

FOR RELEASE
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Saskatoon Public Library requests 0% increase for 2018 budget

The Saskatoon Public Library (SPL) 2018 budget does not require an increase to SPL's municipal levy.

SPL's 2018 budget goals include maintaining service levels, aligning library services with community needs, continuous improvements, modernizing facilities, and to further reconciliation-related work.

In its five-year strategic plan, released in 2016, SPL outlined an ambitious plan for modernization and growth. This past October, SPL announced plans to transition to a new community-led service model and a new organizational structure.

"The library is changing to better meet the needs of our community now and into the future," says Carol Cooley, SPL Director of Libraries & CEO. "We're confident that we can meet our 2018 budget goals with our existing resources."

In total, SPL's proposed operating budget for 2018 is \$24.1 million. This is an increase of \$321,800 or 1.4% over the 2017 budget. The funding gap will be filled by assessment growth and an increase in anticipated supplementary property taxes, resulting in a 0% increase to the municipal levy.

"In the wake of the provincial budget revealed in March, we immediately recognized the economic challenges the city would face in the months and years ahead," Cooley says. The organization has no plans for a workforce reduction in 2018 unless there are provincial budget cuts, she added.

"We realized we must be proactive and identify cost-saving measures to reduce or eliminate tax increases for 2018. As a public institution, it's our responsibility—especially during tough economic times—to operate as efficiently as possible," she says.

SPL receives approximately 97% of its operating budget from city property taxpayers and 3% through a provincial government grant.

SPL has a central library and eight neighbourhood branches. In October 2017, SPL expanded operating hours at the Dr. Freda Ahenakew and Mayfair branches. SPL will have an estimated 1,455,040 patron visits in 2017. Program attendance is anticipated to reach a record high of nearly 108,000 patrons, and borrowing, computer, and WiFi usage stats are all trending upwards as well. The organization employs 148.8 full-time equivalent positions.

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