REQUEST FOR DECISION #047-2018
Title: Wolfville Library Action Plan
Date: 2018-07-03
Department: Community Planning & Development

SUMMARY

Wolfville Library Action Plan

The Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL) have prepared a Move Forward 'Action Plan' for discussion with the Town. Staff have met with the AVRL and support moving forward with the approach outlined in the attached document.

The purpose of this report is to provide Council an opportunity to:

1. provide feedback on the Action Plan;
2. understand next steps; and
3. provide direction to Staff on how to move forward (through a motion).

DRAFT MOTION:

1. That Council endorses the attached Wolfville Public Library – 'Proposed Plan of Action' to move forward with the planning and development of an enhanced Library space in the Town.

CAO COMMENTS

The CAO supports the recommendation of Staff.

1) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Town of Wolfville owns the Library building (and adjacent property) where the AVRL operates the Wolfville Public Library.

2) STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff supports the attached Wolfville Public Library – 'Proposed Plan of Action' document as a guide to move forward with the planning and development of an enhanced Library space in the Town.

3) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

- Wolfville Public Library Moving Forward Proposed Plan of Action (June 2018 - attached)
- April 17, 2018 Town Council Meeting minutes (motion re: Friends Group formation)
- Wolfville Library Needs Assessment (Feb 2017)
- Wolfville Library Consultation Report (Dec 2017)

4) DISCUSSION

Given the recent needs assessment and community consultation by the Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL), there is momentum to move forward with a process to create an enhanced library space in the Town. After a presentation from the AVRL at the April 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council endorsed the formation of a Friends of the Library Group at their April 2018 Council meeting. During these deliberations, Staff advised Council that more information would be forthcoming on how this important project would move forward. The attached Action Plan, prepared by the AVRL for discussion with the Town, lays out a path forward, supported by Staff. It is important to underscore a few key areas of the Action Plan:

- This is a joint effort between the Town and the AVRL and should be seen as a collaborative undertaking.
- Given the scale and complexity of the project, a formal project-management approach is necessary to move forward in a timely / efficient manner and to make the best possible use of resources.
- Council will be providing feedback and making key decisions throughout the process – the first likely being the location – estimated in the fall/winter of 2018.

