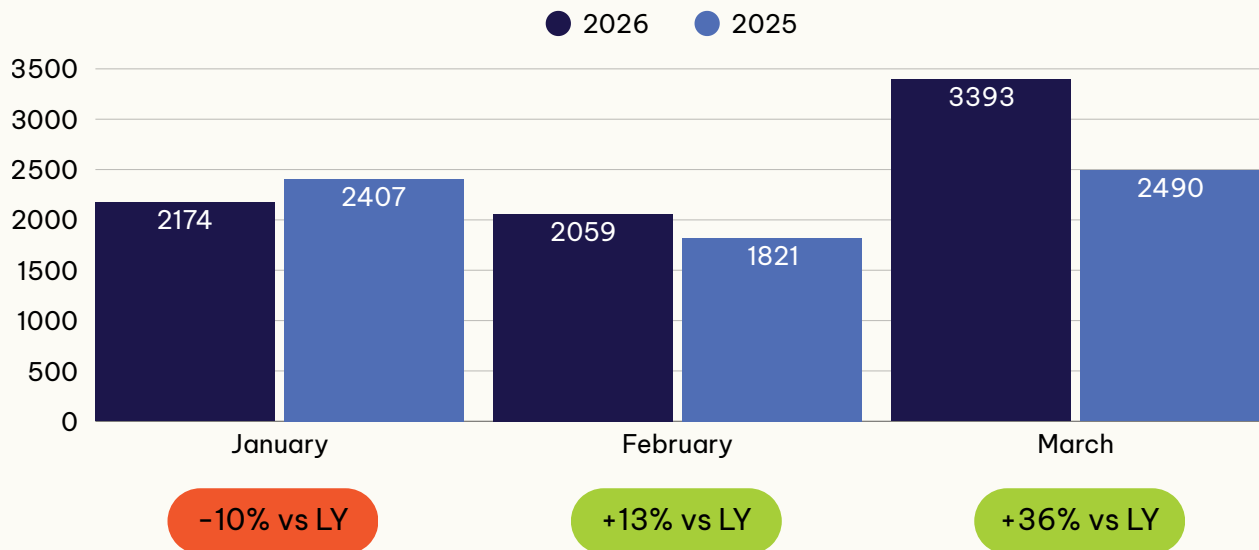
The customer said that she loved that we had decodable books in our collection. They have helped her son enjoy reading and would love to see us add more to our collection.

PROGRAMMING SUMMARY

Q1 2026

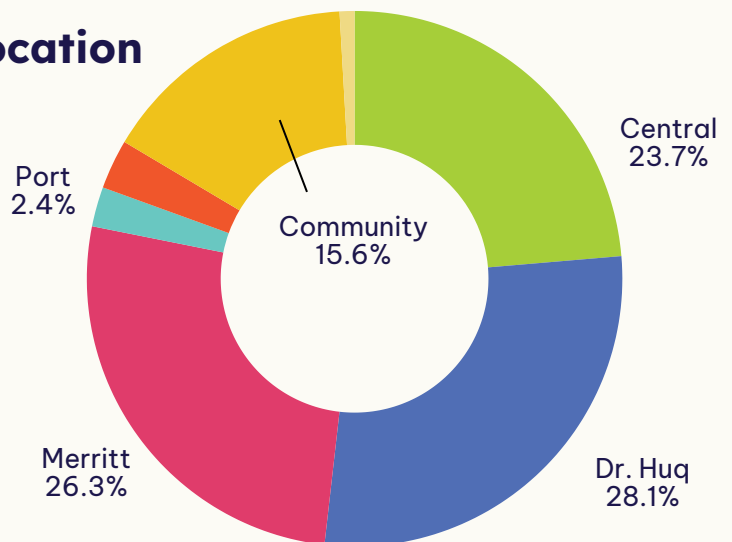
SCPL provided 334 programs to 7,626 attendees from January-March 2026. This represents an overall increase in attendance of 13.5% from Q1 of 2025. Programming for Q1 included local history lectures with a focus on Black History Month and a suite of March Break programs for children and teens.

Q1 Program Attendance vs LY



Q1 Program Sessions per Location

- Central - 79 programs
- Dr. Huq - 94 programs
- Merritt - 88 programs
- Port Dalhousie - 8 programs
- System-Wide - 10 programs
- Community - 52 programs
- Virtual - 3 programs



Q1 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 Q1 include:

- Adam Boyd (D&D Clubs)
- Alzheimer Society of Niagara
- Brian Henry (Publishing)
- Bridges Niagara
- Brock University
- The Brown Homestead
- Carol Parker (Artist)
- City of St. Catharines
- DSBN EarlyON
- Indigenous Dreams
- Mad Science
- Master Gardeners of Niagara
- Michelle MacIntosh (Meditation)
- Melissa Sticca (Red Cross)
- Niagara IceDogs
- Niagara Peninsula Geological Society
- Niagara Peninsula Society of the Archaeological Institute of America
- Port Dalhousie Bicentennial Committee
- Prashanth Krishnakumar (Meditation)
- Rochelle Bush, Tubman Tours
- Silent Book Club of St. Catharines
- St. Catharines Museum

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.

education

5582
attendees

culture

601
attendees

inclusion & wellbeing

197
attendees

entertainment &
leisure

619
attendees

economic
development

7
attendees

civic
engagement

718
attendees

Q1 Program Participant Feedback



Suggestions for Future Programs ...

In Q1 program feedback surveys, customers regularly requested and suggested programs that fall under the following themes:

- Local history lectures on topics such as the Welland Canal and archeology
- Arts and crafts workshops for adults
- STEM programming for children, including repeat sessions of popular resources like Ozobots and Snap Circuits
- Writing workshops
- Book clubs, including genre-focused clubs

Programming Librarians have also noted customer feedback regarding library and children's area noise levels impacting programs, some general scheduling notes, and the need for clearer guidance from facilitators in some programs. Librarians will continue to refine scheduling and offer highly popular and repeatable programs.

Q1 Testimonials from Program Participants ...

“Loved having the library work with another organization in the community. The collaboration [with the Niagara IceDogs] is great.”

“A very interesting workshop involving the history of St Catharines and Port Dalhousie. I also did mixed media for the first time. [The library facilitator] was amazing with deep knowledge and expertise which made this a very enjoyable experience.”

“This DIY Victorian Valentines [program] was so fun and uplifting to attend.”

“All of the info presented was completely new and intriguing to me. Thanks so much for having this presentation [on the History of the Cataract Hotel by the Archaeological Institute of America].”

“I appreciate this programming by the library. I stopped looking at the library calendar a couple years back because there wasn't much of interest to me. I was thrilled to see this partnership with Brock and having it so accessible.”

“My great-granddaughter loved the experience [at the Stay Safe Home Alone Course] and it helped build her confidence. Thank you.”

“[The library facilitator] opened my eyes to digital services and original materials available at the library. One only has to ask! I'm impressed at how the library is embracing digital and other modern methods to make materials available in various formats to all users all within its budget.”

“Both my husband and I thoroughly enjoyed the presentation [on Hockey in the Garden City]. As we were leaving, we chatted with another couple that had similar memories of hockey in St. Catharines. Fascinating!”

Risk Management Semi Annual Reporting

submitted by Lisa DiDonato, Business Administrator

For Information

That the St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) Board receive this report for information.

Report

Background

The SCPL Risk Management Plan outlines the ongoing maintenance and monitoring of a Risk Register to identify, assess, and track risks. Regular reviews and semi-annual reports on the risk register are crucial for fostering a proactive approach to risk management.

Update

The SCPL Management Team has reviewed and updated the Risk Register, which has been posted separately to maintain confidentiality. In accordance with the Risk Management Plan, SCPL will continue to develop and implement control measures to mitigate identified risks.

Valuing SCPL 2025 Update

submitted by Ken Su, CEO

For Information

Background

The St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) is committed to understanding and demonstrating its profound impact on the community. To do this, we have been utilizing the Valuing Ontario's Libraries Toolkit (VOLT) since 2023, a framework developed by the Ontario Library Service (OLS). This toolkit provides a standardized methodology for calculating a library's Social Return on Investment (SROI), translating our services and programs into a tangible economic benefit.

Introduction

This report details the library's SROI for 2025, providing a comparative analysis with the 2024 results. It is important to note that methodological changes were made to the 2025 VOLT calculations last year. As we will explain, these changes are the root cause of several significant data shifts between the two years, and understanding this context is key to interpreting the results.

Comparison of SROI Results: 2024 vs. 2025

Domain	2024	2025	% Change (2024–2025)
Education	\$8,559,880.35	\$5,185,071.23	-39.42%
Culture	\$2,822,200.77	\$5,364,541.36	90.08%
Inclusion & Well-being	\$281,101.93	\$763,563.26	171.65%
Entertainment & Leisure	\$21,309,726.15	\$22,076,822.03	3.60%
Economic Development	\$6,466,931.09	\$7,633,598.70	18.04%
Civic Engagement	\$88,182.77	\$71,763.87	-18.62%

Library Space	\$5,664,545.96	\$5,269,346.99	-6.98%
Total Economic Benefit	\$45,192,569.01	\$46,364,707.43	2.60%
SROI (per \$1)	\$6.80	\$6.61	-2.80%

Snapshot of Customer Feedback

These testimonials, gathered from the Library's departmental quarterly updates, highlight the real life impact of SCPL programs and services.

Staff and Customer Service

A customer who received help with his tablet and Libby was very grateful. He said, "I don't know what I'd do without the library and the staff. You are all so helpful and patient."

A customer expressed gratitude for the time a staff member took to help her print from her phone, stating she "couldn't have done it without the help."

A customer called from Ottawa to request an obituary for a friend. They said that they're glad we can help with local history research and really appreciate our efforts.

Programs and Collections

A customer at the "So You Want to Start a Podcast?" program said it was "exactly what he needed to get started."

A customer attending a children's STEM program commented that she was "amazed at the quality of the programs offered for free."

A customer expressed that the library was amazing with all the different collections we have, especially video games. He said that his children really enjoy coming to the library and it gives them access to all kinds of materials.

Accessibility and Inclusion

A customer stated through an email, "...being able to borrow and return ebooks from the comfort of my own bed has been an accessibility blessing for me."

"Thank you for including the Yoto player in your collection! It is wonderfully accessible for children of all abilities."

Multiple customers shared how happy they are that there is a Holds to Go locker in Merriton, and they like that it is conveniently located in the Home Hardware.

A newcomer to Canada was very appreciative of the help she received from staff with finding resources and services to help her learn English.

Analysis of 2025 Results

The overall SROI is now \$6.61 for every \$1 of municipal investment. While this is a slight decrease from the 2024 figure of \$6.80, the underlying data reveals that the discrepancies appear to stem from changes in data calculation methodology and significant shifts in recorded user activity between the two years. This year's report also incorporates qualitative data, fulfilling our commitment to understanding the library's impact through the voices of our customers.

