

Date: August 3, 2021

To: Chair and Members of Budget Committee

From: Jodi Robillos, Acting Commissioner of Community Services

Originator's files:

Meeting date:  
October 6, 2021

## **Subject**

### **2022 Library Fees and Charges**

## **Recommendation**

1. That the Library Fees and Charges incorporating new, revised and existing Library fees as outlined in Appendix 1 attached to the Corporate Report, dated August 3, 2021 from the Acting Commissioner of Community Services entitled "2022 Library Fees and Charges" be approved.
2. That User Fees and Charges By-law 0251-2020, as amended, be repealed effective at the end of December 31, 2021.
3. That a consolidated fees and charges by-law, effective January 1, 2022, which will incorporate the approved fees and charges of various City departments, be enacted to incorporate and establish the new, revised, and existing Library fees and charges as outlined in the Corporate Report dated August 3, 2021 from the Acting Commissioner of Community Services entitled, "2022 Library Fees and Charges".

## **Executive Summary**

- The Library reviews fees and charges annually for the Library Board and Council's approval.
- The Library is recommending the elimination of overdue fines to align with the "best practice" trend in the public library sector, including neighbouring libraries such as Brampton, Hamilton, Toronto and Vaughn.
- The elimination of overdue fines will promote equitable access to library services and also support community recovery coming out of the pandemic.
- The remainder of the Library's fees and charges remain unchanged from 2019.

## Background

The Mississauga Public Library Board (Board) reviews fees and charges annually, making adjustments as necessary. These include cost recovery fees as appropriate, establishing charges for new services and eliminating charges for services that are no longer offered. The resulting Fees and Charges Schedule is then considered by Council, and if approved, is included in the City-wide Fees and Charges By-law.

The Mississauga Library's 2021 Schedule for fees and charges was approved by the Board on May 15, 2019. The 2019 rates remain in effect due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, the City of Mississauga (City) conducted a Fees and Charges By-law Green Belt project, which generated recommendations that impacted the Library. Specifically, it was determined that the Library's Fees & Charges Schedule should be incorporated with the rest of the City's fees and charges to increase efficiencies and provide residents with consistency across Divisions.

The Library's preliminary 2022 Fees and Charges Schedule (Appendix 1) was considered and approved by the Board at the June 16, 2021 Board meeting.

## Comments

Over the last few years, there has been a trend in the North American public library sector to eliminate fines for overdue material. An environmental scan shows that many Ontario libraries are following suit, including but not limited to, Toronto, London, Ottawa, Vaughan, Hamilton and Brampton. Moving in this direction would not only ensure that the Mississauga Library is aligned with the other leading library systems in the province, but also supports the philosophical mandate to provide equitable access to services that has long been championed by the Board. The Community Engagement Study conducted in 2018 clearly demonstrated that even the possibility of accruing fines is a significant obstacle for some Mississauga residents, creating a barrier for those who are not able or willing to assume the financial risk of incurring overdue fines.

There are other factors that support the timing of this decision. Many of our customers have been transitioning from exclusively borrowing print material to accessing digital resources. Since there are no fines incurred from digital items, the amount of revenue we generate from overdue print material is decreasing organically. The COVID-19 pandemic expedited this process as many customers who were previously reticent began using digital products, having no alternative during the stay-at-home order period. This, coupled with the lack of fine revenue we were able to generate during the pandemic, sets the stage for making the change now.

## Financial Impact

The elimination of fines revenue would result in a projected \$509,000 budget pressure for 2022 offset by savings resulting from the Hazel McCallion Central Library closure and a nominal levy adjustment over two years.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has created many financial pressures for the City and its residents, the elimination of fines would help demonstrate Council's commitment to community recovery.

## Conclusion

The Board reviews fees and charges annually, making adjustments as necessary. These include cost recovery fees as appropriate, establishing charges for new services and eliminating charges for services that are no longer offered. Staff conducted analysis which determined that many comparator libraries are removing fines and customers are using more library offerings which do not incur fines. Given these trends, and to ensure equal access to the Library for all, this report recommends the elimination of overdue fines for library materials. All other fees and charges remain unchanged.

## Attachments

Appendix 1: 2022 Library Fines and Fees Schedule



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Jodi Robillos, Acting Commissioner of Community Services

Prepared by: Rona O'Banion, Director, Library