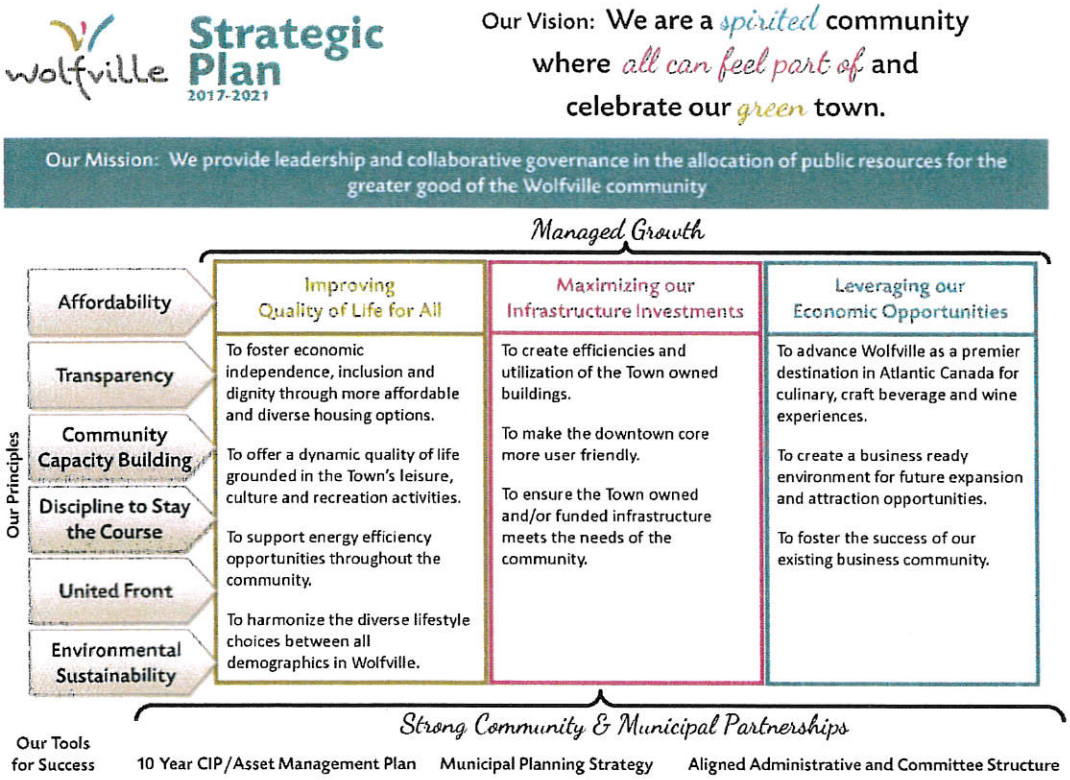
- If endorsed by Council, the Working Group would begin working through the Strategies outlined in the Action Plan, with an emphasis on:
    - Updating and refining the Draft Action Plan with desires of Council.
    - Work on 'Site Confirmation and Planning' (Strategy 1 in the attached document) with the goal of bringing a report to Council for consideration in the fall or winter of 2018.
    - Drafting a 'Communications and Outreach Strategy' to ensure transparent and up-to-date information sharing, including community consultation. This piece of work would also outline timelines for Council feedback, workshops and decision making. This Strategy (see Action Plan Strategy 3) will also include the formulation of a 'Review Group' (see proposed Management Structure).
- Given the impact that an enhanced Library will have in the Town, there are natural synergies with our ongoing MPS review and how we want to manage growth moving forward.

5) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The initial cost to the Town will be in Staff time. This underscores the importance of a functional and competent working group to move the project forward. The Director of Planning will be the primary Staff dedicated to this project (with support from others). Some operational budget dollars may be spent in the preparation of a locational analysis.

6) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

Most of Council's Strategic Directions and principles are relevant to the way we move forward with the planning and execution of an enhanced library facility in the Town:



The Town's 2018-2022 Operations Plan also includes:

Maximizing Town Space – Library Needs Assessment and Options for Town Buildings
Town Council has expressed an interest in determining a long-term plan for Town-owned buildings. It is essential that municipal space be maximized, accessible and functional for all users and staff. In order to inform the decision-making process in future years of the four-year Operational Plan, staff will undertake a process with Council to narrow down options and provide more information.

7) COMMUNICATION

Key Messages:

- The AVRL has completed a Needs Assessment and Community consultation that show Wolfville is in need of an enhanced Library space.
- An Action Plan was drafted by the AVRL to move the project forward. The Action Plan establishes a Working Group and outlines Strategies to move toward successful project execution.
- Council will be involved throughout, providing feedback and making key decisions.

8) ALTERNATIVES

That Council not endorse the Action Plan at this time and provide direction moving forward.

Wolfville Public Library – Moving Forward
Proposed Plan of Action

Prepared by: Annapolis Valley Regional Library
For Discussion with Town of Wolfville
July 3, 2018

INTRODUCTION

In the past year, the Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL) completed a Needs Assessment for the Wolfville Public Library and invited the community to comment on library facilities. These activities were documented in two reports[1] which were presented to Wolfville Town Council. Based on the work completed to date, AVRL has identified new or improved library facilities in Wolfville as its next capital project priority. This report documents a possible strategy for realizing this objective.

