

**Boulder Library District Advisory Committee (LDAC)
November 9, 2021, 6:00-9:00 p.m., Online**

Meeting Notes

Meeting Objectives: Discuss options for disposition of library assets: facilities and land.

Public Comment Session – *Each speaker is allowed 2-3 minutes depending on how many people wish to speak.*

Community members present did not share during comment period.

Follow-up Information: October 28th LDAC Meeting Questions

Polls conducted to gauge support for a library district and mill levy amount – 2019 & 2021

There were two polls, a combine one in 2019 (results are in the report shared with LDAC) and one in 2021. In 2019 a statistically significant phone poll was conducted, as well as an online poll (not statistically significant based on inherent bias of self-selecting online). The phone poll showed 50% support for the higher mill levy option (\$29 per \$100,000 of home value), with 30% opposed, and 20% undecided, while the online poll showed greater support. The 2019 poll also polled two lower mill levy amounts. The poll in 2021 was privately funded, with one question about the library district. The results were similar to the 2019 polls: 50% support, 30% opposed, 20% undecided.

A local pollster reviewed the 2019 poll results in addition to the firm that conducted and tabulated the results of the poll. One difference between the pollsters' assessments was how the undecided respondents were interpreted. One pollster assumed the undecideds would vote in approximate alignment with decided respondents (50% support, 30% opposed) therefore showing strong support for the library district. The local pollster assumed all undecided respondents would vote 'no' for a library district therefore, the extrapolated poll results might show 50/50 vote of support for a library district. A quick review of social science research showed no research indicating that all undecided respondents in a poll would uniformly vote 'no' on a ballot measure.

Living Wage Data

Final decisions on wages will be determined by the library district board. Currently, the average annual salary of library employees is \$51,000, and the median is \$41,000, with an entering wage of \$36,000. For consideration of living wage, an average rent for a 1 bedroom in Boulder is \$1,500/month or \$18,000 annually. This indicates that a Boulder library employee living in Boulder would spend 33-45% of annual earnings on housing.

Currently 56-58% of the total library budget is for staff (salaries and benefits). The district budget assumes maintaining the same salaries, and factored in a yearly 3% increase. Recommending higher wages will impact the proposed library district budget and mill levy needed, an increase would likely require a greater mill levy, how much depends on the increase in salaries. The library has been successful in recruiting and maintaining good people under the City's current compensation structure.

Is Longmont considering a Library District

Longmont has been discussing establishing a library district; the current status of the discussion is about where Boulder was three years ago. The Longmont City Council has a consultant looking at options, and the recommendation is due in early 2022. Longmont staff did not say if they are considering including Niwot in their library district, if one is established.

Discussion

- *Question:* How much property tax would be raised from Gunbarrel residences and how much from Gunbarrel businesses?
Answer: A large portion of Gunbarrel is in the City of Boulder. The unincorporated areas of Gunbarrel would generate about \$350,000 of property tax revenue for the library district per year. The entire Gunbarrel area generates approximately \$700,000 to \$1 M of property tax revenue per year.
ACTION: Will verify this information.
- *Question:* Why is Gunbarrel proposed to get a corner library – is it to get votes?
Answer: A Gunbarrel library has been contemplated for decades. The community and Library Commission communicated a desire for a corner library which is why it was an objective in the 2018 Master Plan. Currently about 80-90% of Gunbarrel households have library card holders. An LDAC member shared: The City has communicated with residents in the area that library services would be provided as part of two past annexation packages (both rejected) over the last 40 years. When the second annexation failed the City stopped working on annexation. A library was also part of the downtown Gunbarrel plan. Gunbarrel would raise enough property tax revenue to cover a corner library, so it would be cost neutral to the district. In the end, it will be up to the library district Board of Trustees to decide what services the district will provide.
- *Question:* Is the intent of a corner library to test whether a full library would be successful, and if the test shows a full library is needed/used, would a full library be built (e.g., the NoBo Corner Library)? Has a permanent/full Gunbarrel library been incorporated into the district budget?
Answer: Yes, a corner library is a test step before a full library is established. A full library is established if library needs are not met with a corner library. Whether a library facility and land would be leased or owned is up to the district Board of Trustees and a new full library building is not currently included in the projected 15 year district budget.

