

Measuring the Impact of the Markham Public Library

Markham Public Library’s resources, staff, programs and spaces enrich the lives of everyone in Markham. The library is a place where the community gathers to read, study, play, explore ideas, express creativity, and connect with one another. As a hub of community engagement, we help people build the quality of life and the vibrant City they desire.

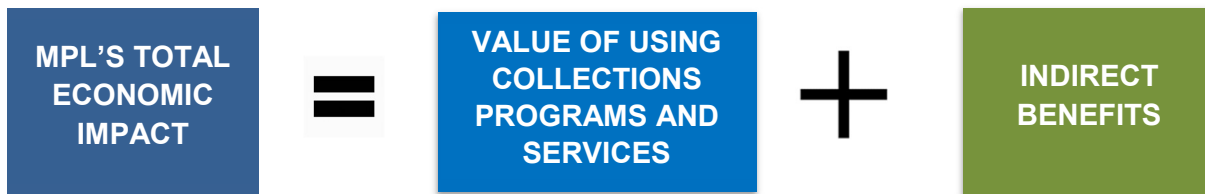
MPL is proud of how we contribute to the City of Markham’s strength and vitality.

The great services MPL provides are only one part of the story. MPL also has a significant economic impact on Markham and its residents through the value derived by using the library and the services and resources we make available.

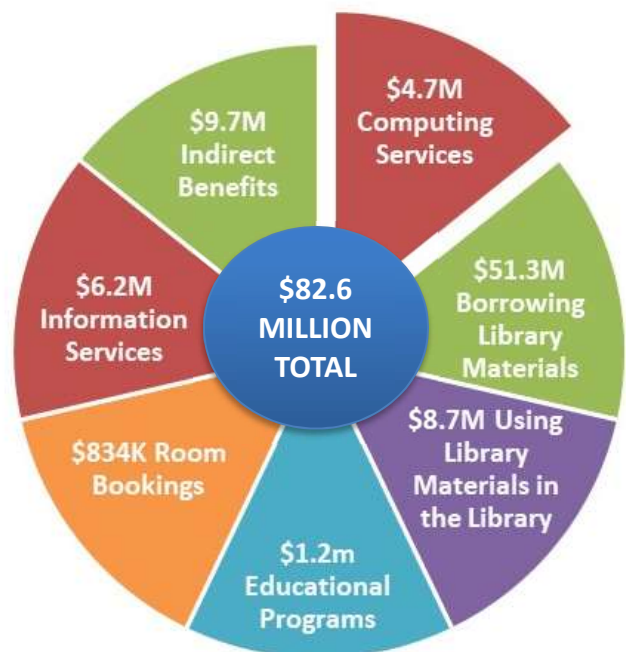
In order to better understand the economic value that MPL provides to Markham, we recently conducted an economic impact study, using a methodology commonly used across many sectors, including culture, parks, sports tourism, & public libraries.

MPL’s Total Economic Impact

Our total economic impact is estimated at \$82.6 million annually (2016\$).



- Value of accessing computing services
- Value of borrowing library materials
- Value of using library materials in the library
- Value of attending educational programs
- Value of room bookings
- Value of using information services
- Value of Indirect Benefits (the multiplier effect)



More Perspectives on Economic Impact



**Economic
Benefit per
Resident**

\$251.33



**Economic
Benefit Per
Household**

\$805



**Return On
Investment
(ROI)**

597%

THE BOTTOM LINE: Every dollar invested in MPL generates \$5.97 of value.

Beyond Economic Impact to Social Impact

Economic impact studies evaluate library activities by assigning them a market value. This is a fairly straightforward calculation. Far more challenging is the measurement of the social, cultural, and educational value delivered by libraries every day.



Traditionally, libraries have relied on indicators (for example, participation numbers), anecdotes and testimonials to demonstrate how their activities affect members of the community – from how early reading programs improve literacy to how makerspaces are attracting teenagers to libraries. While the numbers and the stories continue to be important, libraries are now rising to the challenge of measuring the broader spectrum of impact, and the outcomes of library services in the lives of our customers. MPL will be part of this sectoral measurement initiative.

Understanding the Numbers

1. Direct Benefits

Libraries provide services and programs that benefit their communities. By measuring their monetary value against the market cost of replacement for comparative services and programs, direct benefits can be captured and expressed.

Value of accessing computing services

- MPL provides public access to computers with a wide range of software applications, as well as wireless Internet access for customers using their own devices. This usage is measured in hours and then multiplied by a conservative value derived from similar services in the private sector.

Value of borrowing library materials

- Library materials include books, e-books, CDs, DVDs, magazines and newspapers. In calculating the direct benefits associated with these items, a 40% discount on an item's retail price is typically applied to acknowledge that owning an item is different than borrowing it.

Value of using library materials in the library

- Library materials are also heavily used in our branch. In calculating the direct benefits associated with such use, a 40% discount on an item's retail price is applied as described above.

Value of attending educational programs

- Programs are broken down by type (Preschool, Children, Teen, Adult, and Senior). A comparable market value is derived from similar non-library fee-based educational programs.

Value of room bookings

- MPL offers the community welcoming, safe spaces to read, study and meet. When reserved by the hour, these room uses can be assigned a market value based on the cost to rent a comparable space in the community. Drop-in use of library spaces is not included in this calculation.

Value of using information services

- Through its expert staff, MPL provides research and information services to our customers. The value of these services is estimated based on market costs for similar services.

2. Indirect Benefits

Value of Indirect Benefits (the multiplier effect)

- Indirect benefits, or the multiplier effect, are the benefits created by the re-spending of dollars within the local economy. They are generated by direct spending. When libraries spend money on operations, capital projects, salaries, and library materials, that money enters the economy and is re-spent. We use an economic multiplier range of 1.4 to 2.0 based on multipliers specified by Statistics Canada for relevant industries.

Summary of Economic Impact

Value of accessing computer services	\$ 4,664,768
Value of borrowing library materials	\$ 51,279,775
Value of using library materials in the library	\$ 8,653,298
Value of attending educational programs	\$ 1,224,526
Value of room bookings	\$ 833,839
Value of using information services	\$ 6,222,567
Value of Indirect Benefits	\$ 9,698,823
TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT	\$ 82,577,596