In Nova Scotia, municipalities like Wolfville provide library services to their residents in partnership with regional library systems and the Province. In this model, the Town provides the library facility, the regional library system provides the service and the Province acts as a funder and advisor. A new library in Wolfville is therefore a joint project of the Town and AVRL. The Town must be involved in the planning and approvals of a building that they will ultimately own and maintain. In addition, the Town will want to capitalize on the significant benefits that a strategic library location and partners can bring to the community. Finally, as a funder, the Town must be involved from the outset to ensure that the library project is consistent with municipal capital priorities and financing plans. Similarly, the AVRL must ensure that the facility, its location and potential partners are compatible with library service delivery models and the needs and interests of current and future users. The AVRL also has a critical role to play in engaging the community and building support for the project. This is especially important because public libraries are changing to incorporate opportunities associated with technology, community development and joint service delivery. The library of tomorrow will in many respects be different from what we have known in the past. It's the AVRL's responsibility to involve all Wolfville residents, including those not currently using the library, in a discussion of our library's future.

This is a major project which will take a number of years to implement. A formal project-management approach is necessary to move forward in a timely and efficient manner and to make the best possible use of resources, including those of volunteers. There are two critical elements of a successful project management approach: (1) a formal structure for guiding the project, and (2) a clear sense of the work program. This report describes a possible Town-AVRL committee structure to manage the project and an initial draft Action Plan.

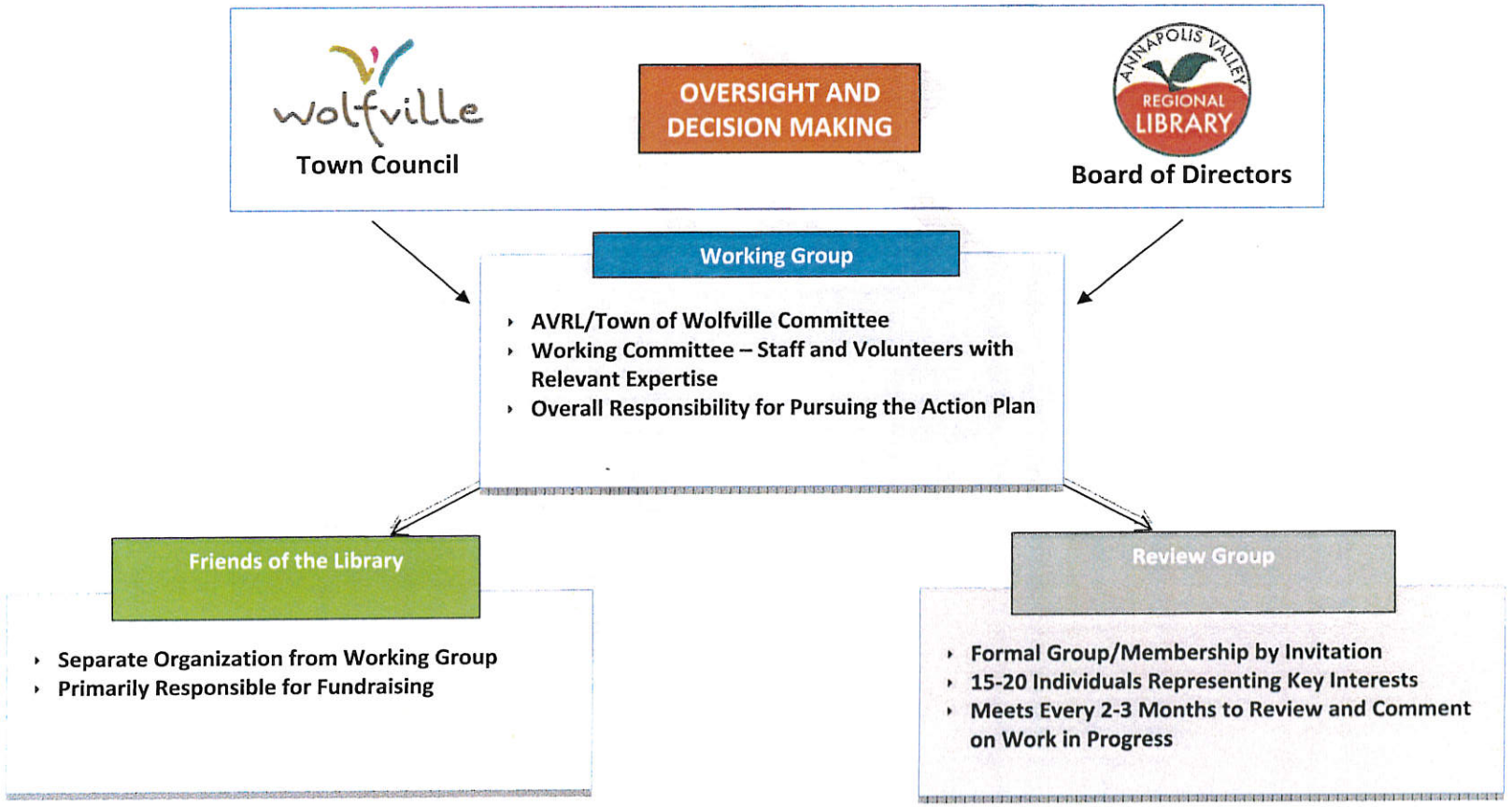
These are presented for discussion with the Town with the intention of confirming our path forward.

