



Vancouver Public Library

Office of the Chair

April 25, 2019

Mayor and Council
City of Vancouver
453 W 12th Ave
Vancouver, BC
V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor Stewart and City Council:

Vancouver Public Library welcomes and encourages the business community, other organizations, and individuals to support the Library through sponsorships and philanthropic gifts that enable the Library to enhance programs, services and spaces.

The Library Board works with the VPL Foundation for most donation and sponsorship arrangements. Over the past several years, the VPL Foundation has raised more than \$13 million for the Storeys That Transform campaign to expand Central Library, and for programs such as the Sun Life Financial Musical Instrument Lending Library and the RBC #DreamJob program series for teens.

The Library finds that sponsorship and donation activities are closely linked, and the policies that are in place for each area influence outcomes for the other. Over the past five years, we have learned that for the Library, effective policy has focused on ensuring gifts and sponsorships come from organizations and individuals that are seen to be appropriate and compatible with the policies, goals and values of the Library. Library staff and the VPL Foundation assess the reputation of potential sponsors or donors as well as their business practices, and consider the potential effect of the affiliation with the sponsor or donor on the Library's public image, on an individual basis. Where concerns arise, discussions occur at the VPL Foundation and/or Library Board level.

The Library and VPL Foundation are cautious about limiting sponsorships and gifts on the basis of broad industry categories, as this has the potential to unduly limit potential sponsor and donor interest in working with the library before an opportunity can be explored. We have found that a focus on alignment with values and interests, and consideration of the circumstances for each individual situation, best serves the interests of the donor/sponsor and the Library.

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The Library has placed specific restrictions on two industries: tobacco and arms manufacture. The Library also limits sponsorship of children's programs and services if products cannot legally be sold to children, or are inappropriate for use by children.

The Library Board has reviewed the additional industry limitations identified in the draft City of Vancouver Sponsorship Policy, and would be unlikely to add these to our policy, given their potential to deteriorate relationships with donors and sponsors who may deem themselves excluded based on different criteria than the Library Board would apply.

When Council has approved a Sponsorship Policy, the Library Board will review it in full, and revise the Library's policy, seeking alignment with Council's intentions and with consideration to the Library and VPL Foundation context. This will include considering how to address alcohol sponsorships, as these are typically part of VPL Foundation gala and celebratory events. In 2018, the VPL Foundation gala sponsorships were valued at \$330,000, and the event raised over \$400,000 for the Vancouver Public Library.

The Library Board notes that Library staff and trustees are not participants in zoning or development decisions, and a limit on sponsorship or donation from large property owners or developers would be unnecessary in a library context, and significantly restrict opportunities for sponsorship and donation that would benefit the community. Within the Storeys that Transform Capital Campaign, up to \$10 million of the \$13 million raised by the VPL Foundation could have been affected by the ineligibility of large property owners in the policy, depending on the definition.

The Library Board appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the Sponsorship Policy, and the interest of City Council in a transparent process.

Sincerely,

John Schaub

Chair, Vancouver Public Library Board

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