



CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION

REPORT TO:	CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS
DEPARTMENT:	LIBRARIES
PREPARED BY:	Darlene Coke, Manager
REVIEWED BY:	Andrew Meyer, General Manager Stéphane Thiffeault, Chief Administrative Officer
MEETING DATE:	January 15, 2025
SUBJECT:	Joint Library Facilities Review – Progress Report

BACKGROUND

At a special meeting of Lambton County Council on January 18, 2023, Council approved Lambton County Library's Joint Library Facilities Review through the following motion:

#3: Bradley/Dennis: That the recommendations in the report dated January 18, 2023 regarding Lambton County Library Joint Facilities Review be approved and amended to include "That the report be brought to all lower tier municipalities first for their review for a period of no less than 45 days," so that the motion now reads:

- a) That Lambton County Library formally adopt a Library Classification System that aligns with the ARUPLO (Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario) Guidelines, consisting of four types of libraries: Urban, Large, Medium and Small.*
- b) That Lambton County Council direct staff to draft a Facility Standards Policy that defines minimum standards for design, amenities and upkeep of buildings occupied by Lambton County library.*
- c) That Lambton County Council, as Lambton's Public Library Board, adopt the Joint Library Facilities Review in principle, directing County staff to evaluate individual library sites against policy directives and enter into discussions with each lower-tier municipality / school board partner to define a path to achieving these directives.*
- d) That the report be brought to the lower tier municipalities first for their review for a period of no less than 45 days.*

Carried.

This report, funded by the Province of Ontario through its Municipal Modernization Program, was the first comprehensive study in many decades that had taken into account all aspects of library service, including usage/activity levels, locations, the condition and size of the buildings, current population and demographic data, and future population projections. The report was authored by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants and MJMA Architecture & Design, with representatives from both firms, along with senior staff, visiting Lambton's libraries and consulting with key municipal staff at ten lower-tier municipalities as well as the Lambton-Kent District School Board, a representative of the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation holding responsibility for library service, and front-line and supervisory library staff.

The report recommended that Lambton County Library:

- Continue to offer 0.7 square feet of library space per capita.
- Create 9,128 additional square feet of library space by 2031 to prepare for future population projections.
- Formally adopt a Library Classification System that aligns with the Administrators of Rural and Public Libraries of Ontario (**ARUPLO**) Guidelines consisting of four types of libraries: Urban, Large, Medium and Small.
- Draft a Facility Standards Policy that defines minimum standards to for design, amenities and upkeep of buildings occupied by Lambton County Library.
- Adopt the Joint Facilities Review and to proceed with evaluating individual library sites against policy directives and enter into discussions with each lower-tier municipality/school board partner (as building owners) to define a path to achieving these directives.

As an outcome of this report and the resulting resolution of Council, the report was brought to lower-tier municipalities for review and in late 2023, Council received and approved a Facility Standards Policy (O04.01) to outline the minimum standards required at each public library. The Facility Standards Policy ensures that the Library can offer accessible services, welcoming spaces, and spaces that are suitably sized and designed for modern library services which include access to technology and meeting spaces.

In 2024, Lambton County Library staff set meetings with key municipal contacts in the ten lower-tier municipalities that host libraries to make site visits to branch libraries. At the on-site meetings, both parties discussed the library's category according to ARUPLO Guidelines, discussed requirements as outlined in the policy, and planned capital improvements and accessibility plans and paths forward to make progress on any identified areas.

Since the reorganization of the Cultural Services Division in 2018, both upper-tier and lower-tier levels of government have been working together to make ongoing improvements to Lambton County Library's spaces in an effort to achieve previous strategic planning objectives and address facility standards, as follows:

- The County renovated the library's main administrative headquarters in Wyoming to support operations across 25 branch locations.
- The County renovated the Sarnia Library Theatre, including new seating, flooring, lighting, projection and sound controls, and improvements to the lobby space. In 2025, the County will complete renovations to the adjacent meeting rooms and remaining lighting improvements for the theatre to support user requirements.
- Through funding from the County Social Services Division and the Province of Ontario, private meeting spaces were constructed in Forest, Corunna, Thedford and Alvinston to support social service integration, and existing library spaces were reorganized to create private meeting space in Watford and Wyoming.
- The City of Sarnia renovated the Sarnia Library to create a single main entrance, add accessible washrooms on the second floor, and replace the HVAC system for the facility.
- Significant interior renovations to improve public spaces were completed at Forest, Petrolia, Alvinston, Corunna and Point Edward Libraries in partnership with lower-tier municipalities (flooring, painting, service desks, shelving, etc.).
- Major capital improvements were completed by lower-tier municipalities at Watford, Thedford, Corunna and Point Edward (roof work, window replacements, HVAC upgrades, etc.) to maintain library facilities.
- Funding from Ontario Health allowed for the addition of a connection cube meeting space at Sarnia Library.
- The City of Sarnia renovated available community hall space at Clearwater Arena to accommodate the relocation of the former Mallroad Library into a 4,000 square foot second floor library space overlooking the ice surface.

While much has been accomplished to modernize Lambton County Library's branch libraries since 2018, the Joint Library Facilities Review has set a path to continue working in partnership with lower-tier municipalities to ensure all libraries support patron accessibility and meet the needs of a present-day library service, while preparing for a future library service that includes access to more technology and the availability of meeting spaces.

This report will focus on the recent evaluation of Lambton County Library's 25 branch libraries that took place in consultation with lower-tier municipal staff, to inform future planning and investments by both the upper-tier and lower-tier levels of government.

DISCUSSION

The first step in evaluating the library branches was identifying each library's classification as either a **Small** (generally serving catchment areas of up to 5,000 population), **Medium** (5,000 to 10,000 population), **Large** (10,000 to 35,000 population) or **Urban** (35,000 or more population) branch, in accordance with ARUPLO Guidelines. This is done by evaluating the catchment area or population served by each library service point. To determine the population catchment area for each library, the County's Geographic Information System (**GIS**) was used to plot each library on a map, and then dividing the

geography of the County into catchments around each library using the road network. Population data from Statistics Canada was used to identify the population within the catchment area of each library.

Based on this analysis, the classifications for each library location are outlined in the attached **Appendix A: Lambton County Library Branches Aligned with ARUPLO Classification System**. Based on the classification assigned to each library, staff evaluated each facility against the best practices outlined in the ARUPLO Guidelines to ensure library spaces are well-positioned to meet local community needs, library service strategies, projected populations, compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, building standards, and other regulations and municipal policies. Each facility was also evaluated based on the appropriate square footage (s.f.) range of library space for each library type within the ARUPLO Guidelines, including general guidelines for **Small** (2,500 to 5,000 net library space square footage), **Medium** (5,000 to 10,000 s.f.), **Large** (10,000 to 35,000 s.f.) and **Urban** (35,000+).

In evaluating each library location against the ARUPLO Guidelines in consultation with lower-tier municipal staff, the discussions with the municipalities revealed the following service planning considerations and areas of focus:

- **Alvinston Library (Small branch):** This library meets the overall size guidelines; however, the layout of the library requires further adjustment by the County to ensure an accessible service desk, an increase in collection size of 1,210 items, and the addition of dedicated space for maker activities. Its general condition is good, and the municipality intends to budget for new flooring when the County budgets to install a new accessible service desk in 2026. The library washrooms do not meet Building Code requirements for barrier-free access. In terms of future growth space, it could be possible to extend the library space at the rear of the property if warranted by growth and should funding opportunities become available.
- **Arkona Library (Small branch):** This library is located within a former classroom space of the community centre, and is undersized by 1,706 to 4,206 square feet. While the community centre has a recently upgraded accessible entrance, the library signage and book return bin is placed in close proximity to the closest entrance to the library, which is not accessible. Signage and the book return bin will be repositioned to align with the accessible entrance. The facility also does not have a barrier-free washroom. The collection should have 2,738 to 8,738 more items, and the library lacks space for maker equipment, a program room suitable for a group of 30, or a study room. The library requires the additional placement of two public computer workstations, although space will not currently allow for these computers. The library also requires an accessible service desk which would cover a larger footprint than the existing service desk. Discussions will continue concerning the possibility to expand into other portions of the building (as proposed in the Joint Library Facilities Review). However, any expansions would impact other community partners using space within the building.

