



2024 to 2027 Business Plan

Service: London Public Library

\$0.31

Cost per day for the
average rate payer
(2024 to 2027)

2.81%

Of the 2024 to 2027
City of London Net
Property Tax
Supported Budget

Who we are:

- The London Public Library (LPL) is a deeply embedded, essential community infrastructure that supports and connects Londoners and those new to London and to Canada with the resources they need to belong and thrive today and into the future. LPL's 16 branch libraries are rooted deeply in London's neighbourhoods, acting as hubs for literacy and learning at all stages of life, nurturing community partnerships, ensuring the sharing and distribution of resources including City of London information and resources, offering free cultural and educational programming and much-needed access to technology and support for using technology. In addition, we provide digital resources available from home that include ebooks, audiobooks, digital newspapers from around the world, research databases, instructional tools for language learning, building job and technology skills, standardized test practice and do-it-yourself (DIY) projects. All at no cost to members of the community with a library card.

What we do:

We provide essential services to Londoners, including, but not limited to the following:

- Through our network of 16 branch libraries located strategically in London neighbourhoods, we provide community space to gather that is free, safe, accessible, and open to the public, a distribution network for pertinent information for the City of London and other partners and stakeholders, and a recognizable community cornerstone for partner services such as the Library Settlement Partnership (LSP) program serving newcomers to London;
- Through our extensive partnership network that includes the City of London and many non-profits and businesses, we create an environment of collaboration and coordination that provides mutually beneficial enhancements to services for Londoners;
- Through our collections of books, media, magazines, and digital resources including ebooks, online learning tools and digital newspapers that are provided to the public free of charge, we deliver high quality, accessible, current, and relevant materials to all Londoners. LPL collections serve diverse users with a variety of needs and expectations, and connect people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to a wide range of ideas, enriching content, and learning and growth opportunities;
- Through our programs and events, we provide educational, cultural and informational opportunities for all Londoners;
- Through our literacy support services, we create a love of reading, a comfort with technology, and access to information on almost any topic; and
- Through our technology services, we provide computers, free wi-fi, wi-fi hotspots, labs offering state of the art equipment, and other services that help bridge the digital divide.

Why we do it:

- **Traditional** - The Public Libraries Act does not require a municipality to establish a public library but all municipalities of a similar size and most in the Province have a long tradition of operating public libraries with multiple branches. LPL has provided public library service to Londoners since 1895.


The following table provides an overview of the budget for this service:


Budget Summary (\$000's)	2024	2025	2026	2027	2024 to 2027 TOTAL
Gross Operating Expenditures	\$23,842	\$24,738	\$25,996	\$27,342	\$101,919
Other Revenues	-\$165	-\$0	-\$0	-\$0	-\$165
Net Tax Levy Supported Operating Budget	\$23,677	\$24,738	\$25,996	\$27,342	\$101,754
Total Capital Expenditures	\$6,436	\$1,095	\$1,665	\$1,825	\$11,021
Full-Time Equivalents (FTE's)	207.5	209.0	209.5	209.5	N/A


Reflects 2024 to 2027 approved City budget as of March 1, 2024.


Linkage to the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan


This service supports the following Strategic Areas of Focus in the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan:


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✓ **Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion**
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✓ **Economic Growth, Culture, and Prosperity**
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Housing and Homelessness
- 

Mobility and Transportation
- 

✓ **Wellbeing and Safety**
- 

Climate Action and Sustainable Growth
- 

Safe London for Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse and Trans People
- 

Well-Run City

Environmental, Socio-economic Equity and Governance (ESG) Considerations

Environmental, Socio-economic Equity and Governance Profile for this service:



Environmental:

With 16 branches to manage, LPL is seeking guidance and support from the City of London as it moves forward with its Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP). With a Facilities Condition Assessment in hand and the completion of our Asset Management Plan in the next year, LPL will be developing a Facilities Master Plan that will be guided by the CEAP and other environmental factors, but implementation will require additional financial support.

