

SUBJECT: Library Committee Recommendation
FROM: Katie Wood, Library Committee Chair
DATE: July 30, 2021

BACKGROUND/ANAYLSIS:

At the direction of Common Council and the establishment of the Library Committee, the Library Committee hired a consultant to develop a community survey to assess resident opinions and feasibility of the future of library services in Glendale. The City of Glendale received 719 survey responses, and of those, 96.8% of respondents reported that they lived in Glendale.

As shown below, our primary recommendation – based on our survey and discussions over the past ten months – is to establish an independent Glendale Library. This recommendation was approved unanimously. The Library Committee has provided an alternative scenario, should the Common Council decide to not pursue an independent library.

Through discussions with MCFLS during this process, the Library Committee learned that there is a charge within Milwaukee County to not have a library or be a part of a joint library/library consortium. Within this scenario, the City of Glendale compensates MCFLS/Determined Neighboring Library as fixed amount per year to utilize library services. This annual contribution amount is not static and varies based upon reported patronage to the libraries from the City of Glendale residents. MCFLS estimates this annual cost of \$903,000/year; which is almost double the annual financial contribution made to the present North Shore Library. This is not a recommendation from the Library Committee; however, the survey indicated a portion of residents that believed that we did not need a library as there are others that are other neighboring libraries that are visited. Through the public education process it is important that residents understand there is not a “free” option. Each route will cost taxpayer dollars.

It should also be noted that Planned Unit Development proposal, located within the Village of Bayside, that would include a North Shore Library [referenced herein as “Bayside Development”], was revealed after the Library Committee was already ten months into their deliberation process. The proposed arrangement was not directly surveyed of the residents. The recommendations made by this Committee are entirely based upon the data and inferences made from the Community Survey and the consulting of MCFLS.

RECOMMENDATION:

City of Glendale either builds or secures an existing site for remodeling to establish an Independent Library, which is centrally located within Glendale. In the survey, 689 respondents indicated they visited the North Shore Library in varying frequencies between multiple times per week to every few months. 91.9% of survey respondents indicated they would support a tax increase of some kind, at varying tolerance levels, to support pursuit of an independent library. Regardless of their support of potential tax increase, community members primarily envision borrowing physical books, A/V materials, and electronic materials, and attending robust programming and a dedicated children’s area and program. Resident support for a library and related tax increase does not monolithically align with resident usage of the current library. Use of other public libraries is not strongly correlated with support of a potential tax increase.

Pros:

- Autonomy – which appears to be lacking within the North Shore Library

- Facility and programming built to the needs and desires of Glendale residents
 - Further needs analysis can be fine-tuned by future focus groups and at the direction of a Library Director

Cons:

- Initial outlay of expense to renovate and/or build a new library space
- Autonomy, with Nicolet a joint High School for the four North Shore Communities

Should there be a gap in time between the North Shore Library agreement ending and a new independent library opening, MCFLS indicated willingness to enter an agreement with the City of Glendale to provide temporary library services to the City of Glendale residents. Steve Hesper, System Director of MCFLS, is researching the statutory circulation requirements [if any] the City of Glendale would be held to for meeting the burden of establishing an independent library without the need to pay into an alternative system prior to opening. The Library Committee is exploring the feasibility of having a small temporary collection to meet this statutory requirement [should it exist] that would preclude the need to partner with another organization temporarily.

During planning phases of a new library the financial impacts of reciprocal borrowing should be taken into consideration. Developing attractive programming, community space and healthy robust collection are all factors in positioning the independent library in the most favorable net lending position, which would provide an additional revenue stream. The survey respondents indicated desires for robust programming, which would most likely be in line with a Tier 2 Library. A Tier 1, the lowest Library Tier, based upon the City of Glendale population is recommended at no less than 25,000 sqft. This calculation was provided by MCFLS. The Library Committee feels strongly that should the City of Glendale pursue building their own Independent Library that the building procured or built meet these minimum standards and strive to exceed them to include adequate community rooms, meeting space, reading space and dedicated children's space. These were the desired resources identified through the survey.

ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO: New North Shore Library in Bayside

The City of Glendale joins a new North Shore Library agreement for the operation of a new public library facility in the proposed Bayside Development. Within this agreement, establishing new governance structure that puts the City of Glendale in a more favorable position is imperative. Through negotiations with the Village of Bayside [and any other interested municipalities], discuss an increased financial operating budget to implement the needs and desires of the surveyed residents. The goal of the new agreement should not be to re-create a subpar library that does not meet the needs of residents. The goal of the new agreement must be to enhance programming and space compared to the current North Shore Library. The services should be developed to attract neighboring communities with a goal of becoming a net lender.

It should be noted that the proposed space within the Bayside Development has both positives and negatives. The positives of the new space are a new building, green space and a drive thru. The largest red flag is the proposed space of 25,000sqft. That is the minimum suggested space for just the City of Glendale – not four communities. MCFLS recommends a space of at least 35,000 sqft based upon the resident count and patronage of all four communities. It should also be noted that this space recommendation is based upon the current resident count and not any new developments. The Bayside PUD proposed 650 new residential units (Multi-Family and Townhomes), which would add to the resident totals of Bayside. The additional housing being added to Bayshore as well as the approved development at Eder Farm within River Hills, would add a significant amount of residents to each of these three communities within the North Shore. Joining a new North Shore Library in an insufficient space, is setting up the community for future failure. Unless a larger space is

negotiated between the Developer and Bayside, the planned space does not suit the needs of the residents or uphold MCFLS minimum standards. It should also be noted that MCFLS has not been consulted during their planning process, as of July 27, 2021. While the MCFLS space planning does incorporate space for media that is less utilized (DVDs, VHS, CDs, etc), it does not equate to a difference in 10,000 sqft need. There is a proposed Green Space within the Bayside Development that could and likely would be used during late spring, summer and early fall; however it should be noted that due to our geographic location weather is unpredictable. It is entirely possible that space would not be able to be used for community gathering and programming for six months out of the year. The City of Glendale must be forward looking and incorporate future development that is occurring into the space requirements for a new library.

Pros:

- Existing collection to build from
- Least public education required
- Drive Thru Space
- More space than currently available

Cons:

- Current space doesn't meet the current needs of all residents or in line with MCFLS minimum recommendations
- No Library Space within Glendale
- Increased cost from current North Shore Library Agreement; however, it should be noted the current Library does not meet the needs and desires of the residents

ACTION REQUESTED:

Upon reviewing the totality of the information provided and making a decision as it pertains to the future of library services, a public hearing should be held. A public hearing is needed to educate the public on the options and the reasons behind making their decision. This public hearing should be advertised in *the North Shore Now*, social media and the city newsletter.