The significant variance in several domains is not due to a sudden change in library performance, but rather a direct result of the revised calculation methodology applied to the 2025 report.

The Impact of Revised Calculations: Education (-39.42%) and Civic Engagement (-18.62%)

The sharp decline in the Education domain is the most notable example of this methodological shift. The new calculation approach for 2025 resulted in a different valuation for fiction circulation (no longer included in Education) and separation of non-fiction into adult and children, causing a nearly \$3.4 million drop in this category's calculated value. Similarly, a change in how volunteer hours were assessed (from rough estimate to evidence-based calculation) is the primary reason for the decrease in the Civic Engagement domain. These are not reflections of a decline in service, but of a change in data collection and measurement.

Success Stories Amplified by New Methods: Culture (+90.08%) and Inclusion & Wellbeing (+171.65%)

Conversely, the updated VOLT methodology for 2025 better captured the value of other services. The phenomenal growth in Culture and Inclusion & Wellbeing was driven by both outstanding community engagement and a revised calculation model that more accurately valued our special collections, cultural event attendance, and accessible collections.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The 2025 SROI analysis tells a story of positive growth, underscored by a significant change in how that growth is measured that raises critical questions about data consistency. The revised VOLT methodology, while causing year-over-year discrepancies, ultimately provides a more nuanced and accurate picture of our value in areas like culture and inclusion.

Moving forward, it is crucial to use the 2025 report as our new baseline with detailed notes on how data is collected and measured. Future SROI analyses will be compared against this updated methodology, ensuring a more consistent and meaningful trend analysis. The powerful testimonials from our customers, combined with this refined quantitative data, will provide a holistic and compelling narrative of the library's essential role in the City of St. Catharines.

2025 Annual Report

St. Catharines Public Library

SCPL

in



Bloom



2025 at the Library

2025 was a year of exciting change and purposeful growth. We dove headfirst into the first year of our new strategic plan, creating experiences and spaces where our community could bloom. We remained steadfast in our commitment to becoming a hub where leisure and lifelong learning connect, enriching our city and helping people at every age and stage of life.

The biggest adventure of the year was the Merritt Relocation Project as we moved the Merritt Branch to its new home at the Niagara Pen Centre. This endeavour, while a huge undertaking for the SCPL team, led to many wins for the community including more space for the collection, bookable meeting and study rooms, and easy access by public transit. We kept service interruptions to a minimum during the branch relocation by introducing the Merrittton Holds Locker at the Home Hardware on Hartzel Road. Through this partnership, we were able to maintain customer access to library materials during the move and beyond. The new Merritt Branch location and the Merrittton Holds Lockers have proven to be a hit with the community!

2025 was also a big year for digital growth at SCPL. In May, we introduced a fresh new website to reflect our commitment to innovation and growth. The new website, with its bright design and user-friendliness, puts our brand and values on the forefront of our digital presence. Another digital development was the launch of our PrintMe services, a new way to print, scan, and copy documents with ease. Now, with PrintMe, customers can send a file to an SCPL printer from anywhere and complete that print job cashless with just a few taps of the touchscreen.

This year, we have also sought digital solutions to reaffirm our commitment to early literacy with the introduction of our AWE Literacy Stations. These stations offer educational games and activities for children ages 6–12 and early literacy programs for kids ages 2–8. Originally piloted at the Dr. Huq Family Library Branch in December, we now offer AWE Literacy Stations at the Central Library and the Merritt Branch as well.

For years, customers have enjoyed the cost-savings of borrowing items from the library. Now, customers can see exactly how much they saved during each visit at the bottom of their checkout receipt. This small addition serves as a powerful reminder of the library's significant impact on our community's daily lives... one visit at a time.

Message from the Chair and CEO

2025 was a milestone year for SCPL as we modernized our spaces and expanded our reach. The launch of our new website, the installation of a Merrittton holds locker, and the relocation of the Merritt branch have enhanced how our community connects with us.

Beyond our walls, we strengthened regional partnerships across Niagara by expanding reciprocal borrowing and initiating a shared online catalogue and borrowing system. We also prioritized safety and accessibility at our facilities, secured multiple grants, and completed the detailed design for the Central Library Renovation.

From launching new collections to fostering community dialogue, our focus remains on inclusivity and innovation. These achievements are a testament to our dedicated staff and the vibrant community we serve. As we look ahead, we remain committed to expanding our programs, enhancing our facilities, and evolving our services to meet the diverse needs of the people of St. Catharines.

Janice Coles
Library Board Chair

Ken Su
CEO

Financials

Revenues	
Municipal Contributions	\$7,010,502
Provincial Grants	\$228,616
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$699,577
Total Revenues	\$7,938,695

Expenditures	
Salaries and Benefits	\$5,345,790
Materials	\$787,385
Occupancy Costs	\$506,595
Services and Supplies	\$544,314
Operating Capital	\$754,611
Total Expenditures	\$7,938,695

Our Values

Inclusion

We are committed to creating a space that is welcoming, accessible, and free of judgement.

Change

We recognize that societal changes are occurring and we embrace our own evolution to keep up with the times and develop new ways of better serving the community.

Community

We believe the community is for all people and we are committed to building a healthy and connected St. Catharines.

Teamwork

We work collaboratively with the Board of Directors, staff, and community partners to provide the best possible service to our customers.

Service

We believe every customer deserves to be treated with kindness and we are dedicated to delivering outstanding customer service.

Accountability

We understand the importance of being transparent and taking responsibility for our actions to foster a healthy organization and an engaged community.

Ideas in Bloom

SCPL by the numbers

401,679

in-person visits
to all branches across
St. Catharines.

7,478

new memberships
were issued, including
1,270 online memberships.

886,693

physical items
were borrowed, a 14.2%
increase from 2024.

226,976

digital items
were checked out.

29,264

attendees
attended 1,251 programs.

91,220

electronic resources sessions
were recorded.

94,052

questions answered
by staff.

2,079,101

catalogue searches
were conducted, a 17%
increase from 2024.

SCPL by the borrows

344,363 adult fiction & non-fiction books

324,261 children's books

134,200 movies

112,193 ebooks

80,932 audiobooks

35,383 video games

28,955
newspapers and magazines

26,285
teen books

By borrowing books, movies and more, by attending our programs and using our services, we've helped our community save

\$46,364,707

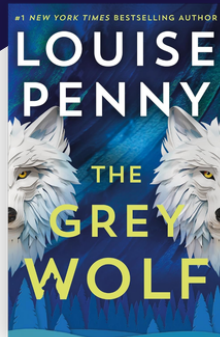
in 2025!

*as calculated using the Ontario Library Service's Social Return on Investment Calculator in the Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit.

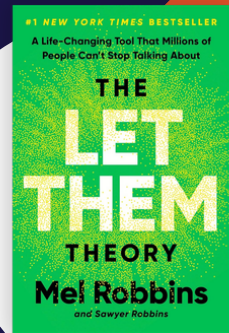
Your favourite SCPL items



Library of Things



adult fiction



adult non-fiction



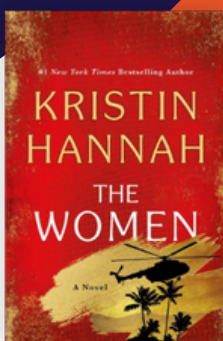
teen book



children's book



eAudiobook



ebook



movie



video game

Serving our community in our community

4,960 participants attended **156**
community outreach programs.

Throughout the year, we hosted **106**
book club meetings.

And made **438** Visiting Library visits.

Program attendance

In 2025, we saw:

12,344

attendees at our adult, older adult, and all ages programs.

1,029

attendees at teen programs.

15,891

attendees at our early years and childrens programs.

Summer Reading Club

826 readers signed up for the Summer Reading Club

Together, we read for a collective total of **23,826** days.

Visit your local library

Locations

Central Library

54 Church Street
St. Catharines, ON
L2R 7K2

Dr. Huq Family Library Branch

425 Carlton Street
St. Catharines, ON
L2M 4W8

Merritt Branch

221 Glendale Ave,
St. Catharines, ON
L2T 2K9

Port Dalhousie Branch

23 Brock Street
St. Catharines, ON
L2N 5E1

Books to Go Kiosk, Holds to Go Locker

240 St. Paul Street W.
St. Catharines, ON
L2S 4B8

Merritton Holds to Go Locker

111 Hartzel Rd, St.
Catharines, ON
L2P 1N6

info@myscpl.ca
905-688-6103

SCPL Board Recruitment Brochure

submitted by Ken Su, CEO

Recommendation

That the Board approve the SCPL Board Recruitment Brochure.

Background

The 2026 Ontario Municipal Election will be held on Monday, October 26, 2026.

Once elected, the new City Council will appoint members to the new Library Board at a regular Council meeting. Anticipating that the City Clerk's Office will begin organizing the recruitment process in early 2027, staff drafted a recruitment brochure to provide key information to prospective applicants and support the recruitment of Board members.

About SCPL

The St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) is a hub of information connecting people to ideas and community to culture.

In addition to books, SCPL is home to a variety of experiential programs, spaces, and public services, as well as host of digital collections and online resources. It is a place for people of all ages and demographics to come as they are; to uncover the past, rediscover the present, and reimagine the future with the momentum of a turning page.

Social Return on Investment

SCPL calculates our Social Return on Investment to assign a monetary value to the economic benefits of library access.

Through our collections, services, and programs, SCPL created

\$46,364,707

of economic benefit for our community in 2025.

Based on calculations using the Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit developed by the Ontario Library Service and NORDIK Institute.

Visit Us

Central Library
54 Church Street

Dr. Huq Family Library Branch
425 Carlton Street

Merritt Branch
221 Glendale Avenue

Port Dalhousie Branch
23 Brock Street

Seymour-Hannah Books to Go Kiosk, Holds to Go Locker
240 St. Paul Street West

Merritton Holds to Go Locker
111 Hartzel Road

Contact Us

(905) 688-6103
info@myscpl.ca
myscpl.ca



**Join the
Library Board**

About the Library Board

SCPL is governed by the Library Board. The Board defines, implements, and approves the strategic direction, governance, and organizational goals of SCPL.

Board Members impact the future of their community by contributing ideas and skills to shape library services.

Responsibilities

Board Members responsibilities include:

- Attending monthly board meetings.
- Providing strategic direction and governance to SCPL.
- Reviewing and approving Board policies.
- Acting as an advocate for SCPL in the community and with Municipal Council.
- Supporting fundraising efforts.
- Attending SCPL events and networking on behalf of the organization.
- Determining the strategic direction of SCPL and overseeing necessary adjustments.
- Evaluating Board effectiveness and CEO's performance.

Composition

The Board consists of 9 members:

- 2 members of City Council
- 7 members of the public

The Board elects a Board Chair and Vice-Chair from amongst its members to serve their roles for length of the board term.

Time commitment

The Board meets on the third Thursday at 6pm each month, excluding July, August and December.

Board Members should expect to spend at least 5 hours each month completing board business.



A board term is 4 years, running concurrently with the term of City Council. The term begins and ends when City Council appoints the new Library Board.