In addition, LPL supports the CEAP by:

- Continuing to support the City of London by hosting informational programs and sharing information.
- Encouraging Londoners to move towards a zero-waste lifestyle by borrowing and returning print collections and using our digital resources.
- Offering programs and services that support a shared economy approach with our creative labs (e.g., sewing machines, 3D printing).

Expanding partnerships with the City of London and other organizations to offer educational programs (Environmentalist in Residence, Green in the City, Repair Cafes, etc.) and resources in LPL locations that help Londoners take individual climate actions.

Socio-economic Equity:

In Eric Klinenberg's 2018 book *Palaces for the People*, he discusses the concept of social capital and the benefit of interpersonal contact to a community and finds in libraries "the textbook example of social infrastructure in action."

"Libraries stand for and exemplify something that needs defending: the public institutions that -- even in an age of atomization and inequality -- serve as bedrocks of civil society. Libraries are the kinds of places where ordinary people with

different backgrounds, passions, and interests can take part in a living democratic culture. They are the kinds of places where the public, private, and philanthropic sectors can work together to reach for something higher than the bottom line.”

LPL is an essential driver of socio-economic equity, addressing disparities and empowering individuals from all socio-economic backgrounds. Through our commitment to equal access to knowledge, job support, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and community engagement, libraries uplift communities and provide opportunities for growth.

LPL, by its very nature, is an organization that seeks to promote and support equity and anti-racism and anti-oppression are primary values in our current Strategic Plan. The City of London’s Strategic Plan focuses on Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion, and LPL will continue, as it always has, to play a significant role.

Governance:

It is yet unclear how or if provisions of the Better Municipal Governance Act and the expansion of “Strong Mayor Powers” will affect how LPL Board governs.

It is yet unclear how or if the changes to development charges as part of the More Homes Built Faster Act will affect LPL’s ability to expand its service to growing neighbourhoods in London.

The following section provides an overview of the key activities the service plans to undertake from 2024 to 2027 to implement the Corporation’s 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan, as well as an overview of the risks and challenges the service is anticipated to experience during this period:

Service Highlights 2024 to 2027

The following service plan highlights are organized by the areas of Focus in the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan:

Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion:

Engagement and partnerships with Indigenous and other equity-seeking communities, organizations and individuals by offering of programming, collections and other service mirror the needs and values of their communities. Specific actions include increasing community awareness of and understanding of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, Indigenous knowledge, and the impacts of colonization, hosting settlement services at our branches, bridging the digital equity divide through multiple technology services, and endeavouring to incorporate the City of London’s Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Framework and Equity Tool in the creation and implementation of policies, procedures, programs and services.

Housing and Homelessness:

Participate in the City's Health and Homelessness Whole of Community System Response as a member of the Strategy and Accountability Table.

Wellbeing and Safety:

Offering support for cultural programs, exhibits and events throughout our 16 branches, working with communities, individuals, and organizations, while ensuring our spaces are welcoming, safe, accessible, and reflective of their communities. Specific action includes the continued work of our Historic Sites Committee in recognizing London's cultural landmarks, provide services that are an intricate part of the City of London's United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) City of Music Plan, providing access to technology to support creative aspirations, skill building, the needs of small businesses and entrepreneurs, and help bridge the digital equity divide.

Safe London for Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse and Trans People:

Support women, girls, gender-diverse and trans people through its collections, programs, and services. Specific actions include the introduction of the availability of free menstrual products at branches, staff participation in community wide meetings and training opportunities, promotion of resources to the community, and participate in the Safe Cities Advisory committee and, where feasible, implement recommendations from the Action Plan.

Economic Growth, Culture, and Prosperity:

Activities include:

- Developing partnerships, provide equipment and technology, and offer programs that support the needs of small business and entrepreneurs.
- Enhancing current services and develop new services at our Central Library to become an intricate part of the City of London's UNESCO City of Music Plan, including the hosting of festivals, events and activations at LPL to attract visitors to the Core and continue to offer spaces at LPL for local artistic and musical talent.
- Revitalize the Central Library to become an anchor of the core's destination plans.
- Offer mental health and addiction support services through our partnership with CMHA and the presence of a Transitional Case Manager at our Central Library, available to help Londoners in need, many of whom frequent LPL, to quickly and easily connect to community resources.

