



BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

I'M STILL PAYING A 2006 LIBRARY PROPERTY TAX, SO WHY DID LIBRARIES CLOSE?

Basically, since 2004, county support for the Library has been reduced by 25% or \$7 million, leaving no choice but to reduce library operations. \$2.5 million of the reduction was in the Library Property Tax, which went from \$24.2 million in 2004 to \$21.7 million in 2005; remaining at \$21.7 million in 2006 (the Library Property Tax had also been reduced in 2001 from the \$26.4 million levy in the year 2000). The rest of the 2005/2006 funding reduction resulted from a \$5 million cut in the Erie County Capital Budget for library materials.

County capital funds are not raised through the Library Property Tax. At the time the 2005 Erie County Budget was adopted, the \$5 million for library materials was shown as a "bonded project," meaning that the County planned to borrow funds (issue bonds) to cover this expense. Debt service cost on county bonds in this case would have fallen to the County General fund which is supported by a combination of sales tax, property tax, fees, etc.

This \$5 million cut forced the Library to carve out money for library material purchases in 2006 from the already reduced \$21.7 million property tax, forcing the cuts and closures the Library and its patrons suffered through in late 2005. The cuts and closures occurred in 2005 because the \$5 million in the Erie County 2005 Adopted Capital Budget for library materials was never borrowed or issued to the Library, forcing the cuts to take place earlier to free up enough money to renew newspaper, magazine, database subscriptions and buy a relative handful of new books and other library materials in 2005.

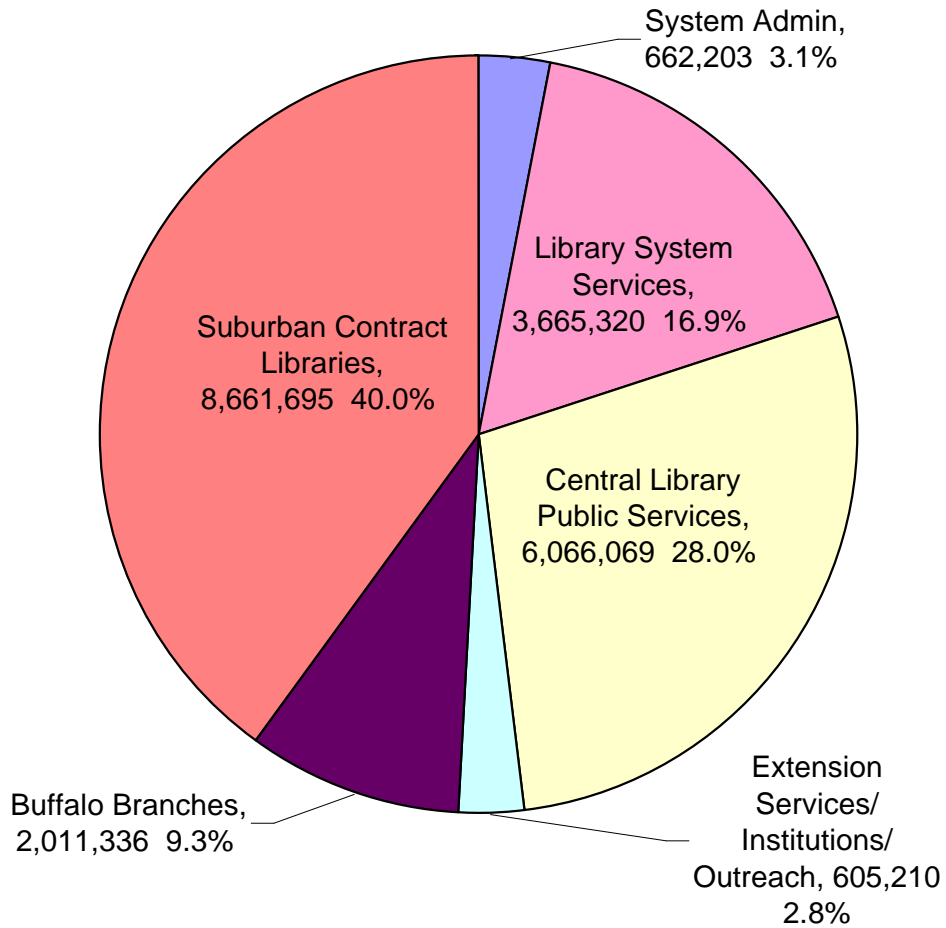
The charts that follow show that County property taxpayers have seen their library property tax decline over what they paid ten years ago. **On average, a \$100,000 taxable value property paid \$89 per year for library services in 1996; \$105 per year in 2000; decreasing to \$ 72 per year for library services in 2006!** These taxes fund a wide range of library services beyond those provided directly through individual community libraries.