To create a well-rounded board, SCPL is seeking a range of experience and skills including:

- Governance
- Finance
- Legal
- HR
- Technology
- Philanthropy
- Strategic planning
- Marketing and public relations

Do you qualify?

SCPL Board members must meet eligibility requirements including:

- Must be a resident of the City of St. Catharines
- Must be at least 18 years old.
- Must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada.
- Cannot be employed by the City of St. Catharines or the St. Catharines Public Library.

How to apply

Applying to join the Board is simple! Following the municipal election, interested individuals can apply through the City of St. Catharines' online application portal.

Visit myscpl.ca or follow SCPL's social media for updates.

2027 St. Catharines Public Library Capital Budget Update

submitted by Lisa DiDonato, Business Administrator

Report

Background

The St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) Capital Budget is prepared by the City of St. Catharines (City) and included in the City's Consolidated Capital Budget. To date, SCPL has not received formal direction from the City regarding the upcoming 2027 Capital Budget.

Update

The Capital Budget for 2027 and beyond are currently in progress. The expectation is that they will be prepared in alignment with the City's Consolidated Asset Management Plan based on available funding and practical considerations.

In a meeting with City staff in April 2027, SCPL was able to confirm the status of the previously approved projects listed below.

Project Name	Status	2023	2024	2025	2026
Central Branch Renovation	Approved	4,850,000			
Central Branch Garage Lighting Upgrade	Complete		150,000		
Dr. Huq Branch Fixtures Replacement	Complete		70,000		
Port Dalhousie Exterior Renovation	Complete			150,000	
Port Dalhousie Washroom Upgrade	Approved				200,000
Port Dalhousie Electrical Upgrade	Approved				25,000

Next Steps

SCPL will continue to collaborate with City staff and keep the Board informed as additional information becomes available.

Discussion Reports

6. Discussion Reports (attachments)

6.1	Policy (G-07) Code of Conduct – H. Jones	Motion
6.2	CULC Open Letter to Minister Williams – K. Su	Motion
6.3	Audited Financial Statements, December 31, 2025- L. DiDonato	Motion
6.4	2027 SCPL Operating Budget – L. DiDonato	Motion
6.5	Central Branch Renovation – K. Su and L. DiDonato	Motion
6.6	Endowment & Trust Request – L. DiDonato	Motion

Policy (G-07) Code of Conduct

submitted by Holly Jones, Manager Programming & Promotions

Recommendation

THAT the Board approve Policy (G-07) Code of Conduct as amended.

Background

SCPL's Code of Conduct establishes clear behavioural expectations for customers across all locations and online to ensure that access remains fair and equitable. Additionally, the policy provides a structured framework for staff to address misconduct through consistent enforcement actions, such as warnings or suspensions, while upholding a customer's right to appeal. The library remains committed to ensuring fair and equitable access while maintaining an environment free from disruptive or harmful behaviour.

The Policy was last amended and approved by the Board in November 2024.

Update

Since the last review in 2024, staff recommend some edits for clarity and to adhere to current policy format.

- Structural Alignment: The content has been restructured to fit the revised policy framework, which involves removing the "Responsibility" and "Implementation" sections and expanding the "Scope" statement to ensure continuity with language in the "Code of Conduct" (Appendix 1)
- Moderate adjustments to provide greater clarity on the enforcement and appeal processes
- Language within the "Code of Conduct" (Appendix 1) has been synchronized with the messaging on SCPL's "Safe, Supportive, and Welcoming" posters.
- The prohibited behaviours table in Appendix 1 now explicitly prohibits the use of "explicit language" and the "unauthorized use of SCPL technology or internet connectivity"

Included for Board review are the following documents:

- Black-line version of Policy (G-07) Code of Conduct showing the proposed amendments
- Clean version of Policy (G-07) Code of Conduct.



Policy Name	Code of Conduct		
Section & Number	Board – G-07	Effective Date	2019-10-17
Motion Number	2026-XX	Last Review	2026-05-21
Author	Manager, Programming and Promotions	Next Review	2028
Policy Maintenance	Reviewed by Management		

Policy Statement

To maintain a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for Library customers and staff, St. Catharines Public Library (~~the 'Library'~~ SCPL) has the right and obligation to enforce the Code of Conduct (~~Attachment~~ Appendix 1) in a fair and consistent manner.

Once a breach of the Code of Conduct occurs, ~~the Library~~ SCPL takes into consideration the severity of the misconduct, the circumstances surrounding the incident and any mitigating factors when determining any sanction including whether a library customer will be suspended from the premises and the period of the suspension.

~~The Library~~ SCPL may take legal action, as appropriate, under the Criminal Code, 1992; Trespass to Property Act and Public Libraries Act, 1990.

~~The Library~~ SCPL is committed to reviewing the Code of Conduct and its application ~~enforcement~~ on a regular basis to support fair and equitable access for all.

Scope

SCPL's Code of Conduct applies to visitors in all library spaces: on library property, in the community, on the phone, or electronically. Any disregard of the Code of Conduct may result in suspension from the library, loss of library privileges, cost recovery of charges, and/or prosecution.

Operational Guidelines

The Code of Conduct shall act as a guideline in the day-to-day operation of this Policy and will be posted at all library locations (Appendix 1).

Non-Compliance with Code of Conduct

1. ~~Library~~ SCPL customers who engage in ~~any~~ prohibited or otherwise unacceptable behaviour, as defined in but not limited to the Code of Conduct may, depending on the severity, receive a warning or be suspended immediately from the premises and ~~if necessary,~~ may be placed under suspension for a period of time. ~~The~~ Suspension will ~~may~~ apply to all programs, facilities, properties and services. ~~if warranted. Length of suspension will be determined by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designate depending on the severity of the situation.~~ A written Trespass to Property notice will be issued.
2. ~~Most incidents that result in a suspension from programs, facilities, properties and services will be followed up by a written Trespass to Property notice.~~
3. ~~Library~~ SCPL staff and security will be notified of individuals who are suspended or who have received a Trespass to Property notice.
4. ~~When a Trespass to Property notice is issued, it can be served~~ A Trespass to Property notice may be issued verbally, in person, electronically, or by mail, ~~or by the Police.~~ It will specify the reason for the suspension, the length of the suspension, and the appeal process.
5. Breaches of municipal, provincial, and federal laws ~~the Code of Conduct~~ may be reported to the appropriate authority. ~~Niagara Regional Police and charges may follow.~~

Right to Appeal

Any library customer who has been suspended from the library has the right to appeal the suspension during the period of suspension using the appeal process described below:

- The library customer may first submit an appeal to the CEO by completing the [Suspension of Library Privileges Appeal form](#). Accommodation when submitting the appeal is available ~~may be made~~ upon request. The CEO,

in consultation with the appropriate staff and/or security, will review the appeal and communicate the decision in writing to the individual.

- Upon receipt of a decision of the CEO denying an appeal, the library customer may further appeal in writing to the St. Catharines Public Library Board.
- The decision of the Library Board is final and there are no further steps to be taken in the appeals process.

Operational Guidelines

~~The Code of Conduct shall act as a guideline in the day-to-day operation of this Policy and will be posted at all library locations (Appendix 1).~~

Regulations

Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46)
Trespass to Property Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. T.21
Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.44

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct

The St. Catharines Public Library is committed to offering a **safe, supportive and welcoming** ~~welcoming, clean and safe~~ environment for all to enjoy. We ask that everyone be:

- Respectful of others in the library – customers, visitors, staff
- Careful and considerate of library property, furniture, and equipment
- Responsible for yourself and those in your care
 - Children 11 and under must be accompanied by an adult
- Lawful – Follow all municipal, provincial and federal laws, codes, rules, and regulations

Any disruptive behaviour that stands in contrast to the enjoyment of library facilities as positive, safe, and enjoyable environments is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal assault
- Physical violence
- Harassment
- Racism and the use of racial, ethnic or other personal slurs
- **Explicit language**
- Theft
- Weapons possession
- Vandalism
- Property damage
- Alcohol or illegal drug use
- Smoking or Vaping
- Filming or recording staff or customers without consent, even if for personal use only.
- **Unauthorized use of SCPL technology or internet connectivity**
- Wearing inappropriate attire (shoes, shirts, and other suitable clothing is required)
- Canvassing, selling or soliciting unless authorized
- Bringing oversized items into the library

Library customers are welcome to film and record their visits on a personal device for personal use only, and only where it does not involve recording other staff or customers without their consent. Photography, filming or video recording on Library premises for professional or commercial purposes requires prior approval.

Authorized service animals and animals needed to assist a person with a disability are permitted in the Library.

SCPL's Code of Conduct applies to visitors in all Library spaces: on Library property, in the community, on the phone, or electronically. Any disregard of the Code of Conduct may result in suspension from the Library, loss of library privileges, cost recovery of charges, and/or prosecution.



Policy Name	Code of Conduct		
Section & Number	Board – G-07	Effective Date	2019-10-17
Motion Number	2026-XX	Last Review	2026-05-21
Author	Manager, Programming and Promotions	Next Review	2028
Policy Maintenance	Reviewed by Management		

Policy Statement

To maintain a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for library customers and staff, St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) has the right and obligation to enforce the Code of Conduct (Appendix 1) in a fair and consistent manner.

Once a breach of the Code of Conduct occurs, SCPL takes into consideration the severity of the misconduct, the circumstances surrounding the incident and any mitigating factors when determining any sanction including whether a library customer will be suspended from the premises and the period of the suspension.

SCPL may take legal action, as appropriate, under the Criminal Code, 1992; Trespass to Property Act and Public Libraries Act, 1990.

SCPL is committed to reviewing the Code of Conduct and its enforcement on a regular basis to support fair and equitable access for all.

Scope

SCPL's Code of Conduct applies to visitors in all library spaces: on library property, in the community, on the phone, or electronically. Any disregard of the Code of Conduct may result in suspension from the library, loss of library privileges, cost recovery of charges, and/or prosecution.

Operational Guidelines

The Code of Conduct shall act as a guideline in the day-to-day operation of this Policy and will be posted at all library locations (Appendix 1).

Non-Compliance with Code of Conduct

1. SCPL customers who engage in prohibited or otherwise unacceptable behaviour, as defined in but not limited to the Code of Conduct may, depending on the severity, receive a warning or be suspended immediately from the premises and may be placed under suspension for a period of time. Suspension will apply to all programs, facilities, properties and services. A written Trespass to Property notice will be issued.
2. SCPL staff and security will be notified of individuals who are suspended or who have received a Trespass to Property notice.
3. A Trespass to Property notice may be issued verbally, in person, electronically, or by mail. It will specify the reason for the suspension, the length of the suspension, and the appeal process.
4. Breaches of municipal, provincial, and federal laws may be reported to the appropriate authority.