Climate Action and Sustainable Growth:

Activities include:

- Encouraging Londoners to move towards a zero-waste lifestyle through our programs and use of our collections.

- Investing in LPL's neighbourhood branches through the implementation of an Asset Management Plan and establishing a standard for building infrastructure that helps close the infrastructure gap and meets environmental targets.
- Partner with the City of London and other organizations to offer educational programs and resources in LPL locations that help Londoners take individual climate actions.
- Invest in LPL's technology infrastructure to meet current and future needs of the community.

Well-Run City

Activities include:

- Supporting the City of London, Federal and Provincial government officials, and key stakeholders in distributing information and hosting informational programs for Londoners through our 16 branches and our online presence.
- Providing exceptional customer service in all areas by offering quality staff training and incorporating best practices.
- Endeavouring to collect regular feedback on its services and improve responsiveness to patron inquiries and concerns.
- Providing timely access to LPL materials, learning, and educational resources, with a focus on expanding access to digital items such as e-books and e-audiobooks, while ensuring all efforts are aligned to better serve equity-denied communities by enhancing representation in our collections and services.
- Continue to support the municipal election by offering branch locations as polling stations.

Risks and Challenges Anticipated in 2024 to 2027

According to the [2022 Ontario Public Library Statistics Report](#) (link), LPL currently receives \$64.50 per square foot in overall operational support from the City of London based on the facilities it manages. This is very low when compared with other Ontario public libraries of similar size. Over time, the lack of support has had a negative ripple effect on areas we've been unable to fund appropriately, including our technology infrastructure, pertinent software additions and upgrades, learning and development opportunities for staff, and general facilities maintenance. We have been stretched thin for a significant period of time.

LPL cannot meet the goals set forth in Council's 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan or the Library 2022 to 2026 Strategic Plan without a substantial increase in support. The risks associated with not receiving requested increases in our base operational and capital budgets and having our business cases approved are voiced below:

- **Personnel:** Personnel costs represent approximately 68% of total expenditures for LPL and we're struggling to maintain public service coverage and infrastructure support for our 16 facilities within our current budget. A new collective bargaining agreement will result in wage increases, the cost of staff benefits will continue to increase, and there are legislative changes that will or hold potential to increase costs (i.e., Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS), CPP, minimum wage, etc.).

- Facilities: Our current system-wide Facilities Condition Index (FCI) score, according to our Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA), is .24, which is considered "fair". We have 3 facilities that are considered in poor condition and another 3 facilities that are very close to that designation. According to the FCA, LPL would need to invest over \$6 million a year in our current infrastructure to bring our overall FCI in the "fair" to "good" range. We cannot continue to manage our current facilities without a substantial increase in support. The risks associated with not completing our lifecycle renewal requirements include the erosion of library service, shortened useful life of assets or outright asset failure, damage and loss of collections materials and public technology, increases in maintenance costs and additional unplanned costs, negative community impact, damage to the environment, potential staff or patron injury and possible temporary or permanent closure of facilities. In addition to Capital needs, we are struggling to address basic maintenance for our buildings and grounds within our current operating budget. Cleanliness, poor lighting, dirty windows, dirty carpets and flooring, overgrown vegetation, untidy grounds and the overall condition of our physical spaces are concerns often expressed by patrons and staff.
- Collections: LPL's Collections Budget is straining to meet the growing demand for digital materials while still supporting the current levels of the usage and demand of physical materials. This is reflected in long wait times for Londoners, and disproportionately affects equity-seeking Londoners such as children, teens, families, and newcomers to Canada, who rely on LPL for these needs. LPL's Collections budget is similarly straining to ensure that all Londoners see their stories reflected in LPL's books and other materials.
- Safety: Due to ongoing and increasing issues with patron behavior, our budget for contracted security services has doubled since the last budget cycle. We are currently providing permanent security services for the Central Library and the Crouch Branch, but issues have begun to increase in other branches that have required temporary solutions or nightly mobile patrols. While we have faith that the City Whole of Community Response Plan will bring improvements, LPL must continue to prioritize the safety of its staff and patrons.
- Security: LPL's current facilities swipe card security systems are facing two major issues: The current age of the existing hardware is costly to maintain, and the lack of upgradeability that limits these existing systems to support newer technologies, or any expansion including the capabilities of swipe card access. All of these systems need to be replaced, as identified in LPL's FCA. Currently swipe card access is only available at our Central Library.
- Addiction and Mental Health: In response to continued concern with patrons using LPL that are experiencing home insecurity, mental health issues and addiction, especially at the Central Library, LPL began partnering with Canadian Mental Health Association Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health Services (CMHATV) in April of 2022 to have a Transitional Case Manager (TCM) on site to provide mental health, life skills and addiction support services at the Central Library. This was an 18-month pilot supported by a combination of operating and donated funds, and in the short time it's been in place, there have been a number of positive impacts. LPL would like to continue this valuable program.