These charts also show the history of funding support by source as reported in the County financial system and the increase in operating costs over the past decade. Note the total County Support line that shows 2006's \$21.7 million takes the County's library funding back to where it was one decade ago. Meanwhile, the consumer price index increased 30% over that same period and many items the library must purchase increased by larger amounts. Had library funding simply followed consumer prices, Erie County funding would total \$28.3 million.

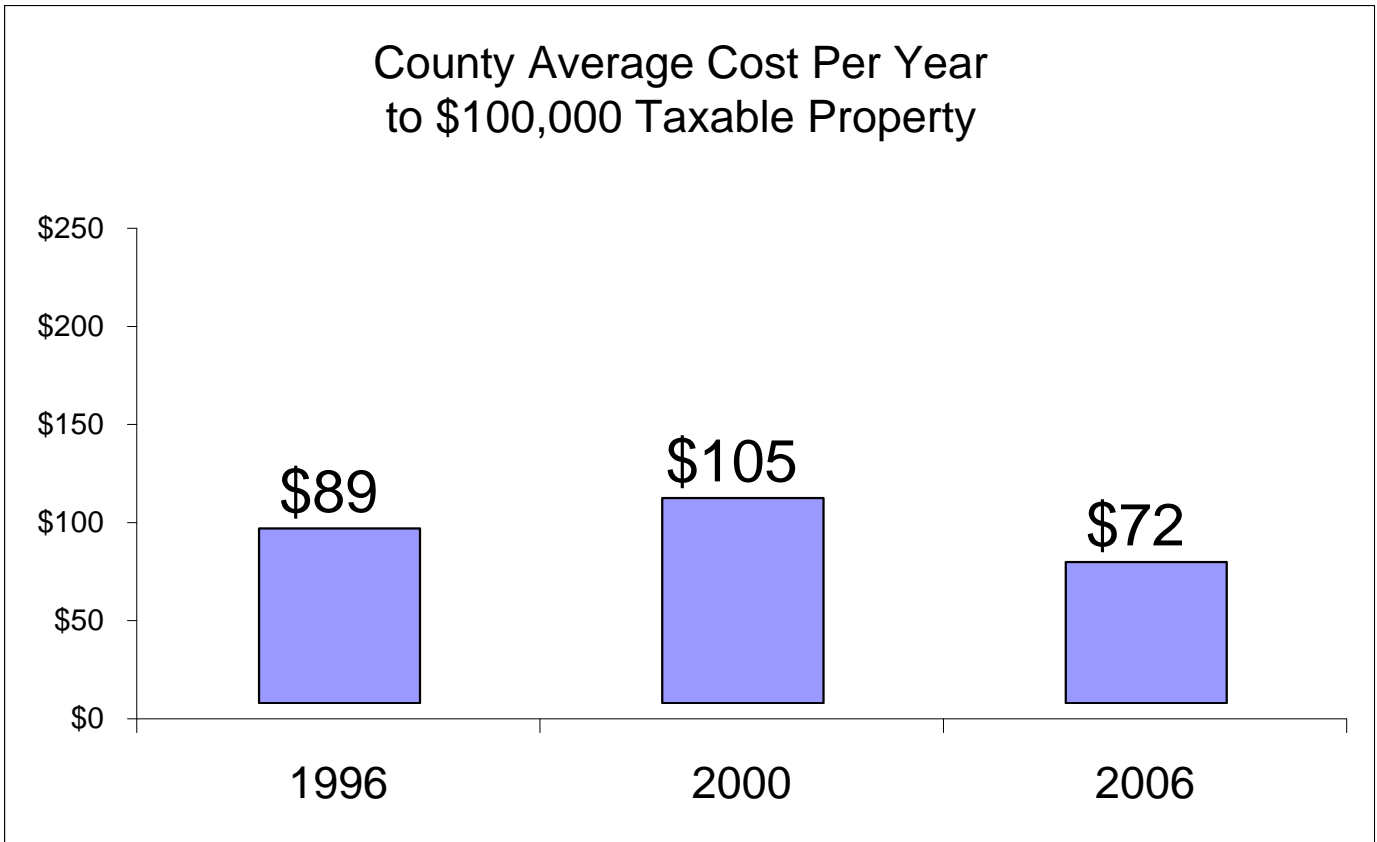
Additional explanations, charts and graphs are included in the Library's budget information link on the Library website at www.buffalolib.org