Right to Appeal

Any library customer who has been suspended from the library has the right to appeal the suspension during the period of suspension using the appeal process described below:

- The library customer may first submit an appeal to the CEO by completing the [Suspension of Library Privileges Appeal form](#). Accommodation when submitting the appeal is available upon request. The CEO, in consultation with the appropriate staff and/or security, will review the appeal and communicate the decision in writing to the individual.
- Upon receipt of a decision of the CEO denying an appeal, the library customer may further appeal in writing to the St. Catharines Public Library Board.
- The decision of the Library Board is final and there are no further steps to be taken in the appeals process.

Regulations

Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46)

Trespass to Property Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. T.21
Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.44

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct

The St. Catharines Public Library is committed to offering a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for all to enjoy. We ask that everyone be:

- Respectful of others in the library – customers, visitors, staff
- Careful and considerate of library property, furniture, and equipment
- Responsible for yourself and those in your care
 - Children 11 and under must be accompanied by an adult
- Lawful – Follow all municipal, provincial and federal laws, codes, rules, and regulations

Any disruptive behaviour that stands in contrast to the enjoyment of library facilities as positive, safe, and enjoyable environments is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal assault
- Physical violence
- Harassment
- Racism and the use of racial, ethnic or other personal slurs
- Explicit language
- Theft
- Weapons possession
- Vandalism
- Property damage
- Alcohol or illegal drug use
- Smoking or Vaping
- Filming or recording staff or customers without consent, even if for personal use only.
- Unauthorized use of SCPL technology or internet connectivity
- Wearing inappropriate attire (shoes, shirts, and other suitable clothing is required)
- Canvassing, selling or soliciting unless authorized
- Bringing oversized items into the library

Library customers are welcome to film and record their visits on a personal device for personal use only, and only where it does not involve recording other staff or customers without their consent. Photography, filming or video recording on Library premises for professional or commercial purposes requires prior approval.

Authorized service animals and animals needed to assist a person with a disability are permitted in the Library.

SCPL's Code of Conduct applies to visitors in all Library spaces: on Library property, in the community, on the phone, or electronically. Any disregard of the Code of Conduct may result in suspension from the Library, loss of library privileges, cost recovery of charges, and/or prosecution.

CULC Open Letter to Minister Williams

submitted by Qingyi (Ken) Su, CEO

Recommendation

THAT the Board:

- i. endorse the Canadian Urban Libraries Council's open letter regarding Bill 28;
- ii. reaffirm its commitment to intellectual freedom, customer privacy, equitable access to information, and the principle of local governance of public libraries, consistent with the Public Libraries Act of Ontario.

Background

In the April 2026 CEO Report, the Board received the Canadian Urban Library Council's (CULC) statement in response to the Province of Alberta's proposed changes to the Libraries Act as part of Bill 28. On April 14, 2026, CULC issued an open letter to Minister Williams (attached).

SCPL stands in solidarity with our colleagues and counterparts across the country in affirming our commitment to intellectual freedom, customer privacy, equitable access to information, and the principle of local governance of public libraries.



Canadian Urban Libraries Council
Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada

OPEN LETTER

April 14, 2026

Hon. Dan Williams
Minister of Municipal Affairs
320 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Williams,

I am writing on behalf of the Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) regarding the changes proposed to Alberta's *Library Act* in Bill 28, the *Municipal Affairs and Housing Statutes Amendment Act*.

CULC represents over 50 of the largest public library systems in Canada, along with Library and Archives Canada and the Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec, including libraries throughout Alberta. Our members serve more than 8 million active users across Canada who annually visit more than 720 locations and utilize virtual services. More than 77% of all Canadians are served by a CULC member library.

Bill 28 directly threatens the integral role libraries play in communities across Alberta by creating new barriers to access, raising serious questions about privacy, and undermining local democratic governance and accountability.

The proposed legislation removes local communities' ability to manage local library operations and imposes direct ministerial oversight and regulation, thereby restricting Alberta residents' access to library materials. Libraries make decisions about collections and access at the local level, informed by community needs, professional judgment, and individual and parental choice. Recent polling has shown that 69% of Albertans prefer that decisions about materials be made by locally trained staff, guided by local boards, rather than by province-wide rules.

Alberta's public libraries are community based, locally governed, and primarily funded by municipalities. Bill 28 creates new and unprecedented ministerial powers related to inspection, access, borrowing and compliance. These changes would shift decision-making away from locally appointed library boards and highly educated and professional staff, to provincial



Canadian Urban Libraries Council
Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada

representatives. This threatens the autonomy of all local officials and citizens and is a significant departure from Alberta's longstanding model of local governance.

Bill 28 will limit access to specific materials for everyone. Libraries already maintain rigorous collection policies, catalogue and shelve materials based on age and audience and uphold parents' rights to make decisions for their families and direct users to developmentally-appropriate materials. Restricting access to public library materials is censorship, regardless of whether these materials remain physically in library spaces. Censorship infringes on intellectual freedom and with broad-sweeping legislation such as what has been presented in Bill 28, the privacy of what one checks out becomes threatened.

As the representative organization of Canada's urban libraries, we are concerned that Alberta's legislation is a first step toward government control, in Alberta and other provinces, over which materials should be accessible in public libraries. We have seen the harm that results from moves to censor library materials in other countries, as some governments have sought to impose their ideological beliefs on community. We cannot allow this level of political interference in our public libraries.

CULC strongly opposes this move to censor what is accessible in Alberta's libraries and calls on the government to withdraw the changes to the Libraries Act in Bill 28.

I am available to further discuss the impact these changes will have on libraries.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Chevreau
Executive Director
Canadian Urban Libraries Council

Copy: Hon. Danielle Smith, Premier
Mr. Naheed Nenshi, Leader of Alberta's Official Opposition

Audited Financial Statements, December 31, 2025

submitted by Lisa DiDonato, Business Administrator

Recommendation

THAT the St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) Board approve the audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2025.

Report

At its April 15, 2026 meeting, the Board reviewed the draft audited financial statements presented by KPMG. However, the Board deferred approval to its May meeting pending a final post-employment benefit expense adjustment.

SCPL has since received the City of St. Catharines actuarial report and recorded a \$16,117 Employment Future Benefit Expense. This entry adjusts the Employee Future Benefit Liability to align with the actuarial valuation for the year ended December 31, 2025.

The draft audited financial statements have now been updated to reflect this change.

Financial Statements of

**ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC
LIBRARY BOARD**

And Independent Auditor's Report thereon

Year ended December 31, 2025

DRAFT

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Table of Contents

Year ended December 31, 2025

	Page
St. Catharines Public Library Board	
Independent Auditor's Report	
Financial Statements	
Statement of Financial Position	1
Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus	2
Statement of Changes in Net Financial Assets	3
Statement of Cash Flows	4
Notes to Financial Statements	5 - 14
Schedule 1 - Other Revenue	15
Schedule 2 - Expenses	16
Schedule 3 - Tangible Capital Assets	17



KPMG LLP
Commerce Place
21 King Street West, Suite 700
Hamilton, ON L8P 4W7
Canada
Tel 905 523 8200
Fax 905 523 2222

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board Members of St. Catharines Public Library Board, Members of Council, Inhabitants and Ratepayers of The Corporation of the City of St. Catharines

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of St. Catharines Public Library Board (the Library), which comprise:

- the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2025
- the statement of operations and accumulated surplus for the year then ended
- the statement of changes in net financial assets for the year then ended
- the statement of cash flows for the year then ended
- and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies

(Hereinafter referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Library as at December 31, 2025, and its results of operations, its changes in net financial assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the "**Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements**" section of our auditor's report.

We are independent of the Library in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.



Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Library's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Library or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Library's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Library's internal control.



- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Library's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Library to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

DRAFT

Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants

Hamilton, Canada

April XX, 2026

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Statement of Financial Position

As at December 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	2025	2024
Financial assets		
Cash	\$ 2,552,210	\$ 3,539,137
Accounts receivable (note 4)	238,440	120,294
Investments (note 2)	1,720,435	1,643,379
	<u>4,511,085</u>	<u>5,302,810</u>
Financial liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	650,948	646,051
Deferred revenue	119,898	–
Post-employment benefits (note 3)	361,017	344,900
Long-term liabilities (notes 4 and 5)	534,400	632,465
Asset retirement obligation (note 6)	917,214	873,537
	<u>2,583,477</u>	<u>2,496,953</u>
Net financial assets	1,927,608	2,805,857
Non-financial assets		
Prepaid expenses	103,504	95,763
Tangible capital assets (schedule 3)	8,981,258	8,168,359
	<u>9,084,762</u>	<u>8,264,122</u>
Commitments (note 9)		
Accumulated surplus (note 8)	<u>\$11,012,370</u>	<u>\$11,069,979</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

On behalf of the Board:

Director

Director

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus

Year ended December 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	Budget 2025	Actual 2025	Actual 2024
	(note 10)		
Revenue:			
Municipal contribution (note 4)	\$ 7,010,502	\$ 7,010,502	\$ 6,641,583
Province of Ontario regular grant	228,600	228,616	228,616
Province of Ontario special grants	12,267	72,267	12,267
Other grants	–	3,430	13,172
Other (schedule 1)	82,288	232,765	341,507
	<u>7,333,657</u>	<u>7,547,580</u>	<u>7,237,145</u>
Expenses:			
Salaries, wages and benefits (schedule 2)	5,393,591	5,262,338	4,822,560
Library materials (schedule 2)	320,541	417,457	435,141
Occupancy (schedule 2)	656,324	538,690	610,367
General and administration (schedule 2)	434,139	452,750	524,426
Interest (note 5)	29,585	27,736	31,413
Amortization (schedule 3)	848,675	848,675	891,536
Asset retirement obligation accretion	–	43,677	41,597
Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	–	13,866	7,875
	<u>7,682,855</u>	<u>7,605,189</u>	<u>7,364,915</u>
Annual deficit	(349,198)	(57,609)	(127,770)
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	11,069,979	11,069,979	11,197,749
Accumulated surplus, end of year	<u>\$ 10,720,781</u>	<u>\$ 11,012,370</u>	<u>\$ 11,069,979</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Statement of Changes in Net Financial Assets

Year ended December 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	2025	2024
Annual deficit	\$ (57,609)	\$ (127,770)
Purchase of tangible capital assets	(1,675,440)	(700,700)
Amortization of tangible capital assets	848,675	891,536
Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	13,866	7,875
Change in prepaid expenses	(7,741)	(87,807)
	(878,249)	(16,866)
Net financial assets, beginning of year	2,805,857	2,822,723
Net financial assets, end of year	\$ 1,927,608	\$ 2,805,857

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended December 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	2025	2024
Cash provided by (used in):		
Operating activities:		
Annual deficit	\$ (57,609)	\$ (127,770)
Items not involving cash:		
Amortization	848,675	891,536
Asset retirement obligation accretion	43,677	41,597
Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	13,866	7,875
Change in non-cash assets and other liabilities:		
Accounts receivable	(118,146)	73,683
Prepaid expenses	(7,741)	(87,807)
Deferred revenue	119,898	—
Post-employment benefits	16,117	16,600
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	4,897	190,406
	863,634	1,006,120
Capital activities:		
Purchase of tangible capital assets	(1,675,440)	(700,700)
Financing activities:		
Repayment of long-term liabilities	(98,065)	(94,443)
Investing activities:		
Change in investments	(77,056)	175,465
Net change in cash	(986,927)	386,442
Cash, beginning of year	3,539,137	3,152,695
Cash, end of year	\$ 2,552,210	\$ 3,539,137

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended December 31, 2025

The financial statements of St. Catharines Public Library Board (the "Library") are prepared by management in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

1. Significant account policies:

Significant accounting policies adopted by the Library are as follows:

(a) Basis of accounting:

The Library follows the accrual method of accounting for revenues and expenses. Revenues are recognized in the year in which they are earned and measurable. Expenses are recognized as they are incurred and measurable as a result of a receipt of goods or services and the creation of a legal obligation to pay.