[1] Wolfville Community Consultation 2017. Report to Town of Wolfville. Ann-Marie Mathieu and Angela Reynolds, AVRL. Dec. 11, 2017
Wolfville Library Needs Assessment 2017. Report to Town of Wolfville. Ann-Marie Mathieu and Angela Reynolds, AVRL. March 1, 2017

PROJECT MANAGEMENT – PROPOSED MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Figure One describes a possible structure for managing the project.

Figure One: Proposed Management Structure for the Project



Overall responsibility for the project would rest with a **Working Group** co-chaired by the Town and AVRL as the proponents and joint partners in the project. This would be a working Committee/Group charged with ensuring the Action Plan was implemented. Staff from both the Town and AVRL would be represented. AVRL would be represented by Ann-Marie Mathieu, CEO at AVRL. The Town of Wolfville would be represented by the Director of Planning & Development and/or the CAO.

We recognize that both AVRL and Town staff resources are extremely limited. Consequently, staff on the Working Group would play managing and co-ordinating roles, predominately providing information and direction. It is anticipated that a small group of individuals with relevant expertise could be recruited as volunteers to implement many of the tasks in the Action Plan (e.g. research, report writing, preparation and delivery of presentations, meetings with funders, etc.) AVRL has approached and will appoint Ms. Janet Ness, Ms. Jennifer Richard, and Mr. Jim Morgenstern as representatives on the working group. Ms. Janet Ness, Wolfville's representative and Vice-Chair of the AVRL Board, would be one such volunteer. Ms. Jennifer Richard, a professional librarian at Acadia, and Mr. Jim Morgenstern, a planner with considerable relevant expertise in the library sector have also indicated they would volunteer to work on the project. We expect 2 or 3 other volunteers with qualifications and experience in other areas reflected in the Action Plan (e.g. communications and community outreach) could be recruited as we move forward. Finally, AVRL has some funds that could be used to hire consultants as required during the course of the project. The Town could also assist in this manner, as required.

During AVRL's community consultations, a number of community residents indicated they would participate in a library development project in Wolfville, these individuals represent a strong cross-section of community interests. We would suggest establishing a **Review Group** of perhaps 15-20 individuals of this type. Review Group membership would be by invitation. The Group would meet perhaps 4 times a year to be updated on the project and offer feedback. They would also serve as ambassadors for the project, spreading the word among their respective constituencies.

A **Friends of the Library** is the third element of the management structure. This would be a traditional Friends group with primary responsibility for fundraising. While there may be some cross representation, the membership and the role of the Friends would be distinct from the Steering Committee and Review Group. Fund raising will be a major commitment and will fully occupy these volunteers.

In addition to this formal committee structure, there would be an ongoing communications strategy involving social media, mailing lists, newsletters etc. This is discussed further as an Action Plan strategy.

