

Advisory Committee Meeting 4 Summary

October 4, 2022

Meeting Details

October 4th | 11:30 – 2:00 pm | Zoom

Objectives

The objectives of this Advisory Committee meeting were to:

- Review Evaluative Criteria and library options,
- Discuss initial recommendations, and
- Identify Advisory Committee representatives for presentation to Library Board and City Council.

Attendance

Advisory Committee in Attendance

David Anderson
Sherwanda Beck-Atkinson
Amelia Escobedo
Bob Estrada
Ron Irwin
Lianna Olds
Josette Parker
Darwin Peters II
Ginny Rawlings
Timothy Rhee
Chelsey Tschosik
Bob Warfield

City of Lakewood

Becky Newton, Economic Development Manager
Josh Kubitzka, Associate Planner

Pierce County Library System

Mary Getchell, Marketing and Communications
Director
Clifford Jo, Finance and Business Director

Consultant Team

Brian Murphy, BERK Consulting
Rebecca Fornaby, BERK Consulting
Katherine Goetz, BERK Consulting

Agenda

- Item 1: Welcome and Agenda Overview
- Item 2: Process and Feasibility of Historic Designation for Downtown Library
- Item 3: Discussion - Evaluation Criteria
- Item 4: Discussion - Initial Evaluation of Options
- Item 5: Next Steps and Meeting Close
- Item 6: Public Comment

Discussion Summary

Following each presentation summary below are bulleted comments and questions from Committee members. Where applicable, responses to each question are included in italics.

The [presentation](#) from this meeting can be found on the [project website](#) under "Project Documents."

Item 1: Welcome and Agenda Overview

Brian Murphy shared an overview of the Committee's charge, project schedule, and Downtown Library Update. Details are included in the [presentation slide deck](#).

Item 2: Process and Feasibility of Historic Designation for Downtown Library

Josh Kubitzka, Associate Planner with the City of Lakewood, provided an overview of the process and feasibility of historic and/or landmark designation for the existing Downtown Lakewood library. Details are included in the [presentation slide deck](#).

Comments / Questions:

- Is the Pierce County Library System the owner of the Downtown Lakewood building *and* property?
 - *Response: Yes, the Pierce County Library System owns the downtown Lakewood Library building and property.*

Item 3: CAC Discussion - Evaluation Criteria

Brian Murphy provided an overview of a draft evaluative framework for the Committee's decision-making process, the criteria for which include Service Suitability, Location, Practical Feasibility, and Cost. Details are included in the [presentation slide deck](#).

After this brief presentation, the Committee weighed in on which of the four criteria mattered most.

Comments / Questions:

- One CAC member noted that **Cost** is the most important criteria.
- Another stated that **Service Suitability** is the criteria most valued. "The services a library offers are the heart of why people use it."

- A CAC member noted that property ownership (under the **Practical Feasibility** criterium) transcends library services and encompasses senior services as well. The City of Lakewood should own both the library and senior center.
 - *Cliff from PCLS noted that the Library System owns the majority of its facilities (13), owns half of some of its properties (2), and leases the rest (4).*
- A CAC member noted that **cost**, specifically operating hours, is important, with several people asking if the library can extend its open hours. Tillicum has limited open hours yet they're supposed to be a fallback for Lakewood library users. Can we increase hours?
 - *Mary Getchell from PLCS responded that the Library System is always looking at the operating hours of all our locations. We're looking at what we can do to increase the hours at Tillicum.*
- A CAC member asked about the benefits of City vs. PCLS ownership vs. some combination?
 - *Cliff from PCLS noted that since the Facilities Master Plan developed in 2008-2009 and published in 2010, the Library System's approach has been to purchase property. One concern about not owning the land and building is that PCLS must coordinate with another entity to do major repairs and updates, which takes more time. There's also a chance the other organization could say no. PCLS leases when it can't secure land to purchase.*
- A CAC member asked if In any of these options, are we talking about the City of Lakewood owning the property?
 - *Response: We're considering PCLS being either the owner or leaseholder, not the City.*
- Other CAC members noted that **Service Suitability**, Operating Hours (**Cost**), and accessibility by foot or transit (**Location**) are priority criteria.

Item 4: Initial Evaluation of Options

Katherine Goetz provided an overview of options identified for considerations by the Committee in Meeting 3. Additional details are included in the [presentation slide deck](#). After this presentation, the Committee weighed in on their initial preferences for both the Downtown and Tillicum locations.

Downtown Library

Options

- Downtown A. Substantially renovate the existing building.
- Downtown B. Completely rebuild on the existing site.
- Downtown C. Build at another location: Seeley Lake.
- Downtown D. Build at another location: Other.
- Downtown E. Locate a library in the Towne Center, which may imply leasing.

Comments from Individual CAC Members

- I support **Downtown A**—I would love to see the building be historically marked and maintained. I'd like to see the church property purchased as well. If we couldn't save the building, my question would

be whether those funds go to only the Lakewood library or to the whole library system. For me, having a senior center would be beneficial, as would a place for children to go.

