

RECREATION, PARKS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

TO: Council
DATE: June 29, 2021
FILE: N/A
SUBJECT: Langdon Library Project

DIVISION: 4
APPLICATION: N/A

POLICY DIRECTION:

On April 27, 2021, Council directed Administration “to pursue development of a library in the hamlet of Langdon, and to prepare a formal plan, including all cost implications, for Council’s consideration”.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Recreation and Parks Master Plan, which was approved by Council earlier this year, identifies library services as one of the amenities to be included in the Langdon Recreation Centre.

In an effort to address the community desires, a group of volunteers formed the Langdon Library Society to accelerate access to library services within the hamlet. With the support of the Marigold Library System, the Society developed a business case proposing the creation and operation of a physical, full-service library branch. During this time, Marigold approached the Society to see if there was interest in receiving a small library collection and related infrastructure from the recently closed Cereal Municipal Library.

While long-term library services will be addressed with the forthcoming Langdon Recreation Centre, Administration has assessed a variety of scenarios to provide interim library services to the hamlet of Langdon.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

Administration recommends proceeding with Option #1.

BACKGROUND:

In an effort to address the needs of our residents, Rocky View County (RVC) has identified library services as a need in the hamlet of Langdon; this has been identified as a proposed amenity in the Recreation and Parks Master Plan as a future component of the Langdon Recreation Centre.

Currently, Chestermere Public Library serves Langdon and the surrounding area. Residents can also access a variety of online resources through the County’s membership with Marigold and are eligible to order from the physical collection via mail (via the Library to You program).

Through discussion with the Society, as well as the Langdon Community Association, it has been continually emphasized that the current need in the hamlet is more about obtaining an additional indoor multi-purpose community space; one that a full-service library location would achieve.

Administration evaluated three locations (four options) to assess the viability of establishing an immediate physical presence within Langdon; they are presented for consideration as follows:

Administration Resources

Dimitri Dimopoulos, Recreation, Parks and Community Support



RVC Municipal Building – Fire & Transportation Services (12 Railway Ave E.):

This is the Society's preferred location, seeking to convert the administrative space currently used by Fire Services; however, there are a number of concerns that have been identified in moving forward with this facility. Furthermore, there is a misconception that the building will be vacant once Fire Services relocates; however, other County departments have been and will still utilize the site.

Administration engaged Group 2 Architecture to perform a facility assessment to evaluate the potential use of the administrative space. The estimated capital cost provided for the interior space to be improved and brought up to code as a public space is approximately \$650,000. The north vehicle/equipment storage bays and the pre-engineered building on the south side would remain as-is and would continue to be in use. The improvements required and comprised in the estimate include water servicing, cooling and ventilation, fire separation, a Hazardous Materials Assessment, potential upgrades to power service and communications, and barrier-free access development.

Other items to be considered, but not included in the estimate, would be improvements to public parking, landscaping, a Change of Use permit, maintenance, hours of operation, and potential relocation and/or storage costs for Transportation and Operational Services equipment storage, as well as fencing around equipment on site.

Lastly, but of most significant concern, is with regard to safety: using this facility for public use while it is actively used as a Grader shed with large/heavy equipment consistently entering and exiting the area is not recommended.

Modular Structure or Portable Trailers:

Two suggestions by the Society, in lieu of using the existing administrative space used by Fire Services within the RVC Municipal Building, would be to place either a modular structure or portable trailers at the site next to the building. Administration would have the same safety and infrastructure concerns previously outlined.

Another community location – such as Langdon Park – would be more suitable and desirable due to its central location and proximity to the schools within the hamlet. Both have flexibility options; from the two, a modular structure would be preferred as it would be an asset and could remain in place as community space.

Commercial Space (106 Centre Street N.):

While rental properties have the convenience of a centralized location, not owning the site would have limitations regarding what the County could do with the space. Furthermore, funds used for rental property versus owning the asset is counterintuitive.

While an assessment has not been made, renovations would need to occur, which would result in significant costs including multiple permits for change of use, signage, building, and sub-trades. Furthermore, libraries require specific floor loading professional engineer design that a commercial rental will not possess, as well as 2-hour fire separations from adjacent suites, and upgrades to washroom facility numbers, as libraries are deemed Assembly occupancies. It is unlikely that these renovations can even be completed in a commercial retail space.



While reviewing each scenario, Administration considered a variety of factors to balance future plans and the current ask.