Action Plans

A preliminary Action Plan has been developed as a starting point for the Working Group's discussion. It is organized around the following five strategies:

Strategy One: Site Confirmation and Planning

Strategy Two: Facility Concept and Service Plan

Strategy Three: Community Engagement and Outreach

Strategy Four: Partnership Development

Strategy Five: Funding and Fundraising

An initial identification of tasks associated with each strategy is included in this document. However, these will be developed and refined by the Working Group as the project proceeds. Responsibilities and timelines will also be identified for each task to monitor progress and update project activities and timelines. Ultimately the Action Plan will become the critical path for project development. Strategies and tasks will be regularly updated as key decisions are made and milestones achieved.

Strategy One: Site Confirmation and Planning

There are two major outcomes of this Action Plan strategy. The first involves guiding the library development through the municipal planning approvals process. The second addresses the new library's location.

The new library's location is a major concern. AVRL's initial consultations indicated strong support for retaining the current location and this would undoubtedly be one of the options investigated. However, we anticipated other options may be available. Additional investigation is required to determine the best site. In addition to being available and affordable, the site must accommodate the library building and associated uses such as parking. Perhaps more importantly, because the library is a major community service and an important civic building, its location can contribute to other municipal planning objectives. The library's location may also be influenced by the needs of potential partners.

Task	Discussion	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. **Identify the planning and approvals process**	The steps involved in the planning and approvals process will be documented to outline information requirements and key decision points. Special considerations that may be relevant, such as dealing with historic designations, will be identified.		
2. **Identify existing municipal plans or proposals relevant to the library**	A number of plans and proposals have been developed or discussed in Wolfville that might benefit from the library's presence. These include such things as a "Cultural Precinct"; the East End gateway; redevelopment schemes for the downtown (Imagine Wolfville); and, a new site for the municipal offices. The status of these proposals and others will be determined and the potential contribution of the library assessed.		
3. **Identify site assessment criteria**	Library locational analysis is guided by a unique set of considerations. Site assessment criteria will be identified to assist in comparing alternate sites. Information on the current use and users of the library will be assembled to tailor site assessment criteria to Wolfville.		
4. **Review the existing site**	The potential of the existing site to accommodate a larger library building and its conformity with the site assessment criteria will be determined.		
5. **Identify and evaluate other possible sites**	Other potential sites will be identified and evaluated.		

Strategy Two: Facility Concept and Service Plan

There are two outcomes of this strategy. A facility concept describing the size and functional areas of the library will be confirmed. In addition, a service plan outlining the activities, programs and services available to users will be produced. The service plan will highlight opportunities available at the new library that cannot be accommodated in the existing building.

In March 2017, AVRL produced an initial needs assessment recommending space requirement between 8,000 -15,000 gross square feet. These were arrived at using generic library planning guidelines. While they provide a useful starting point, they must be refined. A final facility concept and functional space program will be determined through a more detailed examination of how the community will use the library and the size and types of spaces required to accommodate this use. The service plan will guide this assessment and ensure an appropriate "fit" between the building and the way in which it will be used.

Task	Discussion	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. **Analyse opportunities and constraints of existing building**	Continuing to use the existing library building was strongly supported by those participating in the 2017 consultations. The community's attachment to the building and location is an important consideration. However, as a former train station and designated historic site, there will be challenges associated with an expansion and redevelopment. Whether the existing building can be expanded to provide functional space at an affordable price will be investigated. Other issues, such as full accessibility, will also be explored.		
2. **Research on comparable contemporary libraries**	In addition to being too small throughout, the existing Wolfville library is a relatively traditional facility with few of the specialized spaces found in contemporary libraries. It is a challenge to design a functional contemporary library in a small building and successful approaches will be researched. This research will focus on providing a building that fully accommodates the service plan.		