- *Response: PCLS has signed an agreement that obligates PCLS to use all proceeds from the potential sale of the current location—building and land—to be used solely for the benefit of the Lakewood community.*
- *Question: If expansion isn't possible, would you be comfortable with a recommendation to purchase a site nearby?*

- *Response from CAC member: Yes, assuming it's a larger building with a senior center included.*

- I support **Downtown A or C**, though for Option C I don't see how we would overcome the parking issue.
- I support **Downtown A** if we can make the building historical and the community is ok with the additional cost. If not, I support **Downtown B**. A new building may be more sustainable. I don't feel strongly that we need a larger space. I don't think the senior center should be a priority—if the space would support it, it could be included in a ballot for the community to decide.
 - *Response: There is currently no process underway to designate the building as historical. It's not a given that it would be granted historic status, particularly as it's been modified over the years.*
- I support **Downtown A** if we're only considering the existing location. If we were to find a new location, I would prefer a location that is as accessible as possible. I don't feel we should include space for a senior center because other age groups also need space. Have documents about existing building conditions been shared?
 - *Response: Yes, they are on the project website. Results of additional studies will be shared there as well.*
- My first choice is **Downtown A**. **Downtown B** is my second choice and **Downtown C** is my third choice. I don't support leasing for a library this large. Under the circumstances, the senior center needs to be a separate entity.
- **Downtown B**—if we rebuild, could we have underground parking to add space for other things? What does the Lakewood tax base want to spend? Could we add in retail/housing space for a mixed-use site?
- **Downtown B**—the population of Lakewood is growing with no indicator it's going to slow. We need to be adaptable. I have concerns about parking but understand there will be a follow up conversation. I don't think a senior center should be considered at this time. Focus on getting the library operational. I don't support leasing at Towne Center.
- **Downtown B**—it's the same price to rebuild as remodel.
- **Downtown B**. If a new location were to be found, access to public transit is key. I'm fine with including a senior center but it's not a priority.
- **Downtown B, D, or E**. If we go with B, I'm not in favor of incorporating community center. Would be open to it for D and E.

- **Downtown B.** The community deserves a new, modern library on the existing site. We should consider building up or underground.

Downtown Discussion Summary

- Six Committee members expressed an initial preference for **Downtown B: Completely rebuild on the existing site.**
- Five Committee members expressed an initial preference for **Downtown A: Substantially renovate the existing building,** with one of the five noting that if historic designation is not feasible, they would support Downtown B.
- Of the seven members who mentioned the senior center, one was in support of including a senior center, one was indifferent, and five stated that it was not a priority or were opposed.

Tillicum Library

Options

- Tillicum A. Renovate the existing building.
- Tillicum B. Build on the City-owned parcel.
- Tillicum C. Purchase property elsewhere and build a new library.

Comments from Individual CAC Members

- **Tillicum A.** Acquire the site and renovate the building.
- **Tillicum A.** Tillicum B is not a good option because there aren't sidewalks. Elementary school children use the current library and that wouldn't be safe. I'm also very interested in extending library hours.
- I support **Tillicum A** if we can continue partnership with Clover Park Tech.
- I support **Tillicum A** if we can expand the library and make it safer for school children to walk to the library.
- I support **Tillicum A** and expanding as much as possible. I would also hope Lakewood could own the building.
- I support **Tillicum A** assuming Lakewood can purchase the parcel. If we can't, I support working with owners to expand as much as possible.
- **Tillicum A.** I would like more info on making Tillicum C more feasible.
- I support **Tillicum A or B**—whichever is less expensive.
- I would like to explore **Tillicum B** if we can provide an accessibility solution. I am not in favor of building a larger library.

Tillicum Discussion Summary

- Seven members expressed preliminary support for **Tillicum A: Renovate the existing building.**
- One member expressed preliminary support for **Tillicum B: Build on the City-owned parcel** if accessibility can be improved.

- One member would support Tillicum A or B depending on which is less expensive.

Item 5: Next Steps and Meeting Close

At meeting 5 on October 26 at 10 am, the Committee will finalize recommendations and select two representatives to present findings at the Joint Library Board of Trustees and Lakewood City Council meeting on Thursday, November 17. Ginny and Darwin volunteered to serve in this capacity.

The meeting will start at 10:00 am. The meeting link for the public is

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84400013158>.

Public Comment

Based on a Committee vote in Meeting 3, members of the public were allowed to comment during the last portion of the agenda. Each commenter had up to three minutes to speak. Comments included:

- Behrooz Madjdi: “I worked more than half my career at Lakewood Library. Pierce County Library has not taken ownership of this fiasco that they’ve created. They have yet to say they made a mistake. I recommend that the City of Lakewood de-annex from PCLS. Ownership of the building will revert to the City of Lakewood. It will solve problem with Tillicum ownership as well. Library systems within city and county libraries are quite different. The nature of library services has changed enough that you don’t need that much space. In 5-6 years, 70-80% of materials will be digital. PCLS’s reputation is damaged so much that they won’t be able to get any kind of levy lid lift in the future. Break the connection with the library and re-start the process.”
- Karen Marie: “I’m a resident and homeowner in Lakewood. I walk by the library frequently. It’s alarming to see what’s happening in front of library. There is a sign stating there should be no camping or loitering. Please help me understand why there is no enforcement of the sign.”