

Executive Summary

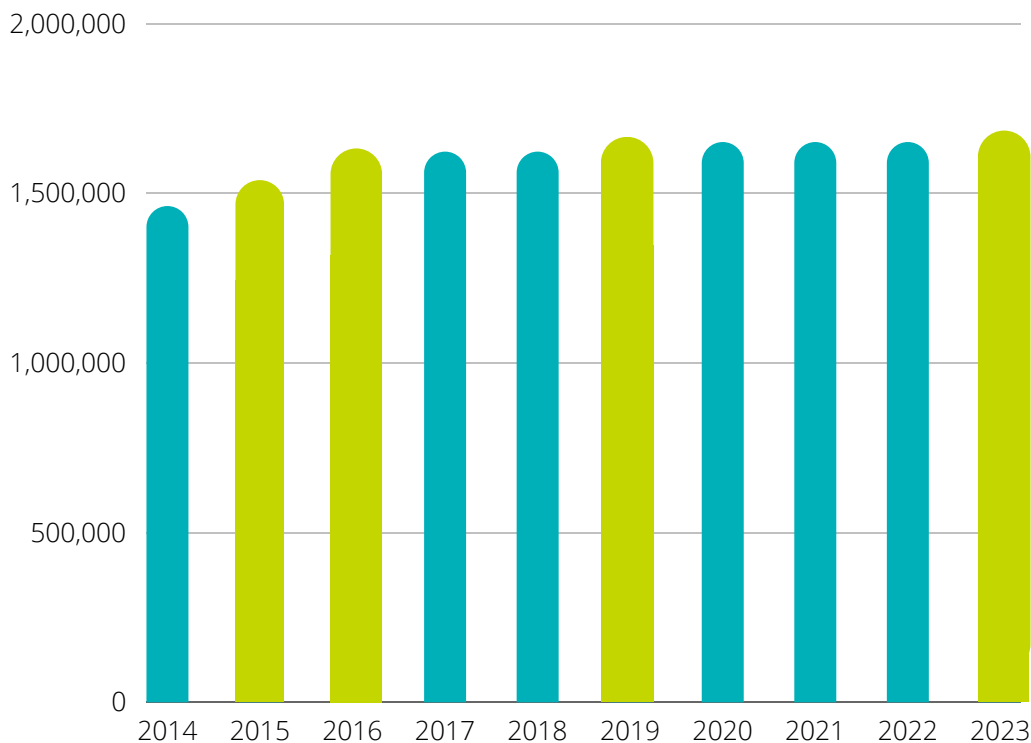
We are asking for a **10.3% (\$172,329) budget increase** in 2024, followed by a **3% (\$55,362) budget increase** in 2025. While a 10.3% budget increase may initially appear significant, it is worth recognizing that the Library's operating budget has not been adjusted to keep up with inflation over the past 10 years.


In 2022, the Library received an operating budget increase of 1.4% (\$23,000). This was the first increase to the Library's budget in four years. Prior to that, the Library received an increase of 1.7% (\$28,283) in 2019, a 5.7% (\$88,434) in 2016, and a 4.7% increase (\$71,941) in 2015.

Over the past decade, the Library has seen a steady decline in the number of staff, staffing hours, and overall full-time equivalencies (FTEs). 10 years ago, the Library had over 30 FTEs. In 2022, we had 20.49 FTEs. With Grande Prairie's population projected to increase to 100,000 by 2046, the demand for Library services will only continue to increase, placing greater strain on the Library's resources.

If the Library does not receive an operational budget increase, the resulting reduction in services will negatively impact the Grande Prairie community and economy. Breakdowns of three different budget scenarios (frozen, inflationary increase, and requested increase) are included in this document.

