

Library Services

Led by: Director of Partnerships

Service Description

Calgary's libraries are vibrant community hubs that not only provide access to resources and learning that Calgarians are seeking, but also foster connection, belonging, and empowerment. The Calgary Public Library Board is an independent City of Calgary Civic Partner that leverages The City's investment of operating and capital grants and assets through volunteer support, partnerships, and donations. As a separate legal entity, costs for the Library's separate governance and corporate services (Human Resources, Information Technology, Financial Services, Security and Facility Management) are included in the Library's operating budget breakdown.

Service Updates

Key Service Results

- The past few years have seen a return to normal for the Calgary Public Library. Each measure has routinely been compared to 2019, not only as the full service year before the pandemic but also a banner year for activity and member interest surrounding the openings of the new Central and Seton Libraries. With steady growth across multiple KPIs, and record highs across some of the most important services, 2023 will become the new year to measure against.
- With 6.74 million people walking through Library doors in 2023, visitation was extremely strong. Members showed high interest in physical spaces, even as digital services continued to grow. While still roughly 12 percent lower than that seen in the atypically high 2019, visitation has steadily grown month over month and this trend is expected to continue.
- Circulation of library materials continued to grow with 2023 representing the highest ever year. Library materials were checked out over 17 million times and combined physical and digital circulation was 14 percent higher than 2019.
- Library membership had a record year with 148,000 new accounts bringing the active membership base to 750,000 (56 per cent of Calgarians).

Service Challenges

Several issues continue to present challenges for Library operations and the implementation of strategic priorities:

- The cost of materials and furniture is increasing, as is the amount of time required to procure it. Manufacturing and delivery times are getting longer, which is having an impact on planned lifecycle and library upgrades.
- Security incidents in the downtown core continue to trend upwards. Drug related incidents in Q4 2023 increased over 400 percent compared to the previous year, and patron vs. patron assaults are on the rise as well.
- The Library continues to experience challenges around physical spaces and locations to deliver Library services. In 2024, the Square Feet of Space per Capita measure is expected to decrease to 0.40 Sq Ft as the population continues to rise. New Library spaces slated to open in 2027 will alleviate this strain but until then, service space will remain a challenge.

Trends & Potential Uncertainties

The largest potential uncertainty continues to be the steady rise in security incidents. Though still far more prevalent within the downtown core, drug related incidents are increasing within community spaces as well, burdening neighbourhood Libraries without dedicated security teams. The Library continues to work with downtown partners and stakeholders to work on security solutions but this rising trend presents an ongoing security risk to Library members and staff.