- **Brigden Library (Small branch):** This library, located within Brigden Public School meets the size guidelines of a small library, but it will require some interior configuration changes to add to the collection size and create dedicated maker space and study space. The agreement between the Township, the County and the Lambton-Kent-District School Board is outdated (drafted in 2005) and not all aspects remain current. In 2025, a new letter of understanding can be considered which would formalize the arrangement between the three parties in relation to the delivery of library service.
- **Bright's Grove Library (Medium branch):** In its current form, Bright's Grove Library is undersized by 3,213 to 8,213 square feet and has an inaccessible entrance, service desk, washrooms, and second floor gallery. However, the City of Sarnia has established a reserve to partially fund an expansion to this building that would provide a modern library that would meet ARUPLO Guidelines for a medium library in terms of size and accessibility. The City has completed detailed architectural and engineering drawings and a cost estimate to support the expansion, and is investigating the necessary site servicing work for the project. The City is also working with a committee of council to develop plans for a public fundraising campaign to help fund the project, and the City and County are collaborating on available grant opportunities.
- **Camlachie Library (Small branch):** While Camlachie Library meets the overall size guidelines established by ARUPLO, an interior floor plan re-design is necessary to reallocate space to include the addition of a dedicated maker space, and a study room and program room suitable for a group of 30. The public washroom does not meet Building Code requirements for barrier-free access, and the building's shared lobby can be enhanced to provide better way-finding to the library and museum through improved signage and organization. The exterior of the building also requires improved signage, general maintenance and landscaping improvements.
- **Clearwater Library (Large branch):** As Lambton's newest library space, the interior is tidy and its furnishings are in excellent condition. However, there remain a few items related to accessibility that need to be addressed including an undersized elevator cab that prevents barrier-free access between floors, and the condition of the shared arena parking lot. These are items that have been identified by patrons with mobility challenges and the County's Accessibility Advisory Committee. Clearwater Library's population catchment is over 25,000 people and as a 'large' category library, this building requires an additional 5,988 to 30,988 square feet to meet ARUPLO Guidelines. In the interim, City staff have suggested that the library may use a community room located on the first floor of the arena to hold programs. Use arrangements will need to be formalized.
- **Corunna Library (Medium branch):** The interior public space of this library is tidy and in relatively good condition following a partial renovation in 2018. However, this library is undersized by 2,675 to 7,675 square feet and its current location does

not provide any available space for expansion due to the limited property footprint. This building lacks a barrier-free washroom, and an accessible service desk is required at this library, along with storage space at the desk for courier bins. The municipality has budgeted for capital improvements to the building's exterior in 2025 including painting, façade window replacement, paving of the single-lane driveway and removal of perennial gardens to enhance parking and reduce maintenance.

- **Courtright Library (Small branch):** This library is undersized by 606 to 3,106 square feet and its current footprint is used to the best of its ability. This library does not have a barrier-free washroom, and it requires an accessible service desk along with storage space for courier bins. As an undersized space, it does not have available space for maker activities, dedicated study space or a program space suitable for a group of 30. It also requires an additional computer workstation, but space is not available. The exterior of the building requires some general maintenance.
- **Florence Library (Small branch):** This library is in excellent condition, and experienced a partial renovation (paint, shelving, furnishings, etc.) in 2017 following a fire in the library space. However, it is undersized by 1,347 to 3,847 square feet. The washroom within the library does not meet Building Code requirements for barrier-free access, although there is a barrier-free washroom in the larger centre space that may be available outside of rental periods. An accessible service desk is required at this library, along with storage space at the desk for courier bins. The library requires dedicated space for maker activities, private study space, and space for one additional public computer workstation. While the library itself does not have a program room that would accommodate a group of 30, it is likely that space in the community centre could be booked for classroom / large group activities when required. However, this type of space would not be desirable for government service partner initiatives, such as Service Canada appointments or Employment Ontario appointments with clients as private meeting rooms are required for this type of outreach activity to the community.
- **Forest Library (Small branch):** This library meets the size guidelines as a Small category library; however its interior space would need to be reconfigured to provide dedicated space for maker activities. The recently built private meeting space can also be used as private study space and a small program room. This library does not have a barrier-free washroom, but the service desk is accessible, having been replaced by the County during a renovation project in 2019. The flooring and the furnishings in the public portion of the library are in excellent condition, following a recent renovation. In 2025, the municipality intends to make some improvements to the walkway leading to the library from the parking lot to improve accessibility.
- **Grand Bend Library (Small branch):** Grand Bend Library was not visited during the time of the site tours as it is under ownership of the Lambton-Kent District