(b) Government transfers:

Government transfers received are from the Province of Ontario and the City of St. Catharines. Government transfers paid relate to surplus repayment and future reserves to the City of St. Catharines. Government transfers are recognized as revenue in the financial statements when the transfer is authorized, any eligibility criteria are met and a reasonable estimate of the amount can be made except, when and to the extent that, stipulations by the transferor give rise to an obligation that meet the definition of a liability. Government transfers that meet the definition of a liability are recognized as revenue as the liability is extinguished.

(c) Other income:

Other income, including investment income, is reported as revenue in the period earned.

(d) Non-financial assets:

Non-financial assets are not available to discharge existing liabilities and are held for use in the provision of services. They have useful lives extending beyond the current year and are not intended for sale in the ordinary course of operations.

(i) Tangible capital assets

Tangible capital assets are recorded at cost which includes all amounts that are directly attributable to acquisition, construction, development or betterment of the asset. Contributed or donated tangible capital assets are recorded at their fair value at the date of receipt.

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended December 31, 2025

1. Significant account policies (continued):

(d) Non-financial assets (continued):

(ii) Amortization

Amortization is recorded to reflect the cost, net of anticipated salvage value, associated with the use of the asset in providing library services over the estimated useful life of the asset. Amortization expense is calculated on a straight-line basis over the assets' estimated useful lives as follows:

Asset	Number of years
Buildings	25-100
Building Improvements	10-50
Collections (asset pool)	7
Furniture and equipment	3-100
IT equipment	3-15

One half of the annual amortization is charged in the year of acquisition and in the year of disposal. Assets under construction are not amortized until the asset is available for productive use.

Certain Library land and buildings are owned and controlled by The Corporation of the City of St. Catharines and are therefore not reflected in these financial statements.

(e) Post-employment benefits:

The Library provides certain employee benefits which will require funding in future periods. The cost of self-insured retirement and other employee future benefits that vest or accumulate over the periods of service provided by employees, such as retirement health and dental benefits for retirees, is actuarially determined using the project benefit method prorated on service. Under this method, the benefit costs are recognized over the expected average service life of the employee group. Any actuarial gains and losses related to the past service of employees are amortized over the expected average remaining service life of the employee group.

The Library makes contributions to Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) pensions, which is a multi-employer defined contribution pension plan, on behalf of its members. These contributions are recognized in the period in which the contributions are earned.

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended December 31, 2025

1. Significant account policies (continued):

(f) Deferred income:

Deferred income represents funds collected for which related services have yet to be performed. These amounts will be recognized as revenue in the fiscal year in which the related services are performed.

(g) Investments:

Investments are recorded at cost. When the investments incur a loss in value that is other than temporary, the investments are written down to their fair value and the loss is recognized in the statement of operations.

(h) Asset retirement obligations:

An asset retirement obligation is recognized when, as at the financial reporting date, all of the following criteria are met:

- There is a legal obligation to incur retirement costs in relation to a tangible capital asset;
- The past transaction or event giving rise to the liability has occurred;
- It is expected that future economic benefit will be given up; and
- A reasonable estimate of the amount can be made

The liability for the removal of asbestos in the buildings owned by the Library has been recognized based on estimated future expenses on closure of the site and post-closure care. Under the modified retroactive method, the discount rate and assumption used on initial recognition are those as of the date of adoption of the standard. Assumptions used in the subsequent calculations are revised yearly.

The obligation is determined based on the estimated cash flows that will be required in the future to remove or remediate the asbestos containing material in accordance with current legislation.

The buildings tangible capital assets affected by asbestos liability are being amortized with the building following the amortization accounting policies outlined in note 1(d).

(i) Use of estimates:

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Significant estimates include assumptions used in performing actuarial valuations of liability for future benefits. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended December 31, 2025

2. Investments:

Investments of \$1,720,435 (2024 - \$1,643,379) are carried at cost which approximates fair value due to the nature of investments held at the end of the year. The fair value represents the realizable value of investments if they were to be sold at December 31, 2025.

3. Post-employment benefit liability:

Post-employment benefits are comprised of health and dental benefits, as well as life insurance for permanent full-time retirees retiring on unreduced OMERS pension up to the age of 65.

The Library recognizes the post-employment benefits costs as they are earned during the year. The Library's obligation under the post-employment provisions of employment agreements will be funded out of current revenue.

The post-employment benefit obligation was determined by an actuarial valuation as at December 31, 2025. The date of the next actuarial valuation is expected to be performed as at December 31, 2028.

Information about the Library's post-employment benefit liability is as follows:

	2025	2024
Accrued benefit obligation		
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 272,900	\$ 247,500
Current service costs	15,677	18,500
Actuarial gain	(80,462)	–
Interest on accrued benefit obligation	12,831	12,100
Benefits paid during the period	(3,591)	(5,200)
Balance, end of year	217,355	272,900
Unamortized actuarial gain	143,662	72,000
Accrued benefit liability	\$ 361,017	\$ 344,900

The 2025 unamortized actuarial gain is amortized over the expected average remaining service life of 15 years. Amortization of the actuarial gain included in expenses in the statement of operations is \$5,364 (2024 - \$8,800).

Actuarial valuations are performed on post-employment and retirement benefits to provide estimates of the accrued benefit obligations. These estimates are based on a number of assumptions about future events including interest rates, inflation rates, salary and wage increases, medical and dental cost increases and mortality.

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended December 31, 2025

3. Post-employment benefit liability (continued):

The main actuarial assumptions adopted for the valuation are as follows:

The accrued benefit liability for post-employment benefits was determined by actuarial valuation as at December 31, 2025 using a discount rate of 4.25% (2024 – 4.60%).

General Inflation - Future general inflation levels, as measured by changes in the Consumer Price Index ("CPI"), was assumed at 2.00% per annum.

Health and dental trend costs – Health care trend costs of 6% in 2025, reducing linearly to 4.00% by 2031 (2024 - 7.03% reducing linearly to 4.50% by 2043. Dental care trend costs of 4.00% (2024 – 4.50%) are assumed.

Mortality is based on the Canadian Institute of Actuaries' 2014 CPM Public Table with MI-2017 Scale.

4. Related party transactions:

(a) Transactions with related parties:

The Library had the following transactions with the City of St. Catharines, its controlling party:

	2025	2024
Revenue:		
Municipal contributions	\$ 7,010,502	\$ 6,641,853
	\$ 7,010,502	\$ 6,641,853
Expenses:		
Municipal cost recoveries, including tangible capital asset additions	\$ 75,563	\$ 36,972
Rent expense	610	600
	\$ 76,173	\$ 37,572

The revenue and expense transactions have been reflected in annual surplus for the current year and were measured at the exchange amount of consideration established and agreed to by the related parties.

The Library leases some of its premises from the City of St. Catharines for \$601 per year. The lease commitments have been included in note 9.

(b) Receivables from related parties:

The Library has a receivable from the City of St. Catharines, in the amount of \$25,409 relating to a property tax grant. This amount is included in accounts receivable on the Statement of Financial Position as at December 31, 2025.

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended December 31, 2025

4. Related party transactions (continued):

(c) Outstanding balances due to related parties:

The Library has a long-term loan payable to the City of St. Catharines amounting to \$534,400 (2024 - \$632,465). The details of which has been disclosed in note 5.

5. Long-term liabilities:

The balance of long-term liabilities reported on the statement of financial position is made up of:

Debenture number	Purpose	Interest rates	Maturity date	2025	2024
110-2011	Dr. Huq Family Library Branch	3.8%	2031	\$ 534,400	\$ 632,465

Principal charges in each of the next five years are as follows:

2026	\$ 101,828
2027	105,734
2028	109,790
2029	114,002
2030 and thereafter	103,046
	<hr/>
	\$ 534,400

Total interest on long-term liabilities which are reported on the statement of operations and accumulated surplus amounted to \$27,736 (2024 - \$31,413).

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended December 31, 2025

6. Asset retirement obligation:

The Library has recognized an obligation related to the legal requirement for the removal or remediation of asbestos-containing materials in certain buildings. The obligation is determined based on the estimated cash flows that will be required in the future to remove or remediate the asbestos-containing materials in accordance with current legislation.

At December 31, 2025, as a result of the annual re-evaluation, the obligation increased, resulting in an increase to the liability on the Statement of Financial Position with a corresponding increase in expenses on the Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus.

The change in the estimated obligation for the year consists of the following:

	2025	2024
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 873,537	\$ 831,940
Add: accretion expense	43,677	41,597
Balance, end of year	\$ 917,214	\$ 873,537

7. Pension agreements:

The St. Catharines Public Library makes contributions to OMERS, which is a multi-employer plan, on behalf of 69 members of its staff during the year ended December 31, 2025. The plan is a defined benefit plan, which specifies the amount of the retirement benefit to be received by the employees based on the length of service and rates of pay.

The latest actuarial valuation as at December 31, 2025 reported a funding deficit of \$1.3 billion (2024 - \$2.9 billion). OMERS expects the contributions and policy changes made in response to the deficit to return the plan to a fully funded position by 2030. Contributions were made in the 2025 calendar year at rates ranging from 9.0% to 14.6% depending on the level of earnings. As a result, \$365,632 (2024 - \$345,014) was contributed to OMERS for current service.

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended December 31, 2025

8. Accumulated surplus:

Accumulated surplus consists of individual fund surplus and reserve and reserve funds as follows:

	2025	2024
Reserves and reserve funds	\$ 1,459,959	\$ 2,087,675
Funds set aside (note 11)	1,466,570	1,791,310
Amounts to be recovered – long-term liabilities	(534,400)	(632,465)
Amounts to be recovered – post-employment benefit	(361,017)	(344,900)
Tangible capital assets	8,981,258	8,168,359
	<u>\$ 11,012,370</u>	<u>\$ 11,069,979</u>

9. Commitments:

Minimum future lease payments for various premises and equipment are as follows:

2026	\$ 256,100
2027	267,498
2028	267,239
2029	272,532
2030	283,930
2031 and thereafter	449,206
	<u>\$ 1,796,905</u>

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended December 31, 2025

10. Budget data:

The budget data presented in these financial statements is based upon the 2025 operating and capital budgets adopted by Council on Date. Amortization was not contemplated on development of the budget and, as such, was not included. The chart below reconciles the approved budget to the budget information reported in these financial statements. The budgeted is unaudited.