- **Software as Service:** Changes in industry standards has greatly increased the operating cost of commonly used software products (e.g., MS 365 as Software as a Service vs. previously purchased products that had a life span of 5 to 7 years). With these cloud-based applications, a greater stress is placed on network infrastructure, increased security and backup requirements to encompass cloud service points, and Internet Services, all requiring hardware and service upgrades to maintain an adequate level of service, and security. Further, the expectation of capital infrastructure to support new technologies and services reduces the life span of major infrastructure devices bypassed by advancements (switching, storage, and front-line devices).
- **Digital Divide:** LPL continues to bridge the digital equity divide by providing technology services such as computers, printers, scanners, photocopiers, access to wi-fi, wi-fi hotspots, classes on digital basics, volunteer computer and technology support, support from LPL staff to access technology, and our creative labs. There is potential to increase our support of the City of London's Strategic Plan but cannot do so without additional funding.
- **Learning and Development:** LPL struggles within our current budget to provide high quality staff training, incorporate industry best practices through professional certification and development opportunities, and provide a Learning Management System (LMS) to efficiently address the training and development needs of over 300 employees.
- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI):** Both the City of London and LPL have placed significant focus on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in their respective Strategic Plans, but that commitment comes with costs associated with supporting promotion of LPL services (including translation) to equity-seeking groups, consultation fees for community stakeholders that provide guidance and other services, staff training, and implementation of strategies.
- **External Factors:** Based on projections from the City of London, LPL is facing a 25% increase in cost for utilities and insurance over the next 4 years. The future of the Provincial Library Operating Grant (PLOG) continues to be uncertain. This represents approximately \$600,000 in annual funding for LPL and has not increased in over 30 years. A reduction, or the elimination, of this operating grant would result in a decrease to overall service levels provided by LPL, if an alternative source of financing cannot be secured.
- **Enterprise Solutions:** LPL is highly independent from the City of London, and while that separation is in the spirit of the Public Libraries Act, there may be potential cost-savings in identifying opportunities to collaborate with the City of London on enterprise solutions.

Other reference information and links:

- According to a 2023 report examining the economic impact of LPL services, LPL contributes to the community a return on investment of \$6.48 for every dollar it receives from the City of London. More than 172,000 Londoners actively use their LPL card, regularly making use of our physical and digital collections, with many more regularly taking part in programs and making use of our community spaces.
- A recently released report by the Canadian Government addressing their commitment to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals states that public libraries “are integral to a vibrant democracy, a strong economy and thriving communities.” This report can be found by visiting this link [Sustainable Development Goals](#).
- According to the [2022 Resident Satisfaction Survey](#) (link) conducted by Forum Research Inc. between September 23 and October 17, 2022, LPL rated higher than any other City of London-funded service, with 95% of respondents rating our services favourably.

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