Acceptance of the Cereal donation would have an additional financial cost, which has yet to be determined. The logistics, coordinated in collaboration with Marigold, to package and relocate these items is deemed to be a potentially complex endeavour. Furthermore, a full-service library would also include the costs for the installation and operation of the SuperNet, which would be in addition to the estimated capital costs.

The financial commitment, both operating and capital, from the County varies depending on the scenario, which is summarized in the table below. It is important to note that the table shows estimated budgets; the final number could differ.

Table 1: Estimated costs and potential funding sources:

	Estimated Capital Costs	SuperNet Installation Cost	Estimated RVC Annual Commitment	Funding Source
RVC Municipal Building	\$650,000 (interior renovations only)	\$109,000	\$45,000	Capital Budget Adjustment
Modular Structure	\$470,000	\$109,000	\$45,000	Capital Budget Adjustment
Portable Trailers	\$135,000	\$109,000	Approx. \$70,000 (includes monthly rental costs and estimated utilities)	Operating Budget Adjustment
Commercial Space	To be determined (Significant renovations to turn space into library)	\$109,000	Approx. \$100,000 (includes monthly rental cost and estimated utilities)	Operating Budget Adjustment

Regardless of the scenario, capital and ongoing operating funds would be required to support the initiative. A dedicated library space in Langdon has not been identified on Council's current 5-year Capital Plan or within the Recreation and Parks Master Plan, both a capital and an operating budget adjustment would be required.

An alternative approach, utilizing Library Lending Lockers, was also reviewed; as this has been successful with the County earlier this year in the hamlet of Bragg Creek. While this model does not achieve the Society's vision, as a transitional solution, it would have been a cost-effective, sustainable, and flexible way to meet the evolving needs without the expenses associated with a brick and mortar facility. Additionally, due to the minimal cost in comparison, the County would be able to use fund from its Library Reserve; unfortunately, the challenge of a suitable location to situate the Library Lending Lockers also became evident.

CONCLUSION:

Library services has been identified as a feature of the Langdon Recreation Centre and has been deemed as a long-term priority within the Recreation and Parks Master Plan. With the opportunity of the Cereal donation, the Langdon Library Society was formed to establish a physical presence within the hamlet. However, throughout ongoing discussions and evaluation, it is apparent that the immediate need itself is for an additional multi-use, indoor, community space due to Langdon's continued growth.

As there is currently no capital or ongoing operating funding sources, Administration recommends working with the Society to form a partnership with a new or existing community group to further assess their options. As a Library Society, the group is restricted in the type of funding it can apply for, but by collaborating with a fellow community organization, it would allow them to be eligible for more funding and fundraising opportunities.



The short-term approach, over the next one to three years, would consist of allowing the Society time to fundraise and acquire a suitable space within Langdon – such as purchasing a modular structure and situating it in a centralized location – that would serve as a multi-purpose community space in which that Library Lending Lockers could be placed.

This would support the long-term strategy, with the Library Lending Lockers providing reliable data and metrics to continually assess and adequately shape the future library services in the hamlet. Moving forward, a member of the Society would be participating in the Stakeholder Advisory Group for the Langdon Recreation Centre, and could use the information received through the Library Lending Lockers and the usage of the community space.

The multi-purpose community space could remain in place, as either a County or a community group owned asset, after the library-specific need would no longer be required. This proposed solution aligns with both the County Plan and Council's Strategic Plan, and is consistent with potential future plans to provide additional library service options throughout the County.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

In accordance with the Provincial Libraries Act and County Policy C-312, public libraries are funded primarily by the local municipality. Council, in its annual budget, may provide operational funding to assist libraries located within the County that are members of Marigold.

While Administration has been researching outside funding sources for both capital and ongoing operational costs, none have been confirmed or solidified at this time.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

The suggested solution of a proposed modular structure in a centralized location with Library Lending Lockers, rather than an immediate library presence in the community, would align with the Strategic Theme of Financial Health, and the Strategic Objectives of Expanding Community Service Delivery and Increasing Awareness of the County's Financial Risk Tolerances.

OPTIONS:

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| Option #1 | Motion 1 | THAT the Langdon Library Project report be received as information. |
| | Motion 2 | THAT Administration be directed to continue working with the Langdon Library Society and facilitate a partnership with a community group to develop a strategy for funding and for identifying a new indoor multi-purpose community space. |
| Option #2 | THAT alternative direction be provided. | |



ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

Respectfully submitted,

“Brock Beach”

Acting Executive Director
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DD/rp

Concurrence,

“Kent Robinson”

Acting Chief Administrative Officer