Revenues:	
Operating budget	\$ 7,453,657
Less:	
Transfers in – reserves	(120,000)
Total revenue	7,333,657
Expenses:	
Operating budget	6,834,180
Capital budget	619,477
Add:	
Amortization	848,675
Less:	
Capital expenses	(521,412)
Principal repayments	(98,065)
Total expenses	7,682,855
Annual deficit	\$ (349,198)

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended December 31, 2025

11. Funds set aside:

The Library has set aside specific monies for which donations received are designated for specific purposes. These include collections, capital funding and Library support programs. The reserves are summarized below:

	Architects Fund	Internal Fund	2025 Total	2024 Total
Revenues:				
Book revenue	\$ –	\$ 4,431	\$ 4,431	\$ 12,590
Donations	–	9,911	9,911	5,979
Interest	–	64,542	64,542	87,971
	–	78,884	78,884	106,540
Expenditures:				
Library furniture	–	403,624	403,624	80,000
Net revenues	–	(324,740)	(324,740)	26,540
Funds, beginning of year	766	1,790,544	1,791,310	1,764,770
Funds, end of year	\$ 766	\$ 1,465,804	\$ 1,466,570	\$ 1,791,310

12. Financial risks:

Liquidity Risk:

Liquidity risk is the risk of the inability of an entity to meet its current obligations from proceeds of current assets. The Library manages its liquidity risk by forecasting cash flows from operations and other activities and maintains credit facilities with the City to ensure it has sufficient available funds to meet current and foreseeable financial requirements.

Credit risk:

Credit risk refers to the risk that a counterparty may default on its contractual obligations result in a financial loss. The Library is exposed to credit risk with respect to the accounts receivable. The Library manages credit risk as their activities are funded by grants and well-established organizations. An allowance of \$nil (2024 - \$nil) has been estimated for potential credit losses on balances due from unrelated parties.

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Schedule 1 – Other Revenues

Year ended December 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	Budget 2025 (note 10)	Actual 2025	Actual 2024
Fines and memberships	\$ 5,500	\$ 3,015	\$ 3,916
Interest	50,000	149,440	251,407
Photocopying	2,905	–	3,720
Sundry	16,383	49,647	40,044
Meeting room rental	6,000	13,410	18,776
AV services	1,500	2,910	5,075
Donations	–	14,343	18,569
	\$ 82,288	\$ 232,765	\$ 341,507

DRAFT

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Schedule 2 – Expenses

Year ended December 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	Budget 2025	Actual 2025	Actual 2024
	(note 10)		
Salaries, wages and benefits			
Library and administration	\$ 5,393,591	\$ 5,246,221	\$ 4,805,960
Post-employment benefits	–	16,117	16,600
	\$ 5,393,591	\$ 5,262,338	\$ 4,822,560
Library materials			
Audio	\$ 3,830	\$ –	\$ –
Microfilm	3,623	3,256	–
Periodicals	313,088	414,201	428,763
Processing	–	–	6,378
	\$ 320,541	\$ 417,457	\$ 435,141
Occupancy			
Communications	\$ 41,900	\$ 35,480	\$ 41,190
Insurance	47,555	52,753	45,743
Rent and taxes	190,316	33,429	50,638
Repairs and maintenance	148,398	100,568	147,614
Security	–	99,569	131,655
Utilities	228,155	216,891	193,527
	\$ 656,324	\$ 538,690	\$ 610,367
General and administration			
Audio visual supplies	\$ –	\$ 10,970	\$ 5,264
Data processing	28,846	25,057	21,234
Equipment rental	13,276	12,008	10,877
Service subscriptions and contracts	144,614	142,248	125,770
Library supplies	40,650	64,906	75,242
Printing and stationery	2,222	686	1,701
Professional fees	59,095	90,914	178,197
Programming	19,625	19,804	15,097
Sundry	39,461	40,358	46,908
Training and development	44,940	30,455	32,186
Transportation and postage	41,410	15,344	11,950
	\$ 434,139	\$ 452,750	\$ 524,426

ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Schedule 3 - Tangible Capital Assets

Year ended December 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	Cost				Accumulated Amortization					Net Book Value
	Balance Beginning of Year	Additions	Disposals	Transfers	Balance End of Year	Balance Beginning of Year	Amortization	Disposals	Balance End of Year	
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
Land	25,138	-	-	-	25,138	-	-	-	-	25,138
Buildings	7,882,793	-	-	-	7,882,793	4,044,538	96,924	-	4,141,462	3,741,331
Building Improvements	2,690,211	652,738	(2,686)	38,158	3,378,421	546,926	145,667	(1,276)	691,317	2,687,104
Collection	4,178,979	369,928	(757,309)	-	3,791,598	2,707,475	468,826	(757,309)	2,418,992	1,372,606
Furniture and Equipment	1,085,554	478,715	(54,695)	-	1,509,574	594,053	62,876	(42,239)	614,690	894,884
Information Technology	756,125	137,815	(6,959)	14,396	901,377	634,769	74,382	(6,959)	702,192	199,185
WIP	77,320	36,244	-	(52,554)	61,010	-	-	-	-	61,010
December 31, 2025	16,696,120	1,675,440	(821,649)	-	17,549,911	8,527,761	848,675	(807,783)	8,568,653	8,981,258
Land	25,138	-	-	-	25,138	-	-	-	-	25,138
Buildings	7,882,793	-	-	-	7,882,793	3,947,614	96,924	-	4,044,538	3,838,255
Building Improvements	2,588,964	101,247	-	-	2,690,211	421,790	125,136	-	546,926	2,143,285
Collection	4,564,211	356,863	(742,095)	-	4,178,979	2,931,757	517,813	(742,095)	2,707,475	1,471,504
Furniture and Equipment	1,006,288	113,009	(33,743)	-	1,085,554	562,102	57,819	(25,868)	594,053	491,501
Information Technology	679,098	77,027	-	-	756,125	540,925	93,844	-	634,769	121,356
WIP	24,766	52,554	-	-	77,320	-	-	-	-	77,320
December 31, 2024	16,771,258	700,700	(775,838)	-	16,696,120	8,404,188	891,536	(767,963)	8,527,761	8,168,359

2027 St. Catharines Public Library Operating Budget

submitted by Lisa DiDonato, Business Administrator

Recommendation

THAT the St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) Board approve, in principle, the 2027 Operating Budget for submission to the City of St. Catharines.

Report

Background

To date, the St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) has not received formal direction from the City for the upcoming 2027 Operating Budget. In the absence of specific directives, staff are proceeding with the preparation of the budget based on the framework and principles of the City's established budget policy in prior years.

Report

The SCPL 2027 Operating Budget was developed through a comprehensive, line-by-line review conducted by the management team. This process included an analysis of prior-year trends and thoughtful consideration of future needs. Each component was carefully evaluated to ensure accuracy, efficiency, and alignment with organizational priorities.

The budget reflects a number of ongoing and emerging cost pressures. These include the financial impact of implementing rates under the collectively bargained agreement, increased occupancy costs associated with the relocation of Merritt Branch, rising technology expenses, and to increase health and safety security measures.

In response to the significant and measurable growth in library visits, circulation, and program attendance, the budget includes funding the opening of the Merritt branch on Sundays starting in October 2027 and a summer student.

The budget also includes transfers to reserves in accordance with the reserve policy which set the parameters for building and maintaining adequate reserve levels to support day-to-day operations, while also advancing the goal of strengthening long-term capacity and enabling future investments in infrastructure.

As a result of these combine factors, a municipal contribution increase \$633,943 (8.4%) is required to fund an \$8.15 million Operating Budget.

2027 City of St. Catharines Contribution Reconciliation		
	Amount	Increase %
Approved 2026 City of St. Catharines Contribution	\$7,517,958	
Salaries and Benefits		
Base Salaries and Benefits	172,560	2.3%
Benefit Premium Savings	(63,480)	(0.8%)
Merritt Branch Sundays (October to December)	10,373	0.1%
Summer Student	6,008	0.1%
Total Salaries and Benefits Increases	125,461	1.7%
Other Expenditures		
Merritt Branch Lease Increase	104,672	1.4%
IT Service Subscriptions and Contracts	47,577	0.6%
Additional Seasonal Security	34,603	0.4%
Reserve Contributions – Capital Reserve	132,425	1.8%
Reserve Contributions - Stabilization Reserve	160,000	2.1%
Net Other Increases	29,025	0.4%
Total Other Expenditure Increases	508,302	6.7%
Proposed City of St. Catharines Contribution Increase	633,943	8.4%
Proposed 2027 City of St. Catharines Contribution	\$8,151,901	

The detailed proposed budget and relevant notes are attached as Appendix A.

Next Steps

Approve the 2027 SCPL Operating Budget in principle and await further direction and a schedule from the City of St. Catharines. The expectation is that the 2027 Operating Budget will be due to the City in August or September and presented to Council in December after the municipal elections.

Appendix A - St. Catharines Public Library 2027 Proposed Operating Budget

	2027 Budget	2026 Budget	Variance	% Increase (Decrease)
City Contribution	8,151,901	7,517,958	633,943	8.4%
Provincial Grant	228,600	228,600	-	0.0%
Other Grant Revenue	12,267	12,267	-	0.0%
Fines/Membership	1,550	5,500	- 3,950	-71.8%
Copier Services	20,000	2,905	17,095	588.5%
Equipment Rental	2,000	1,500	500	33.3%
Investment Income	40,000	40,000	-	0.0%
Meeting Room Rentals	10,000	6,000	4,000	66.7%
Sundry	15,000	16,383	- 1,383	-8.4%
Transfer from Reserve	-	60,000	- 60,000	100.0%
Total Revenue	8,481,318	7,891,113	590,205	7.5%
Salaries & Benefits	5,767,449	5,641,988	125,461	2.2%
Books	462,086	490,703	- 28,617	-5.8%
Videos and Video Games	74,321	70,359	3,962	5.6%
Microfilm	3,495	3,731	- 236	-6.3%
Electronic Resources	301,186	252,121	49,065	19.5%
Sound Recordings	3,912	3,944	- 32	-0.8%
Total Library Materials	845,000	820,858	24,142	2.9%
Utilities	241,500	239,562	1,938	0.8%
Insurance	53,879	49,933	3,946	7.9%
Rent/Taxes	281,587	256,566	25,021	9.8%
Repairs & Maintenance	203,802	151,366	52,436	34.6%
Security	116,812	82,209	34,603	42.1%
Communications	42,146	41,900	246	0.6%
Total Occupancy Costs	939,726	821,536	118,190	14.4%
General Supplies	32,000	48,707	- 16,707	-34.3%
Electronic & Peripheral Supplies	5,500	4,284	1,216	28.4%
Professional Fees	55,648	59,686	- 4,038	-6.8%
Staff Training & Development	46,500	45,389	1,111	2.4%
Rental of Equipment	45,826	13,409	32,417	241.8%
IT Service Subscriptions and Contract	196,529	148,952	47,577	31.9%
Transportation	31,000	34,174	- 3,174	-9.3%
Sundry	16,000	15,772	228	1.4%
Printing & Stationary	2,000	2,244	- 244	-10.9%
Public Relations	27,576	27,035	541	2.0%
Programs	22,481	22,040	441	2.0%
Data Processing	26,469	29,423	- 2,954	-10.0%
Total Supplies and Services	507,529	451,115	56,414	12.5%
Furniture & Equipment	20,000	20,000	-	0.0%
Facility & Systems Enhancements	25,000	25,000	-	0.0%
Debenture Debt-Aquatic Centre	105,734	101,828	3,906	3.8%
Reserve Contributions	270,880	8,788	262,092	0.0%
Total Operating Capital	421,614	155,616	265,998	170.9%
Total Expenditures	8,481,318	7,891,113	590,205	7.5%

Revenue

City Contributions

For 2027, SCPL requires an 8.4% increase in municipal funding to offset costs of collectively bargained increases, increased occupancy costs associated with the relocation of Merritt Branch, rising technology expenses, increased security measures and transfers to reserves in accordance with the reserve policy.