3. Prepare service plan	The service plan will describe what happens in the building. With a particular emphasis on services and programs that are not easily accommodated or not available in the existing library, the service plan will illustrate the full potential and anticipated benefits of a new library. Opportunities to attract non-users and contribute to a wide range of community objectives will be highlighted. The service plan, in combination with the refined facility concept, will be the foundation of the community engagement and outreach activities.		
4. Develop functional space program	The functional space program will describe the area committed to various uses and users in the library (e.g. collection, program and meeting areas, offices, working and reading areas, etc.). This will be a detailed breakdown compatible with the service plan and suitable for preliminary cost estimates.		
5. Prepare preliminary cost estimates	A preliminary (Class D) capital cost estimate will be prepared.		

Strategy 3: Community Engagement and Outreach

At key points in the planning process, residents and the review group will be asked to comment on the design, location, cost, potential partners and other aspects of the proposed new library. In addition, an active communications plan will be required to acquaint the community with the role a new, contemporary library can play in Wolfville.

Task	Discussion	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. **Create Review Group**	Review group members will be recruited.		
2. **Develop and implement ongoing communications plan**	A communications plan tied to key milestones in the project's critical path will be developed and implemented.		
3. **Meet with community leaders**	In addition to the community-wide communications plan, face-to-face meetings and presentations will be arranged with individuals, groups and committees representing key interests (business, education, heritage, community service, etc.)		

Strategy 4: Partnership Development

It is increasingly common for public libraries to enter into partnerships to expand or enhance services available to their users and to secure resources that contribute to their ongoing viability. Partnerships are mutually advantageous arrangements. For libraries serving small communities, partnerships may be the only opportunity to offer some services. On the other hand, the library is a perfect partner for many other organizations. As a research and information provider, the library can support the objectives of organizations interested in education, economic development, health, and a variety of other service sectors. A partnership development strategy is therefore a critical component of the Wolfville library's development plan.

Task	Discussion	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. **Prepare a library partnership model**	There are a wide range of possible partnership models employed by libraries. These can range from something as simple as sharing space (such as a meeting room or lobby) with another service provider to joint-service delivery where staff from multiple agencies not only share a building but collaborate on service planning and delivery. These various models will be examined for their relevance to Wolfville. The Town and AVRL will identify the broad parameters of an acceptable partnership as a basis for approaching prospective partners.		
2. **Identify prospective partners in Wolfville**	Prospective partners will be identified based on actual developments in Wolfville, (including those noted in Strategy One, Task Two) and successful examples elsewhere.		
3. **Meet with partners to identify opportunities and constraints**	Initial meetings will be held with prospective partners to establish interest and viability. Partners will need to be introduced to the benefits of a library partnership based on examples from other communities. The Town/AVRL's expectations for the partnership (timing, financial contribution, operating arrangements, etc.) will be described in sufficient detail to determine if a partnership is a realistic possibility.		
4. **Identify core partners and partnership agreement**	Based on the results of Task Three, core partners would be identified and the process of negotiating a partnership agreement initiated.		
5. **Reflect core partners in the library development program**	Once partners are confirmed, their needs will be reflected in the site development and facility concept strategies.		

Strategy 5: Funding and Fundraising

A strategy will be developed and implemented for funding and fundraising.

Task	Discussion	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. **Establish a preliminary financing strategy**	An overall strategy will be identified based on the capital funding required for the project, realistic timeframes and potential sources. External funding programs (federal and provincial) will be identified and monitored as these will likely change during the project. Preliminary targets for funding from all sources will be set.		
2. **Establish Friends of the Library group**	A Friends Group with appropriate membership will be established to raise funds locally.		
3. **Meet with potential funders and funding agencies**	Meetings with potential funders – both government and community – will be arranged to ensure the Wolfville Library project is on their radar.		
4. **Prepare and implement a fundraising campaign**	A formal fundraising campaign, coordinated by the Friends, will be launched as soon as the key elements of the project (facility concept, location, preliminary cost, possible partners) are defined.		