Is Boulder County OK with the six boundary changes – Clerk and Land Use departments

This conversation is on-going. Chris Meschuck will provide and update on this at an upcoming LDAC meeting.

ACTION: Provide this information at the next LDAC meeting.

Discussion

- *Comment:* It would be better to have the LDAC recommend boundary criteria, rather than an actual boundary line. The voting precincts lines are likely to change, therefore, basing a district boundary on precinct lines as they now exist doesn't make sense. Some draft criteria for discussion were posted on the LDAC Team forum. *[NOTE: The following was posted, but not presented at the meeting,*
 - *Includes all areas within the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan service area.*
 - *Excludes areas served by other library service providers.*
 - *Excludes areas within Boulder County recognized municipal or townsite planning areas where said municipality or townsite intends to offer annexation and/or the provision of library services.*
 - *Excludes all land otherwise in Jefferson County.*

- Includes areas with significant concentrations of patrons.
- Excludes areas whose primary road access occurs in other counties.
- Creates a rational boundary capable of simple description.
- Conforms to Boulder County precinct boundaries to the extent feasible.
- *Question:* Are changes based on criteria expected to be big or small?
Answer: Any changes are likely to be very small with little impact on the district budget or mill levy needed, unless the Gunbarrel area is removed.

PROCESS AGREEMENT: LDAC agreed to build agreement on boundary criteria, and let City Council decide the actual boundary lines on the map.

Timeline/Process for City Council discussions on repurposing current library financial support

By January 2022, the LDAC will recommend, and City Council will decide on IGA elements. Then the City will conduct community engagement on library district/funding and council will discuss broadly what to do with General Fund monies previously allocated to the library and what to do with the .333 mill of property tax revenue restricted for the library fund.

In April 2022, the council will hold a public hearing to gather input, and decide on whether to form a resolution to establish a library district. Council may not have specific amounts or direction of how library General Fund monies would be re-allocated by then, but they are likely to give broad ideas of where current library funds could be repurposed. The Finance team is working on identifying options for repurposing those funds and the City's priorities and needs, and the City Council budget Sub-committee will consider those options.

Discussion

- *Question:* Is the repurpose amount \$7 M or \$11 M?
Suggestion: It shouldn't be limited to just the \$7 M from General Fund; it should be a range.
Answer: This suggestion will be relayed to staff and the City Council.
- *Question:* Is it in LDAC's purview to recommend use of library funds that have been accumulating? It is important to communicate to council that decisions on those monies need to be clear.
Answer: The intent is that any accumulated funds collected specifically for the library would stay with the library. There is not a lot of accumulated funds left, less than \$2 M. They were used for Main Library restroom renovations, NoBo Branch Library project, Main library renovation and other things.
ACTION: Gather information about the amount of existing accumulated funds.
- *Question:* Could a library district impose a growth/impact fee?
Answer: This has not yet been decided through the court system; Colorado does not have a clear answer on this. The issue was raised for school districts and courts said that those fees are outside a school district's jurisdiction.

DISCUSSION: Asset Transfer – Facilities and Land Disposition

Presentation

- Recommendation for the 6 library facilities:
 - Transfer building and land to district (3): Carnegie Library for Local History, George Reynolds Branch Library, New North Boulder/NoBo Branch Library (when complete)

- For new NoBo, staff will assess whether the boundaries of the property need to be adjusted to divide the library lot from the south side which is a flood control area and bike paths maintained by the City.
- Transfer leases to the library district (2): Meadows Branch and NoBo Corner Libraries
- Get more data on (1): Boulder Main Library: This facility is part of a mixed use campus including Library, Parks and Recreation, and shared parking. It is likely that the building will be transferred to the library district and a common-interest community agreement could be developed for the surrounding common use areas. This agreement might include a process to share maintenance and engage all users in decisions that impact those areas, like a condominium association, other responsibilities, and financial obligations. Ground maintenance for the Main Library was not factored into the projected library district budget.