In 2025 and 2026, transfers from the Stabilization Reserve were used to mitigate multi-year budget municipal funding gaps during the reconfirmation process.

Provincial Grant

The Ministry has not indicated any changes to the Provincial Grant for 2027, which has remained stagnant for over 30 years.

Other Revenue

Other revenue includes memberships, copier services, meeting room and equipment rentals, as well as investment interest. For 2027, budget includes minor service revenue increases to align with experience.

Transfers from Reserves

In 2025 and 2026, transfers from the Stabilization Reserve were used to mitigate multi-year budget municipal funding gaps during the reconfirmation process. For 2027, no transfers from reserves are recommended.

Expenditures

Salaries and Benefits

	2027 Budget	2026 Budget	\$ Increase	% Increase
Salaries	\$4,746,017	\$4,592,231	\$153,786	3.3%
Benefits	\$1,012,432	\$1,049,757	(\$28,325)	(2.7%)
Total Salaries and Benefits	\$5,767,449	\$5,641,988	\$125,461	2.2%

The 2027 salaries and benefits include the current staffing complement and the addition of a summer student (\$6,008) as, well as, staffing for the opening of the Merritt Branch on Sundays starting in October 2027 (\$10,373).

The benefits costs include an estimated \$63,480 in premium savings resulting from the transition to a new benefit carrier in June 2026 after going to market to obtain competitive bids.

Library Materials

Historically, SCPL spent a higher proportion of the budget on library materials than our peers. From 2019 to 2023, the library materials budget was strategically lowered by almost 25%. The 2027 budget reflects a balance between being prudent while still ensuring our customers receive the materials they want.

Occupancy Costs

The increased occupancy costs are primarily the result of the relocation of the Merritt branch to the Pen Centre in 2025. In 2026, the increase is partially offset by a transfer from the Stabilization Reserve. The increase also reflects the transition to third party cleaning services at the branches. These costs have been offset by salaries and benefits savings.

Supplies and Services

Overall supplies and services cost have remained relatively stable. The increase in IT Service Subscriptions and Contract is the result of temporary increased Integrated Library Service maintenance fees. The migration from SirsiDynix to Polaris, in collaboration with the Niagara Falls Public Library, will result in ongoing savings starting in 2028.

Operating Capital

The SCPL Reserves Policy establishes the parameters by which SCPL will build and maintain an adequate level of Reserves to support day-to-day operations with the goal of building long-term capacity or investing in infrastructure.

As per the policy, the 2027 Operating Budget includes \$270,880 in transfers to reserves. This includes an \$160,000 transfer from to the Stabilization Reserve, approximately 2% of the Annual Operating Budget and an \$110,880 transfer to the Capital Reserve, 0.25% of the insured value of library assets. The reserve forecast is attached as Appendix B.

Appendix B - SCPL Reserves Forecast

SCPL Capital Reserve										
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Balance, Beginning of Year	2,673,789	2,323,789	2,332,577	1,373,790	1,266,414	1,410,465	1,555,956	602,903	751,318	901,218
Contributions from Operating	-	8,788	141,213	142,625	144,051	145,491	146,946	148,416	149,900	151,399
	2,673,789	2,332,577	2,473,790	1,516,414	1,410,465	1,555,956	1,702,903	751,318	901,218	1,052,617
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	1,373,790	1,266,414	1,410,465	1,555,956	602,903	751,318	901,218	1,052,617

Stabilization Reserve										
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Balance, Beginning of Year	319,844	205,702	5,702	165,702	328,902	495,366	665,159	838,348	1,015,001	1,195,187
Contributions	5,858	-	160,000	163,200	166,464	169,793	173,189	176,653	180,186	183,790
	325,702	205,702	165,702	328,902	495,366	665,159	838,348	1,015,001	1,195,187	1,378,977
Transfer to Operating:										
ILS One Time Project Costs	-	90,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community Needs Assessment	-	50,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Merritt Relocation Mitigation	120,000	60,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Spending	120,000	200,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Estimated Balance, End of Year	205,702	5,702	165,702	328,902	495,366	665,159	838,348	1,015,001	1,195,187	1,378,977

Central Branch Renovation

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

Recommendation

THAT the St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) Board request that the City of St. Catharines City (City) Council:

- i. Amend the December 12, 2022, motion to remove the clause "that the Central Branch Library Renovation project's construction phase approved as part of the 2023 Capital Budget be contingent upon approval of grant funding from the Federal Government".
- ii. Release the \$4.85 million included in the 2023 Approved Capital Budget be used to fund the Central Branch Renovation and Accessibility Improvement Project.

Report

Background

The City's 2023 Approved Capital Budget allocated \$4.85 million for the Central Branch Library Renovation Project. This funding was contingent upon securing a federal grant, as the project was part of a larger \$15 million initiative.

Per the minutes of the December 12, 2022, meeting, Council approved the following motion:

That Council approve the 2023 Capital Budget and Four-Year Forecast as detailed in Appendix 1, Tab 2, Schedules A to V; and

That Council approve for the 2023 Capital Budget, a 7.5% capital out of revenue funding contribution (consistent with the COVID-19 Financial Recovery Plan) rather than the 10% rate stipulated in the Debt Management Strategy; and

That Council approve for the 2023 Capital Budget, a forecast 2023 debt ratio of 10.18% which is marginally higher than the 10% limit stipulated in the Debt Management Strategy; and

That Council approve an additional full-time employee in the operating budget, for a Project Manager and that will be funded through an overhead charge to related capital projects similar to best practices followed by other Ontario municipalities; and

That the Central Branch Library Renovation project's construction phase approved as part of the 2023 Capital Budget be contingent upon approval of grant funding from the Federal Government; and

That projects identified in Appendix 6 be recommended for 30-year debenture term funding; and That Council receive for information, as detailed in Appendix 1, the 2022 Asset Management Status, and Schedules W to AE; and

Further, that the City Solicitor be directed to prepare the necessary borrowing by-law.

According to former City Treasurer and CFO, Kristine Douglas, the \$4.85 million for the Central Branch Library Renovation Project is funded from three sources: \$3,055,500 from the Development Charge Reserve, \$135,000 from Capital Out of Revenue, and \$1,659,500 in debt.

Update

Since January 2023, SCPL has been aggressively seeking external funds with no success. We currently await the decision on our second application for the Federal Green and Inclusive Community Buildings (GICB) Grant however, given the federal government's current fiscal constraints, we are not optimistic about the likelihood of success.

Efforts on other fronts have been similarly challenging; provincial grants have provided only modest sums (\$60,000), and we have not yet succeeded in securing funds from private organizations or foundations.

As the SCPL Board and City Council are aware, the current condition of the Central Branch's public-facing spaces, a result of long-delayed upkeep and improvements, undermines our collective commitment to providing accessible and equitable service to all residents of St. Catharines, especially those with disabilities and older adults.

To address the funding shortfall, we propose a revised approach that adjusts the project scope to our current financial capacity, subject to City Council approval removing the federal grant requirement. This revised approach allows us to move forward with essential upgrades and address the most critical accessibility and service gaps in a fiscally responsible manner.

The key objectives are:

1. **Modernize Facilities:** Address the urgent need for universally accessible public spaces and washrooms for all community members.
2. **Enhance Safety & Security:** Improve sightlines throughout the building to create a safer and more secure environment for visitors and staff.
3. **Ensure Comprehensive Accessibility:** Implement features like a safer entrance ramp, wider doorways, accessible service points and shelving units to guarantee equitable access for everyone.
4. **Foster an Inclusive Community:** Provide updated, welcoming facilities that enhance the visitor experience and encourage social participation.
5. **Build for a Sustainable Future:** Invest in infrastructure that meets both current and future needs, exceeding provincial accessibility standards to promote long-term equity and inclusion.

Building on the community's positive reception to the successful Merritt (2025) and Port (2024) branch renovations, we have the momentum and proven foundation to proceed with the Central project. Modernizing our flagship library is a critical step in the revitalization of our downtown and is key to securing its future as the city's premier center for information and community engagement.

SCPL is experiencing a significant and measurable increase in public engagement, demonstrated by noticeable growth in key areas like in-person visits, material circulation, and program attendance, as detailed in Appendix A. Furthermore, our meeting and study rooms are regularly at capacity, pointing to a strong community need for public spaces to work, learn, and connect. This growing demand for our physical buildings, combined with the continued heavy use of our online resources, clearly demonstrates the community's deep reliance on the library as a vital public service and a critical 'third space'.

Approximately \$7.15 million in funding is currently available for the Central Branch Renovation. This total is composed of a \$4.85 million contribution from the City, \$1.1 million from the St. Catharines Public Library's (SCPL) Capital Reserve (Appendix B), and the \$1.2 million balance available in the SCPL Endowment and Trust Fund.

The release of the approved City funding for the project is contingent upon resolving two principal barriers. The following section details each obstacle and presents a recommended solution.

1. Federal Funding Contingency

The 2023 Capital Budget allocation is contingent upon securing a federal grant. This condition can be lifted through a City Council amendment to the December 12, 2022, motion, specifically by deleting the clause that ties the project's construction phase to the approval of federal grant funding.

2. Development Charge (DC) Reserve Funding

The release of DC funds is dependent on the revised project scope being consistent with the original project's intent. According to the City, Council initially deemed the project eligible for development charge funding because it would increase circulation, public space, and services. Although the revised project is smaller in scale and includes less new infrastructure, its core objectives remain identical. The project continues to meet the established criteria for DC eligibility because, while there is no increase in physical space, it will improve key functional spaces, such as study rooms and washrooms.

