



## MEMORANDUM

### Library Services Department

**DATE:** October 16, 2017

**TO:** Library Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Rosanne Macek, Library Services Director

**SUBJECT:** **Library Collection Report**

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### INTRODUCTION

The Library Board approved Materials Selection Policy, which is included at the end of this report, includes the following statement.

*"Items may be discarded from the Library if they are surplus to the collection, not relevant to the needs of the community, or physically worn or damaged."*

The practice of removing items from the collection that are no longer needed, affectionately called "weeding," is a normal and critical part of maintaining a relevant collection for the community. Regular weeding is important to free up space for new materials, remove outdated materials, and remove materials that are in poor condition or are no longer being used. According to Rebecca Vnuk in her book *The Weeding Handbook*:

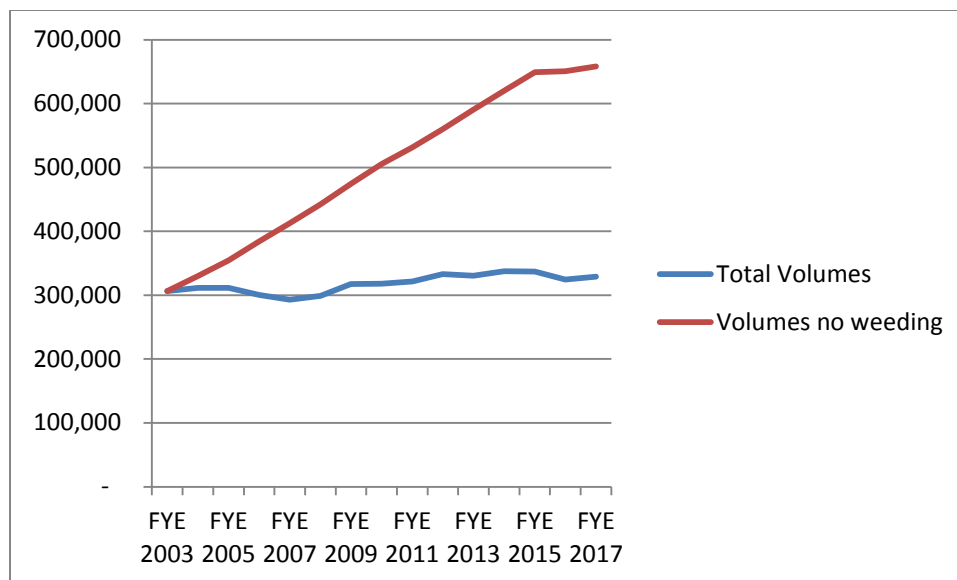
*"...the bottom line is that libraries (particularly public libraries) are not – and never have been – archives. There simply is not enough space to hang on to every book and every item. And there is no need. A library is an ever-changing organism. Weeding helps a library thrive." (Vnuk, 2015)*

Sometimes there is confusion about this practice and community members can get upset when they see discarded library books being prepared to be recycled. The purpose of this report is to explain the importance of regular weeding to maintaining a relevant and attractive collection for the community, the process that is followed for

determining which materials get weeded, and what happens to materials when they are removed from the library collection.

## **IMPORTANCE OF WEEDING**

When the Mountain View Library opened in 1997 it had a collection of 240,000 and was designed for a future capacity of 300,000. Without regularly removing items the collection would have exceeded the space available in the building years ago. We started keeping detailed records in 2003 of items added and weeded. In FYE 2003 the collection was 306,545 volumes and was 329,135 at the end of last fiscal year. If no weeding had taken place over the past 14 years the total collection would now be 658,170.



## **WEEDING PROCESS**

Each professional librarian is responsible for maintaining a portion of the collection. This includes evaluating requests from the public, purchasing materials based on demand and reviews, and removing materials that are no longer needed. The criteria for regular weeding includes the following: condition, date, circulation, community needs, overall collection balance, space limitations, duplicate copies, newer editions, format (e.g. VHS, cassettes), changing school curriculum, and availability of materials elsewhere. On an ongoing basis, librarians run reports by circulation and age, and also physically review books on the shelves. Items are removed after a careful analysis using the criteria above.

## **WHAT HAPPENS TO WEDED MATERIALS**

If items are in still in good condition they are donated to the Friends of the Library. These items are sold in the lobby shop and at quarterly book sales. This generates revenue for the purchase of newer materials and to fund other library programs. Any additional materials that are in good condition and not needed by the Friends are shipped to Better World Books, who sell them online with a portion of the proceeds donated to the Friends.

If materials are in poor condition or outdated, they are recycled. This includes books that have broken bindings, water damage, torn pages, food stains, have been eaten by dogs, or are otherwise in poor shape. This also includes books that are out of date and have incorrect information.

## **FRIENDS DONATIONS**

I have met with the Friends of the Library to review their criteria for discards, which is similar to the Library's. Materials that are in good condition are sold in the lobby shop and quarterly book sales to generate revenue to fund new library materials and programs. Materials that are left over after book sales are picked up by R&R Books and sold online. Materials that are not in good condition or outdated are recycled.

## **CONCLUSION**

Regularly removing materials from a public library's collection is a routine and desired activity and Mountain View Library staff follows a careful process for this removal. This allows us to keep our collection current, accurate, and fresh for our community.

## **CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY**

### **POLICY:**

The Library affirms and encourages the freedom to read, the enjoyment of lifelong learning, and open access to ideas. The mission of the Library is to make readily available, in the most appropriate formats, the information and materials most wanted by its users.

The Library Board of Trustees endorses the Library Bill of Rights as adopted and amended by the American Library Association on January 23, 1996.

### **REGULATIONS:**

- The Library selects and makes available materials in a variety of formats for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all the people of its community.
- The Library seeks to represent a diversity of expression and points of view in its collection in order to provide people with the foundation for making informed decisions and formulating personal opinions.
- Items are selected for inclusion in the collection based on the following considerations:
  - Proven or potential interest.
  - Availability and cost.
  - The amount of similar material already in the collection.
  - The extent to which the material may be available elsewhere.
  - The suitability of the physical format and the availability of space.

The presence of controversial materials in the collection shall not constitute an endorsement of the ideas contained therein.

- Items are not excluded from the Library because of the race or nationality or social, political, or religious views of the author. Items are not excluded from the collection because they may contain language and illustration offensive to some persons. Works being considered are to be viewed as a whole, not in isolated parts.

- The Library is aware that individuals may question the selection of a specific item and welcomes any expression of opinion by patrons. However, the Library cannot undertake the task of pleasing individuals by removing such items.
- The Library is not responsible for the material chosen and read by minors. Acquisition of adult material shall not be restricted by the possibility that these materials may come into the possession of minors. Professional staff are available to offer suggestions to minors in choosing Library material. The Library shall not be expected to act in loco parentis.
- Books and other materials shall be made easily accessible to the public. Use of certain items may be limited because of susceptibility to loss or damage.
- Gifts of materials to enrich the Library collection are welcome. This selection policy applies to all such materials. The Library Director reserves the right to accept or refuse conditions placed upon gifts of materials by donors. Most gifts are donated to the Friends of the Library.
- The Library encourages individuals to suggest items for purchase at any time. These suggestions shall be reviewed by the appropriate Library staff and Library Director.
- Items may be discarded from the Library if they are physically worn or damaged, surplus to the collection, or no longer relevant to the needs of the community.
- All decisions regarding the selection or withdrawal of materials are made by the Library Director and other professional staff.

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees: February 22, 1988

Endorsed by the City Council: March 29, 1988

Revised: September 15, 2014