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TAMRMS#: B05

BUDGET INFORMATION REQUEST (BIR) - Library Sales and User Fees

Requested by: Councillor Hughes
Date of Request: November 17, 2025
Date Response Due: November 21, 2025
Confidential: No.

QUESTION

Please provide a breakdown of why the library sales and users fees have decreased and the amounts with each reason for the 2025 and 2026 budgets. Also when were decisions made to decrease the sales and user fees.

RESPONSE

Sales and User Fees:	Actual (2023)	Actual (2024)	Actual YTD (2025)	Budget 2025	Budget 2026
Recovered Costs (Including Cost recovery for ILS)	\$ 45,800	\$ 46,100	\$ 43,500	\$ 6,000	\$ 43,000
Sale of Goods (Mostly STARfest books)	\$ 5,100	\$ 3,100	\$ 4,400	\$ 5,200	\$ 3,000
Ticket Sales (STARFest)	\$ 1,800	\$ 2,400	\$ 4,600	\$ 1,500	\$ 2,000
Memberships (non-resident)	\$ 1,100	\$ 900	\$ 500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,000
Library Fines	\$ 58,200	\$ 52,100	\$ 27,400	\$ 45,000	\$ 30,000
SALES AND USER FEES:	\$ 112,000	\$ 104,600	\$ 80,400	\$ 59,200	\$ 79,000

Recovered Costs (2026 budget increase of \$37,000)

The 2026 budget summary reflects a cost recovery amount for shared costs of the ILS (Integrated library System) that is paid by SAPL, with the proportionate costs shared between St Albert Public Library, Strathcona County Public Library and Fort Saskatchewan Library. This expense is offset in contracted services, with a net zero impact on the library budget.

This cost recovery and related expense has been reported in actuals for numerous years, but not budgeted for until 2026 and ongoing budgets.

Library Fines (2026 budget decrease of \$15,000)

Reduction resulting from:

- Removal of Overdue Fines for Children’s and Teens’ Materials (Approximate \$21,000 decrease in 2025)

In November 2024, Collections and Member Services Manager Lisa Old presented her report “Going Fine Free: Investigating the Elimination of Financial Barriers to Library Services” to the St. Albert Library Board. “Some St. Albertans let their memberships lapse and don’t return to the Library because of the barriers and stigma around overdue fees,” says Lisa Old. “Oftentimes, it is the most underserved groups who experience these barriers and who could most benefit from Library services.”

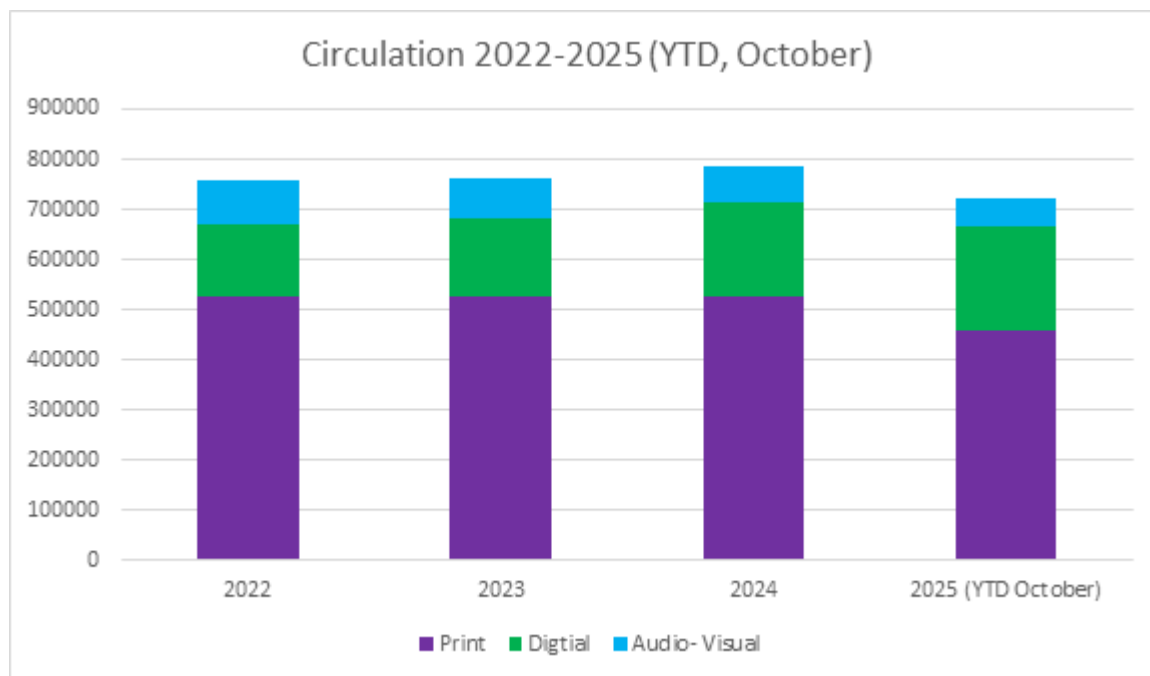
A motion was made at the November 20, 2024 Library Board meeting to move forward with a phased in approach: waiving late fines on children’s materials and look to go fine-free on all materials at a later date. It was carried unanimously, with Co-Chair D. McTaggart-Baird saying “Waiving children’s fines is in sync with [SAPL’s] strategic priority of Creating Young Readers: Early Literacy.”

Many of SAPL’s library peers dropped overdue fines over the last five years: Edmonton Public Library (2020), Calgary Public Library (2020), Strathcona County library (2020), Fort Saskatchewan Library (2020), Beaumont (2023), Leduc (2022), Airdrie (2025), Grande Prairie (2021), Red Deer, Lethbridge (2021), Stony Plain, Strathmore (2022), Wood Buffalo Regional Library (2022), Cochrane (2023), Camrose (2020), Canmore (2024), Devon (2021) and many more.

On April 24, 2025, St. Albert Public Library announced the removal of overdue fines on Children’s and Teens’ materials. The library will issue an invoice for the replacement cost of any Children’s or Teens materials that are out for 40 days. Studies have shown that libraries who have eliminated late fees experience a decrease in late returns and shorter hold wait times.

- Increased Digital Resource Use

Another factor causing a reduction in Library Fines is the continued increase in demand for digital resources (up 36% YTD in October 2025). Digital resources are returned automatically and therefore do not incur any overdue charges, therefore fines will continue to decrease as digital resource use increases as per the chart below.



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