Measuring Our Performance

Legend

— Actuals

■ Expected Future Performance

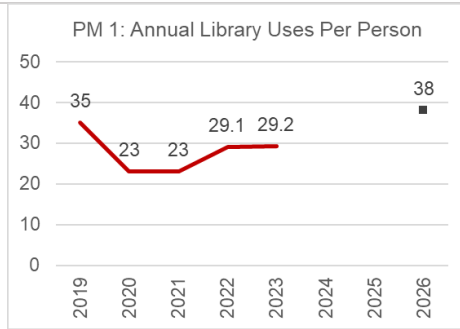
→ Progressing as planned

⊖ Not progressing as planned

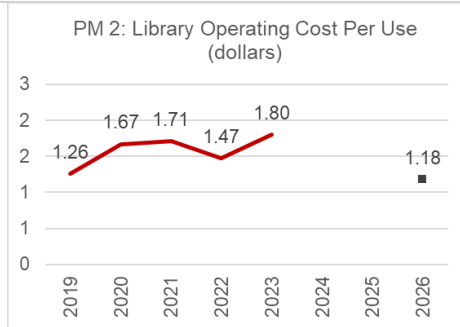
Performance Measures

Story behind the numbers

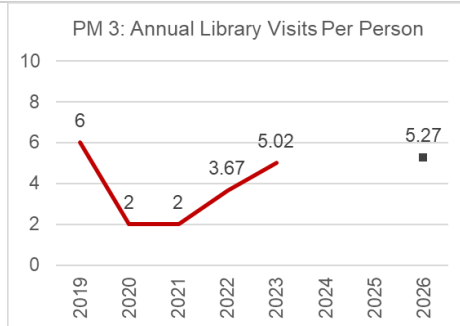
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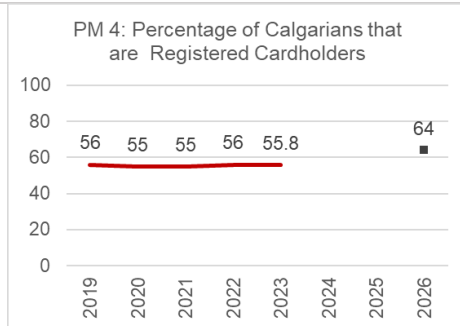
Annual Library uses is comprised of 11 different metrics, the criteria and definition of which are developed in conjunction with other Canadian Library systems. Of those 11 metrics, eight have increased in use relative to last year while three measures (all related to digital visitation) decreased. As a measure of capita, City population also affects this measure. At 29.2 Library uses per Capita, this measure compares favorably to Canadian municipalities.



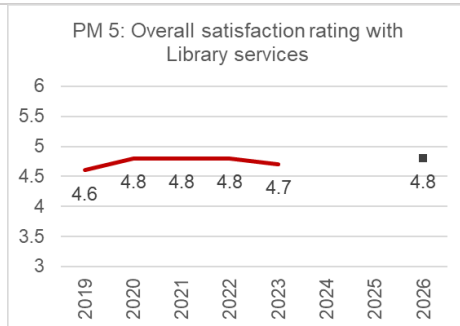
The increases to circulation, visitation, technology use and program attendance have contributed in large part to the increases in total usage. As this is a comparison of uses to budget, increases to operating fund in 2023 have offset the increases to usage. The measure stayed nearly the same, improving slightly from \$1.81 per use in 2022 to \$1.80 per use in 2023.



The Calgary Public Library had 6.74 million visitors walk through our doors in 2023. The per capita measure is 5.02 visits per Calgarian, a 37 percent increase over 2022. While still approximately 12 per cent lower than the pre-pandemic value, it is important to note that 2019 was an exceptional year for visitation with the excitement and activation of the newly opened Central and Seton Libraries. The comparison to a more traditional year like 2018 shows near parity. Visits have been increasing steadily each quarter for the past several years, a trend that is likely to continue throughout 2024.



Membership is the strongest it has ever been. In 2023, 148,000 new members registered for Library cards, 5 percent higher than the record year of 2019. Active membership is a flow of new memberships in and the removal of inactive memberships (after three years of inactivity). Approximately 60,000 inactive accounts were purged in 2023, an expected result of the bulk renewal of accounts in summer 2020 when fine free processes were implemented. Despite that decrease, extremely strong member acquisition and retention saw the membership base quickly bounce back. At 750,000 active members, a total of 55.8 per cent of Calgarians have Library cards.