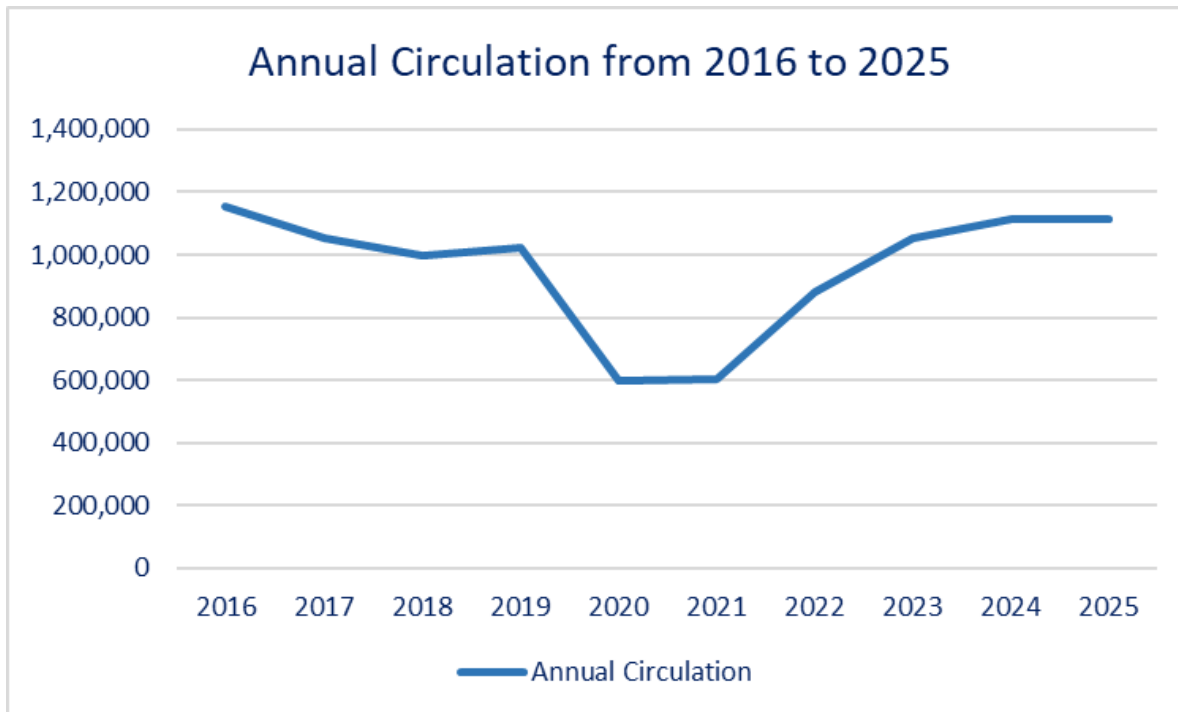
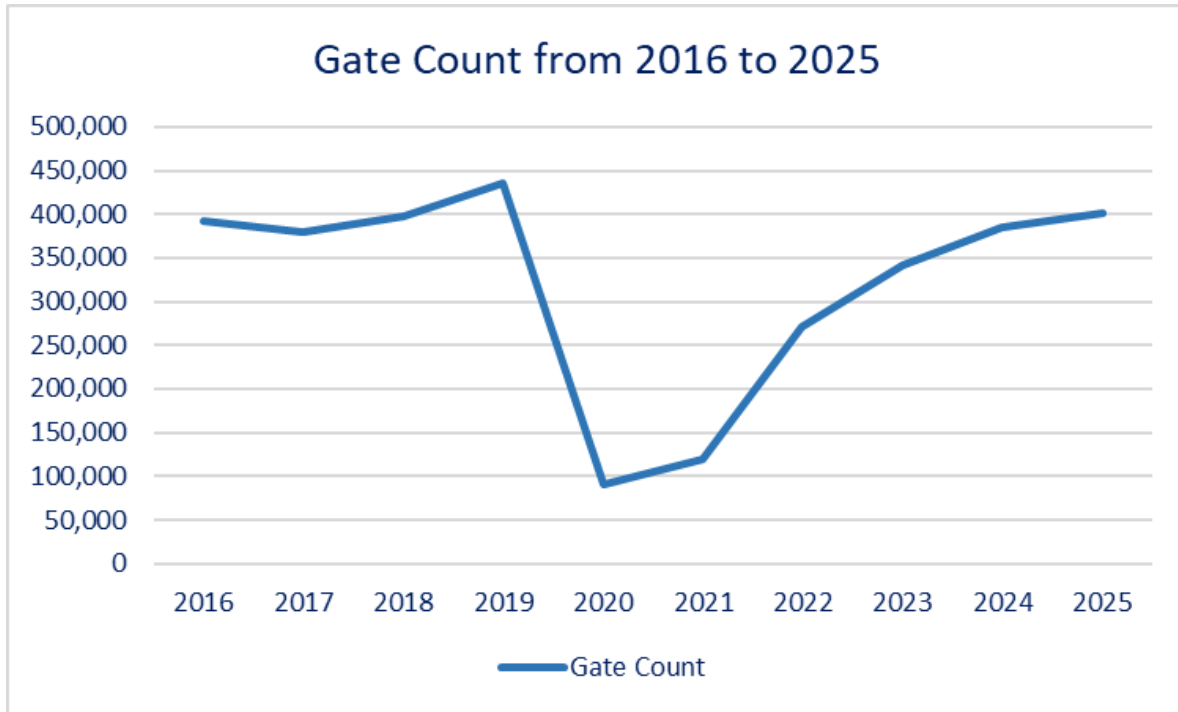
Next Steps

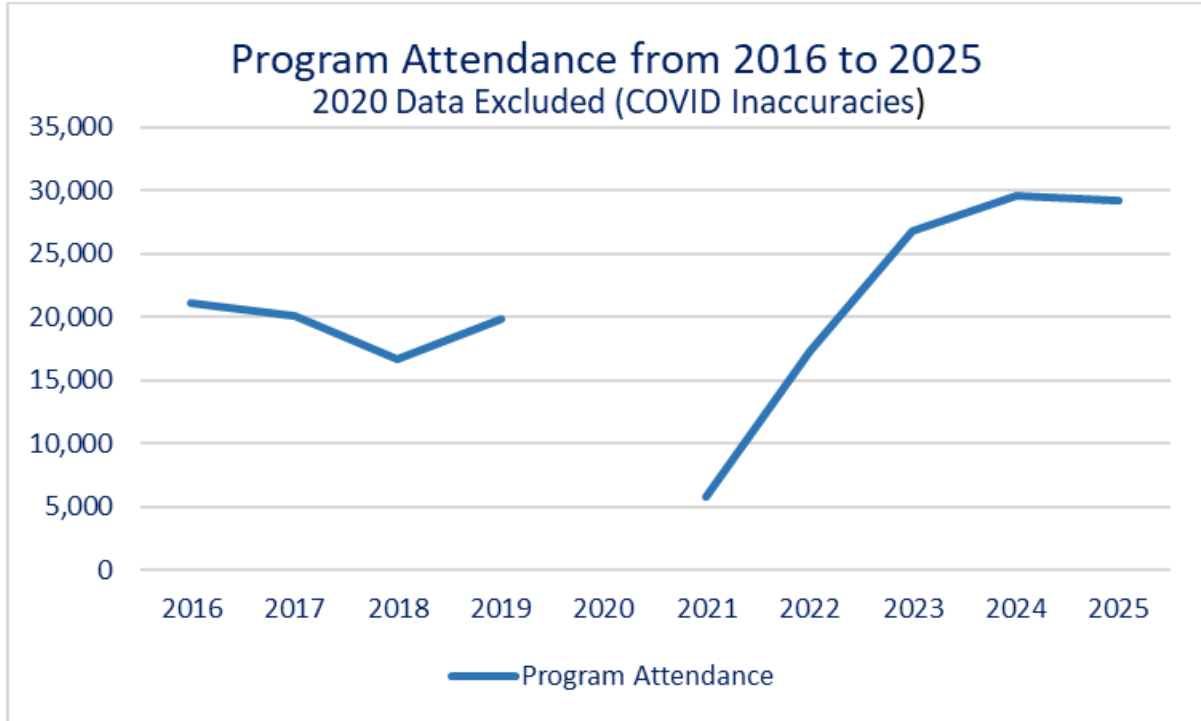
The need for long-overdue upkeep and improvements to the Central Branch's public-facing areas is a critical issue that impacts our ability to serve the community, particularly those with accessibility needs. While core infrastructure systems like the roof, HVAC, and elevator have been updated over the last five years, the spaces serving the public now

require urgent attention. By resizing the project to align with the approximately \$7.15 million in available funding, we can proceed with these essential renovations in a pragmatic and fiscally responsible manner.

The recent successes of other branch renovations and the significant growth in library use underscore the public's demand for modern facilities. The barriers to proceeding are administrative, not financial. By adopting the recommendations in this report, City Council can unlock this vital community project and ensure the Central Library remains a cornerstone of a revitalized and inclusive downtown for decades to come.

Appendix A – Public Engagement Growth





Appendix B – Capital Reserve Forecast

SCPL Capital Reserve Forecast									
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Balance, Beginning of Year	2,673,789	2,323,789	2,332,577	1,373,790	1,266,414	1,410,465	1,555,956	602,903	751,318
Contributions from Operating	-	8,788	141,213	142,625	144,051	145,491	146,946	148,416	149,900
	2,673,789	2,332,577	2,473,790	1,516,414	1,410,465	1,555,956	1,702,903	751,318	901,218
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	1,373,790	1,266,414	1,410,465	1,555,956	602,903	751,318	901,218

Endowment and Trust Request

submitted by Lisa DiDonato, Business Administrator

Recommendation

THAT the Board authorize the expenditure of up to \$15,000 from the Endowment & Trust to enhance the patio area outside the Dr. Huq Branch.

Report

The St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) Endowment and Trust Fund (E & T) was established to receive donations from the public to fund library services above and beyond normal provincial or municipal funding

In 2025, the E & T received \$14,343 in donations and earned \$64,542 in interest. The total of the fund at December 31, 2025 was \$1.5 million. Of the \$1.5 approximately \$206,000 is encumbered specific to the Dr. Huq Branch.

The St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre and Dr. Huq Branch, which opened in July 2012, includes an outdoor patio designed to serve as an inviting and functional community space. However, since its opening, the area has experienced limited use and has never been furnished, preventing it from reaching its full potential.

SCPL is seeking to enhance this outdoor space to better serve the community. The goal of the project is to improve usability, comfort, and visual appeal while aligning with library programming and community engagement initiatives.

Proposed enhancements include the addition of seating, raised garden beds, a sail shade, and an additional security camera. These improvements will help transform the space into a welcoming, safe, and versatile environment that supports programming and encourages greater public use. These enhancements would start in June 2026.

Recognizing the ongoing budget pressures faced by the City, SCPL recommends utilizing E & T funds encumbered for the Dr. Huq Branch to support the purchase and installation of these improvements.