

Public Libraries & Development Charges: Response to Ontario Regulatory Proposal 25-MMAH011

Submitted by Ontario Library Association & Federation of Ontario Public Libraries
July 2025

On behalf of Ontario's public libraries, public library boards and staff, the Ontario Library Association & the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries welcome the opportunity to express our support for the proposed update to O. Reg. 82/98 under the *Development Charges Act* to update the requirements on how municipalities spend or allocate development charge (DC) reserve funds.

Through this regulatory proposal, the Ontario Government is proposing to expand the requirement for municipalities to spend or allocate 60 per cent of DCs in their reserve fund to now include all DC-eligible services, including public libraries. The omission of public libraries from this requirement when originally introduced in the *More Homes Built Faster Act*, 2022 put additional pressure on the ability of municipalities to maintain and upgrade public libraries. We strongly support this proposed update.

Public libraries are Ontario's farthest-reaching, most cost-effective public resource. They are engines of innovation, entrepreneurship, and local economic development in communities of all sizes. Millions of Ontarians rely on local public libraries in their communities: to work, to learn, to connect to community and government services, and to find or train for a job.

Public libraries depend on development charge revenue to fund new and renovated buildings, digital infrastructure, and collection growth to keep up with the growing demand for library space and resources in communities across Ontario.

Under the *COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act*, 2020, the Ontario Government modernized the *Development Charges Act* to update the list of services that were eligible to receive development charge revenue. Public libraries were at the top of the updated list. Through the leadership of this government, for the first time, all eligible capital costs for public libraries were fully cost recoverable through development charges.

The Ontario Government's proposal reflects its continued recognition of the critical role that public libraries perform as community infrastructure in municipalities of all sizes across the province, and the importance of ensuring that municipalities use a portion of the DCs they collect to help maintain strong, sustainable public libraries for current and future residents alike.

Our members are eager to continue to work alongside their municipalities to support capital investments in their local public libraries for the benefit of the people and communities they serve.

Ontario Library Association / Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

The Ontario Library Association (OLA) is the oldest continually-operating non-profit library association in Canada, with over 3,500 members comprised of library staff and supporters from public, school, academic, and special libraries.

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) represents 237 public library systems in Ontario, including 39 Public Libraries on Reserves.

Together, OLA & FOPL are committed to ensuring that libraries can continue to play a critical role in the social, education, cultural and economic success of our communities and schools.