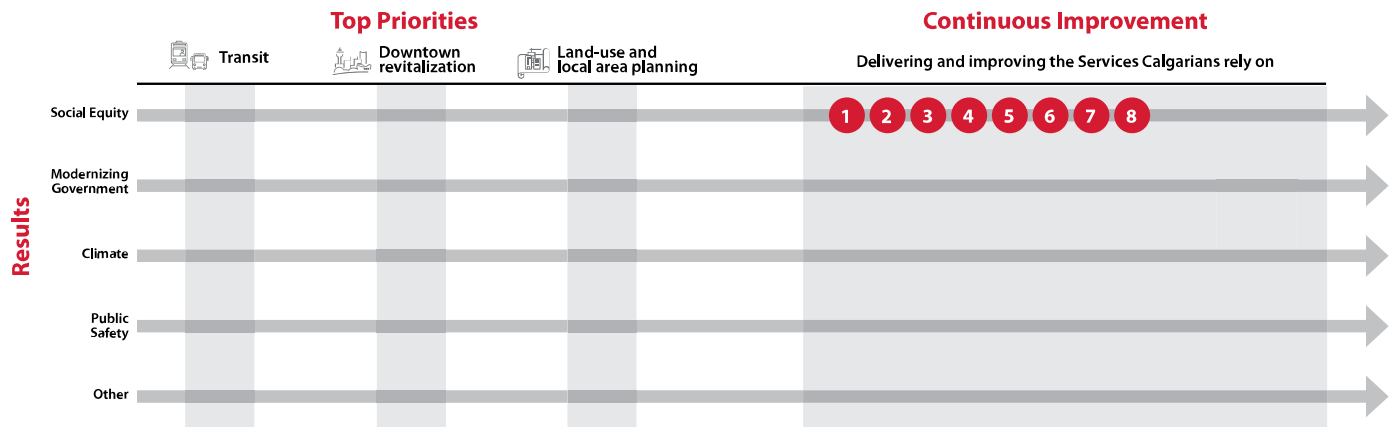
This measure is from a third-party phone survey conducted semi-annually. Of the 400 Library members surveyed in November 2023, 93 (23.3 percent) rated their experiences as very satisfying, while 280 (70.2 percent) rated their experiences as extremely satisfying for an overall satisfaction score of 93.5 percent. As these members are selected randomly, they represent a broad spectrum of Library users, engaging with a wide variety of Library services. This measure has remained consistently high since 2019, showing considerable resilience during the years of the pandemic. It is indicative of the quality and breadth of the Library's offerings.






Progress on Service Delivery

Alignment with Council Refined Priorities and Result Areas



- Legend**
- Completed
 - Progressing as planned
 - Not progressing as planned
 - Not started
 - Initiative number

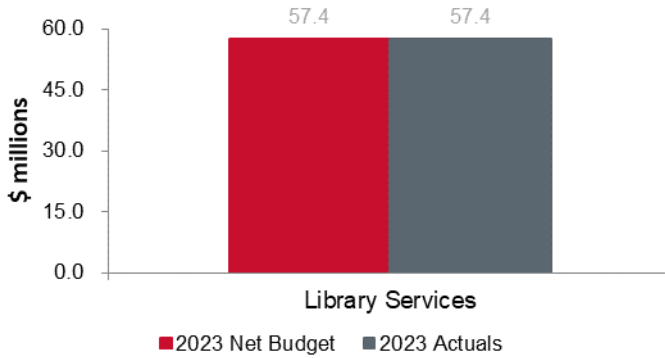
Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
1 Provide exceptional service to Calgarians by operating the existing 21 service locations, maintaining the current service level of 1,450 open hours per week (average 70 hours per location).	Library hours have not been altered and met expectations for the year. Exceptional service is reflected in membership levels, visitation levels and member satisfaction surveys. Membership continues to grow each quarter, with a total of 148,223 members added in 2023. The overall active membership base is 750,052. Visitation continues to increase as well, with 37 percent more total visits than in 2022. Lastly, member satisfaction continues to remain extremely high, with 94 per cent of respondents indicating their experience were very, or extremely satisfying.	
2 Increase quality of life for all Calgarians by operating outreach services to mobility-challenged populations, groups experiencing vulnerabilities, and those residing in areas without a convenient Library service location.	Community outreach has been one area that has been slower to return to pre-pandemic levels. This is due to a variety of reasons including staff capacity, partner capacity, and community need. It is also an indication of new found efficiencies however, as numerous routine outreach experiences have been translated to virtual delivery. Program facilitators now regularly engage with thousands of students concurrently, extending the Library's ability to connect with our communities. Approximately 1,500 outreach activities occurred in 2023, reaching a total of 62,616 community members.	
3 Enhance pathways to wellness for Calgarians by improving and expanding services offered through Wellness Desks.	The Wellness Desk program continued to expand this year. Reaching nearly 400 at risk Calgarians with critical support. The job desk is offered at Central, Crowfoot, and Shawnessy Libraries.	
4 Enhance support for school-aged learning by developing pop-up and loanable versions of current Questionarium content and materials.	Questionariums have been expanded to several additional locations, providing intrigue and discovery opportunities for more school-age students. Training resources have been developed to empower and encourage staff to activate the materials in dynamic and exciting ways.	
5 Maintain a "Good" rating in building condition assessments by conducting lifecycle investment in existing service locations.	A good rating has been maintained in all locations. Significant improvements to the Fish Creek Library began in 2023, to be completed in 2024.	
6 Increase quality of life for Calgarians by building four new library service locations by end of 2026.	Three Library locations (Belmont, Walden, and Symon's Valley) will begin construction in this budget cycle. A 3,000 Sq. Ft. space has been leased in Skyview to be developed into a smaller storefront location. This smaller space will alleviate the community need in the area until the larger Library location is constructed. All three larger libraries are on track to open by 2027.	
7 Improve early learning capacity by creating three new outdoor early learning centres by end of 2026.	Plans for outdoor learning centres have been placed on hold for the moment. Resources have been reallocated towards interior early learning centres, with both Fish Creek and Louise Riley renovations expected to be completed in 2024.	

Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
8 Increase sense of belonging by creating additional opportunities for Indigenous Placemaking within current service locations.	Round four of the Indigenous Placemaking project, which includes installations at Village Square, Judith Umbach and Fish Creek Libraries, is currently wrapping up. The Village Square Library installation was completed in August 2023. The fabrication and installation of a textile design at Judith Umbach is scheduled in Q1 2024. The Fish Creek installation is currently in progress, to be completed alongside that Library's renovation. This phase of the Placemaking, designed to connect emerging artists with experienced, is complete. Plans are underway to expand the Placemaking to other locations.	



Service Updates on Financial Performance

Net Operating Budget and Actuals as of December 31, 2023



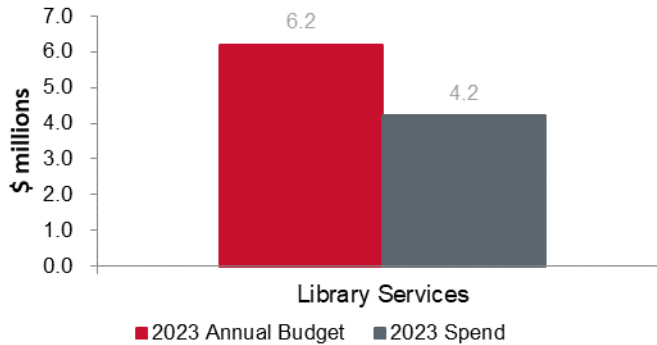
Operating Budget Updates - 2023 net operating budget vs actuals:

Library Services has no operating budget variance for the reporting period.

Approximately 97 per cent of the service's operation budget is represented by the annual operating grant to the Calgary Public Library. The Calgary Public Library leverages The City's grant funding with a variety of other resources.

In 2023, the Calgary Public Library continued to deliver full service at 21 locations, acquiring a record 148,000 new members, circulating a record 17 million items, and showing strong visitation throughout the year.

Capital Budget and Spend as of December 31, 2023



Capital Budget Updates - 2023 total capital budget vs 2023 spend:

Library Services spent 67.6 per cent of its 2023 capital budget.

In 2023, the capital expenditures were primarily used to modernize and update locations based on lifecycle renewal schedules. 82.0 per cent of the Library Lifecycle budget was spent in 2023. Challenges around the acquisition of materials and supplies impacted the timely completion of several capital projects.

New Library projects approved for the 2023-2026 budget cycle are currently in design. Spending will accelerate as these projects progress.