Discussion

- Benefits of transferring both the buildings and the land is that the library district would have greater flexibility to use the asset for debt (if needed) without going to the voters for bonding authority or a tax increase. Having more financing options/tools is good, but the ultimate decisions about incurring debt and how it is done is up to the library district Board of Trustees.
- *Question:* Lease transfer, are there any costs associated with transferring the lease?
Answer: For the Meadow Branch Library, the city pays a common area maintenance fee (like a condo association) of approximately \$25,000 a year which would transfer to the district. There are no associated costs for transfer of the lease for the NoBo Corner Library.
- *Question:* Are any library assets pledged for other purposes?
Answer: No, library assets are not pledged for other purposes.
- *Question:* What would happen to new NoBo Branch Library parking lot, would it remain free or would there be a fee?
Answer: Parking costs at new NoBo Branch Library would be up to the library district Board of Trustees.
- *Question:* What is the approximate estimate for land maintenance costs?
Answer: We do not know at this time but, based on common area maintenance charges for Meadows, the assumption is these costs would be less than \$200,000 yearly for all libraries combined (including Main Library common interest agreement).

AGREEMENTS:

- Recommend Carnegie Library for Local History, the George Reynolds Branch Library and the New NoBo Branch Library buildings and land ownership be transferred to the district.
- Recommend Meadows Branch and NoBo Corner Library leases be transferred to the district.

Boulder Main Library

- This is more challenging than the other single-use library facilities; staff is working on how to separate and share responsibilities with library, Parks and Recreation, etc., and provide that information to the LDAC when it is ready.
- The intent is the Main Library buildings would be transferred to the district together – north building, bridge, and south building.
- Most likely there will be a common-interest community agreement developed for the Main Library grounds (like a condo association).
- Grounds maintenance for any library facility was not factored into the district budget, but this could be expensive and impact the budget and mill levy needed.

- *Question:* What happens with possible future expansion to the building [specifically the North Building of the Main Library]?
Answer: While the 2015 Civic Area Master Plan describes the potential for incorporating a Performing Arts Center on the site of the North Building of the Main Library, there have not been any plans submitted for expanding the facility. If expansion was desired, the discussion would happen with and as part of a common-interest community with the City.
- *Question:* How will future redevelopment be handled? The IGA example has language about the library working cooperatively with the City on what happens with the west end of the Civic Area.
- *Answer:* More data and detail on grounds maintenance and future planning are being discussed.
ACTION: This information will be brought to LDAC for further discussion when ready (December).

DISCUSSION: Disposition of Facility/Land when/if Library want to not own it anymore

Options raised/discussed

- A. Give it back to City
- B. Sell it, City has first right of refusal
- C. Sell it, City has first right of refusal AND re-zone for public use
- D. Do not give a specific recommendation, let council decide

Discussion

- There needs to be flexibility, a facility may have a better use than a library or public use. (e.g., library may decide to let go of one of the two southern facilities (Meadow or George Reynolds Branch Libraries) since they are close together geographically).
- *Question:* What costs are associated with owning land, other than grounds maintenance (snow plowing, lawn mowing, etc.)?
- *Answer:* Whether the property is owned by the district or not, there will still be grounds maintenance needed. Some of the specific ownership expenses are the potential liability issues, catastrophic loss (e.g., serious flooding), environmental issues (e.g., underground contamination), but these aren't cost that are factored into the cost of owning the property except that insurance costs were factored into the district budget.
- *Option A. Give it back to the city*
 - Public won't have to pay twice for the same property.
 - Don't want the public to buy the same site twice, but OK if the property is sold to a third party.
 - Concern: If a facility is given back to the City, the district loses the monetary value of the asset.
- *Option B. Sell it, City has first right of refusal*
 - Keeps library assets working to provide library services - properties were acquired for library services, the library should be able to leverage those assets to continue services (e.g., use the funds from the sale of the asset to build/renovate/move to a better location).
 - Gives more flexibility to the district for use of the asset.
- *Option C. Sell it, City has first right of refusal, and the property is rezoned for public use*
 - Currently, some lands are zoned to match surrounding properties and other public or institutional uses in the city have public zoning. It may be better if Carnegie and Reynolds were zoned for public use, public expects it to be public use.