Buffalo and Erie County Public Library PROPERTY TAX REVENUE

2006 USE OF LIBRARY PROPERTY TAX, \$21,671,833



County Average Cost Per Year to \$100,000 Taxable Property



B&ECPL 2006 BUDGET - USE OF PROPERTY TAX

Use of Library Property Tax – Central Library, \$6,066,069

B&ECPL relies heavily on the Central Library which, at more than 51% of the total square footage for the 36 funded libraries in the System, houses by far the largest number of requested materials shipped to libraries throughout the county. Extending two city blocks in length with more than 58 miles of shelving, the Central Library in Lafayette Square in the heart of downtown Buffalo is a regional facility serving residents and businesses from throughout the area, both in person and electronically. The auditorium and meeting rooms are utilized for events of local, regional and state-wide interest.

The Central Library's size, depth and specialization of its collection and staff, combined with the ease of on-line library material request and an efficient materials delivery system, helps significantly supplement the services and library materials that can be offered through surrounding libraries.

Excluding the Central Library, Erie County's public libraries are, on average, very small. B&ECPL's average of 8,612 square-feet is the 64th smallest of 72 reporting libraries serving US and Canadian communities with populations between 500,000 and 1,550,000 in the group. This is 22% below the median value of 11,035 square-feet. The small size limits the ability of B&ECPL's libraries, in and of themselves, to offer comprehensive service to their patrons, particularly limiting the size of book collections and other library materials available within each building. Central helps compensate for the relatively small size of most of the public library facilities in Erie County.

The County revenue contribution supporting the Central Library compares favorably with the closest comparable Central library, the Central Library in the City of Rochester, NY. In 2006, Monroe County has budgeted \$6,620,000 for services provided by Rochester's Central Library.