GPPL Operating Budgets



 = Operating budget increases

Funding Level Impacts

Frozen Funding - 0% increase

Due to minimal budget increases and decreasing staff numbers over the years, the Library is in a critical position of not having enough funding to properly maintain basic operations, such as shelving, checking items in and out, and creating memberships. In order to ensure our basic operational needs are being met, our Board would have to consider making the following adjustments in a frozen funding scenario:

- Duties of professional, salaried staff would need to be shifted, resulting in a loss of hours for part-time staff. Programming and Information Services staff will be required to perform basic operations, such as checking materials out and shelving, making them unavailable to program outside of the Library or offer more in-depth assistance (i.e. job searching help, helping newcomers with immigration, etc.)
- The Outreach Programming budget will be cut, along with Summer Student positions, resulting in the Library being unable to have a presence at community events, such as Experience GP, Heritage Festival, National Indigenous Peoples Day, and the Pride Carnival.
- We will be unable to afford sufficient cybersecurity measures, which increases the Library's vulnerability to hackers and ransomware attacks, putting patron privacy at risk.
- As the public computers break down, we will be unable to replace them, creating wait times for those who need them to access employment resources, schooling, online training, etc.
- As the prices of licenses and subscriptions continue to increase, we will be unable to continue providing access, resulting in decreased learning opportunities for patrons who may want to learn a language, take free courses, borrow eBooks, etc.
- It is important to note that the Library is unable to decrease the budget for materials, as it is necessary to maintain the minimum material purchasing amount as outlined in the agreement between the City of Grande Prairie and Peace Library System. This per capita based amount will continue to increase as the Grande Prairie population grows. Currently, the Library is only fulfilling the minimum amount required by the agreement.
- Worst case scenario, if funding does not increase, the Board will have to consider reducing hours of operation. This will negatively affect the community as a whole, as access to the Library will be severely diminished.

Funding Level Impacts

Inflationary Funding - 3% increase

With a 3% increase, we will strive to maintain our current operations until 2025, at which point the Board will need to consider implementing the following measures:

- Minimal closures during specific timeframes.
- The Outreach Programming budget will still be cut, along with Summer Student positions, resulting in the Library being unable to have a presence at community events, such as Experience GP, Heritage Festival, National Indigenous Peoples Day, and the Pride Carnival.
- Continuing to implement a hiring freeze for full-time positions.
- We will continue to only allocate the minimum requirement of materials spending as outlined in the agreement between the City of Grande Prairie and Peace Library System.

With an inflationary funding scenario, it is important to recognize that we will return in 2025 with another significant budget increase request, as a 3% increase does not adequately align the Library's operations with where they need to be after a trend of frozen funding.

Funding Level Impacts

Requested Funding - 10.3% increase

With a 10.3% increase, our funding will be more in line with where it should be after a history of insufficient increases. We will be able to fully meet the needs of the community by ensuring there are enough frontline staff members to carry out basic operations, allowing our other staff members to focus on building important community relationships and growing the Grande Prairie economy. Outcomes of the requested funding request include:

- We are able to fully develop and maintain our collections to meet the needs of the community, which provides patrons with access to new and popular materials in a timely fashion.
- There are enough staff to offer programs outside of the Library, as well as further diversify programs at the Library. We would look to recruit a full-time Programmer to offer French programs. This will result in programming staff being able to build positive community relationships, and focus on program planning and facilitation rather than basic operations and allow us to support the City's goal to be a multicultural city.
- Current staffing will not be reduced and we will be able to increase staffing hours for Customer Service Clerks, Shelves, Processing, and Programming Staff for a total of 3 additional FTE positions. This will result in less lineups and patron frustration, more help with research and education, re-shelving materials, checking items out, and creating memberships.
- Full-time staff will be able to focus their attention on developing and nurturing partnerships, looking for sponsorships, and applying on grant applications.
- The necessary cybersecurity measures will be in place, ensuring patrons and staff are protected against ransomware attacks and private information is protected.
- There will be an adequate number of public computers to meet community need, along with consistent WiFi access that patrons can utilize in any area of the Library.
- Licenses and subscriptions to Library databases will be able to keep up with inflation, allowing us to keep up with the growing demand for eBooks and eAudiobooks. We will also be able to continue offering services to new Canadians, including language services, citizenship/GED exam preparation, and demand for eBooks and eAudiobooks.
- The Library would look to increase hours of operation, which has been a concern voiced by patrons over the years. This would also allow us to increase our room rental availability, allowing for increased revenue to the Library and providing an affordable space for non-profits and local businesses to meet.