- Zoning to surrounding properties is an old model, the newer model is to zone public facilities for public use.
- Reflects the City's intent to use the property for public use
- Could be reused for public or for a private/public use (e.g., a care facility)
- Concerns:
 - Don't want to cripple future district planning – ability to move, and/or flexibility for financial decisions.
 - Rezoning complicates things and it may be more difficult for the library to sell or be of less value if rezoned for public use, harder to use it as a tool for financing.
 - There may be much better use of those properties for their neighborhoods (e.g., the Reynolds neighborhood needs more affordable housing).
- The rezoning process: City Council, planning board or a landowner can initiate a rezoning. Typically, a rezoning application is done concurrent with a Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan land use map amendment to ensure that the comprehensive plan and zoning map are consistent. The Planning Board then recommends rezoning to the council to approve. If desired, this process could be initiated prior to the sale of library property.
- **Option B or C**
 - District is responsible for keeping the funds for library use – if district decides it needs the funds from the sale of property to buy/build another property it should be able to do that.
- **SUGGESTION:** Could recommend covenants on the sale of library assets.
- **SUGGESTION:** Offer the property in trade for a City property in a more appropriate location.
 - Concern: The intent of the recently adopted Facilities Master Plan was to decrease land inventory; the City is unlikely to have any properties to trade.
- Selling older properties and funding newer ones would save on deferred maintenance needs in the future and some of the funds from the deferred maintenance budget could be used to buy/build renovate a new property.
 - *Question:* How much of the deferred maintenance budget is for the two oldest facilities?
Answer: The district board would have to decide the best use of funds and assets – to do major renovation or build new.
- Concerns:
 - It is hard to envision all potential scenarios and control for everything LDAC doesn't know now; LDAC doesn't know the many reasons the library may choose to move or what revenue is needed for in the future.
 - It is challenging, not knowing why a property is being disposed of.

Next Steps

Actions

- Provide data in how much property tax is generated from Gunbarrel residences and businesses, in City and in unincorporated County.
- Provide information on how the County feels – Clerk and Land Use – about the district boundaries not following exactly voting precincts and when voting precincts will be updated as a result of redistricting.
- Provide the total amount of accumulated library funds.
- Provide estimated costs for grounds maintenance.

Next meetings

- November 29 (M) – Agreement on boundary criteria, agreement on disposition of assets/facilities, presentation of other asset disposition in preparation for the next meeting
- December 8 (W)
- December 16 (Th)

APPENDIX A: Attendees

LCAC MEMBERS

	Name		Name
X	Alicia Seidle	X	Joanna Rosenblum
	Annette Dula	X	Joni Teter
X	Cara Schenkel		Kevin Miller
	Chip		Michelle Denae Garcia-Morrissey
X	Deborah Read Fowler	X	Miho Shida
X	Jane Sykes Wilson	X	Peter Pollock

Boulder Public Library (BPL), City of Boulder (COB), Contractors

Organization	Staff
BPL	David Farnan, Jennifer Phares
COB	Janet Michels, David Gehr (legal consultant)
Facilitator	Jody Erikson, JSE Associates

Public/Others

Name – Organization or Interest group		
Michael Mason		

APPENDIX B: Agenda

Boulder Library District Advisory Committee (LDAC)

**November 9, 2021
6:00-9:00 p.m., Virtual**

Meeting Objectives:

- Discuss options for disposition of library assets: facilities and land.
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6:00 Welcome, agenda overview

6:05 Public Comment Session – *If interested in speaking please sign up with staff before the meeting starts (name, community, topic to comment on). Each speaker will be allowed 2-3 minutes depending on how many people wish to speak.*

6:20 LDAC Member introductions

6:30 Follow-up Information: October 28 Questions by LDAC

- Poll results 2019
- Living wage data
- Is the County ok with the six boundary changes
- Is Longmont considering a Library District
- Process for council decisions on repurposing current library funds

6:45 DISCUSSION: Asset Transfer – Facilities and Land Disposition

- Presentation:
 - Library Facilities
 - Assumptions
 - Options
- Discussion: Does the LDAC support the assumptions and options for disposition? Does the LDAC support recommendations for disposition?

8:50 Next Steps

- Next meetings
 - November 29 (M) – Disposition of assets: agreements on facilities and land, and other asset dispositions
- Actions decided during the meeting

9:00 Adjourn