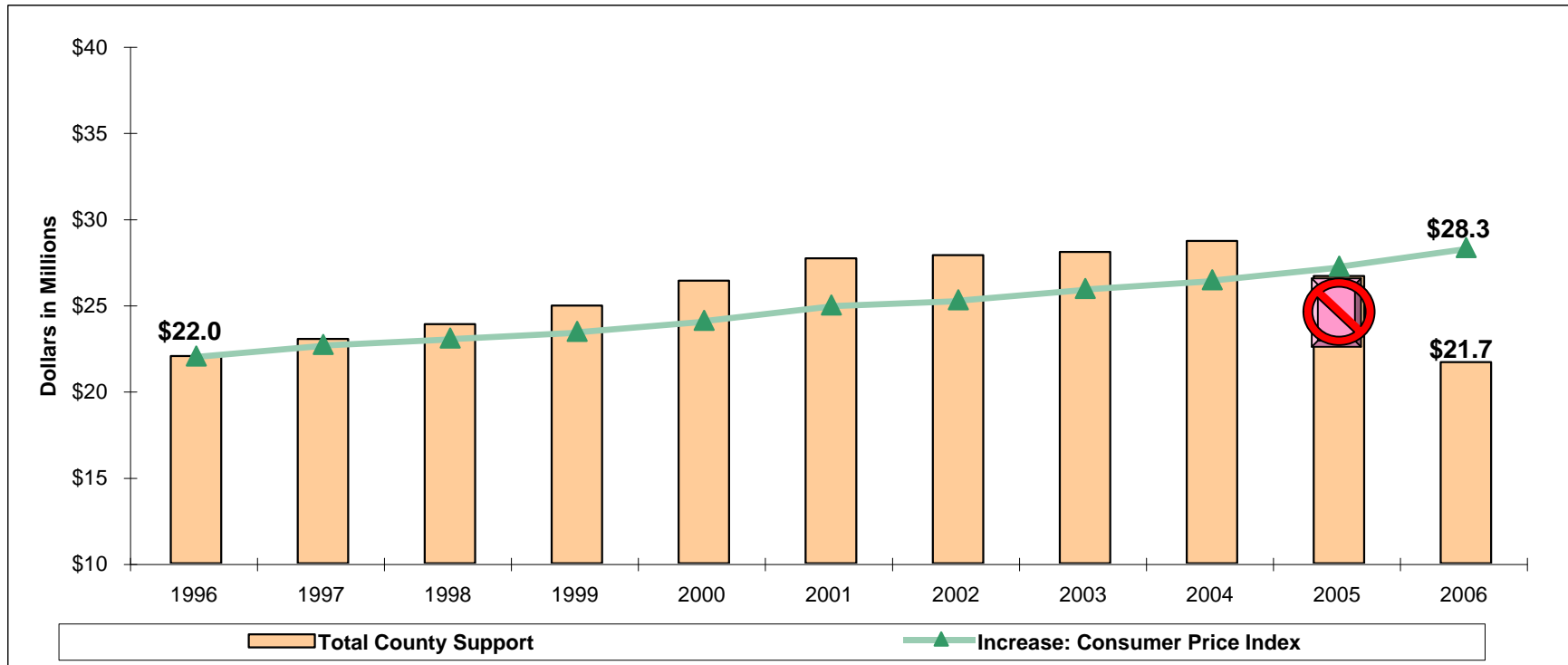
Use of Library Property Tax – Library System Services, \$3,665,320

Library Systems serve individual libraries in a role similar to that performed by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) for school districts. At the B&ECPL those functions, housed at the Central Library, serve every library in the System. System services include managing the on-line catalog, circulation system, telephone and e-mail reference, electronic databases, automation, acquisition, cataloging, library material processing, repair of damaged materials, program development, inter-library loan and shipment of requested books and other library materials among Erie County's public libraries.

County revenue support supplements New York State Aid for Library Systems allowing the B&ECPL to charge no fees to the individual libraries within the System for services. Further, these libraries do not have to pay for their books as well as audio and video materials, which are purchased and paid for centrally. To supplement New York State Aid that has been mostly stagnant for years, other library systems in the State charge individual libraries fees, depending upon the service levels received beyond a very basic core level of service (for example, an individual library might pay a fee for online catalog/request service or elect not to offer the online features to users). For the individual libraries in those systems, this is on top of having to fund the purchase of computers and most of their books and audio and video materials.

Single libraries could not function without these services, and the cost of them on an individual basis would likely be higher because of the loss of "group purchasing power."

B&ECPL OPERATING AND LIBRARY MATERIAL BUDGETS 1996 - 2006



	1996 Adopted	1997 Adopted	1998 Adopted	1999 Adopted	2000 Adopted	2001 Adopted	2002 Adopted	2003 Adopted	2004 Adopted	2005 Adopted	2006 Budget
Erie County Capital For Library Materials	-	-	-	-	-	4,717,516	4,906,217	5,000,000	4,500,000	5,000,000	-
Property Tax for Library Purposes	22,028,963	23,018,144	23,866,460	24,953,953	26,393,455	22,969,980	22,969,980	23,067,481	24,197,118	21,671,833	21,671,833
Total County Support	22,028,963	23,018,144	23,866,460	24,953,953	26,393,455	27,687,496	27,876,197	28,067,481	28,697,118	26,671,833	21,671,833



County funding for Library Materials included in Erie County's 2005 Adopted Budget was not provided to the Library. As this allocation was within the COUNTY Capital Budget, NOT the Library Fund, the allocation was not covered by the Library Protection Act. This resulted in an additional \$5 million gap in 2005 on top of the \$2.5 million reduction in the Library Tax that was part of the County's Adopted 2005 Budget.

Change in County Support From 2004 to 2006: (\$7,025,285) -24.5%
Change in County Support From 2000 to 2006: (\$4,721,622) -17.9%

New York State Aid	1,980,495	1,980,495	1,980,495	2,141,072	2,141,072	2,139,572	2,099,201	2,099,201	2,099,201	2,099,228	2,138,572
Use of Fund Balance	-	413,983	710,763	785,046	419,112	400,000	445,414	550,000	550,000	930,381	550,000
Fees, Fines, Other Revenue	784,709	788,537	854,813	982,708	993,058	985,329	1,047,757	1,546,127	1,635,121	1,369,701	942,724
Total Other Revenue	2,765,204	3,183,015	3,546,071	3,908,826	3,553,242	3,524,901	3,592,372	4,195,328	4,284,322	4,399,310	3,631,296
COMBINED OPERATING AND LIBRARY MATERIALS SUPPORT	24,794,167	26,201,159	27,412,531	28,862,779	29,946,697	31,212,397	31,468,569	32,262,809	32,981,440	31,071,143	25,303,129

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Then and Now

While library funding has been reduced to the level of a decade ago, the cost of providing services continues to grow:

<i>Description</i>	<i>Cost 1996</i>	<i>Cost 2006</i>	<i>Change</i>	
			<i>Amount</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Sample of Library Materials (list price):</i>				
Guinness Book of World Records	\$6.99	\$7.50	\$0.51	7%
Old Farmer's Almanac	\$3.95	\$5.99	\$2.04	52%
Physician's Desk Reference (PDR)	\$49.00	\$94.95	\$45.95	94%
Windows for Dummies	\$19.99	\$21.99	\$2.00	10%
Betty Crocker's Cookbook	\$25.00	\$29.95	\$4.95	20%
Chilton's (any automobile)	\$30.95	\$44.95	\$14.00	45%
Popular Mechanics	\$2.95	\$3.99	\$1.04	35%
Newsweek (per issue)	\$2.95	\$3.95	\$1.00	34%
Better Homes & Gardens	\$1.99	\$3.49	\$1.50	75%
John Grisham (any 1996 copyright:2005 copyright)	\$26.95	\$27.95	\$1.00	4%
Sue Grafton (any 1996 copyright:2005 copyright)	\$25.00	\$26.95	\$1.95	8%
<i>Regular Pension and Life Insurance Percent:</i>				
Retirement - Tier 1 - Percent of Salaries/wages	3.6%	13.2%	9.6%	267%
Retirement - Tier 3 & 4 - Percent of Salaries/wages	2.5%	9.7%	7.2%	288%
<i>Employer Cost of Health Insurance:</i>				
Librarian Family Coverage (1996 Composite rate, 2006 Core Plan)	\$4,139	\$9,822	\$5,682	137%
Note: Consumer Prices increased approximately 30% over this period.				