School Board. In the fall of 2024, the Municipality of Lambton Shores approached the County to report on the outcome of its Feasibility Study for a new community centre in Grand Bend. The outcome of that report recommended that should the municipality proceed with a new community centre complex in Grand Bend, it consider the library as an anchor tenant. In an effort to be considered for a Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund grant the Municipality proceeded with concept drawings that included 5,000 square feet of library space in the complex. The Municipality approved a recommendation to apply for the grant funding on December 2, 2024 and Lambton Shores Council reviewed the concept drawings at its meeting on December 17, 2024. A new larger library would be beneficial to Lambton County Library. It would not only allow the library to meet its small category size guideline, but it would also add an additional 1,000 square feet to Lambton's total library space. Lambton's Joint Library Facilities Review from 2023 recommended that Lambton acquire just over 9,000 additional square feet by 2031 to meet forecasted population projections and to ensure 0.7 square feet of library space per capita. Library and lower-tier municipal staff have also met with the school board to discuss the possible departure from the school property, should funding be secured. The school board was supportive of the project overall, as it creates some flexibility for the school as it continues to evaluate its space and make plans to expand its footprint to accommodate rising enrollment. A new community centre within walking distance to the school also creates new opportunities for the student population.

- **Inwood Library (Small branch):** This library is undersized by 1,304 to 3,804 square feet and requires an interior redesign to attempt to redistribute space to better align with ARUPLO Guidelines. The library requires an accessible service desk, along with storage for courier bins.
- **Mooretown Library (Small branch):** This library is located within a small room on the second floor of the Mooretown Sports Complex. The space is grossly undersized by 2,201 to 4,701 square feet as a small category library. It does not have an accessible service desk or adequate storage space, has undersized collections, and requires two additional computer workstations to meet ARUPLO Guidelines. It also does not feature dedicated maker space or study space. Program space could be achieved by using the adjacent second-floor viewing area that overlooks the sports complex's swimming pool. In order to meet the size requirements, discussion centered around the future possibility of expanding the library's footprint to include the entire second floor viewing area space, similar to the approach at Clearwater Library, while allowing for continued access for spectators of the swim area. This concept may be explored in the future and would require an architectural and structural engineering review to determine if it remains a possible solution for the consideration of St. Clair Township Council.
- **Oil Springs Library (Small branch):** This library is undersized by 1,485 to 3,985 square feet and is presently not accessible as the majority of the collection is located on an elevated level that requires travelling up a short flight of stairs. The

Village continues to pursue various grant opportunities that would address the need for a barrier-free path of travel and barrier-free access between floors, such as the addition of an accessible entrance at the rear of the building. The service desk is not accessible and the washroom is not barrier-free. The library is housed in the Village's former community hall and the second story is currently vacant and inaccessible. Should funding opportunities present themselves, the use of an accessible second floor would increase the library's square footage to better align it with ARUPLO Guidelines.

- **Petrolia Library (Medium branch):** As a medium category library, Petrolia Library is undersized by 2,675 to 7,675 square feet. In an effort to create more space for programs, County staff approached municipal representatives regarding the potential use of the adjacent Kerr Building to host library programs (during three seasons, as it is not well-suited for winter use). The library's footprint does not provide opportunities to offer dedicated maker space, private study space or private meeting space. The location of the public washroom inside the turret room prevents the room from use as a private meeting space. The washroom is not barrier-free. The physical appearance of the library is excellent and it features a new service desk following a renovation in 2019, however the collection is undersized by about 3,409 items. Lambton County Library will need to explore options to meet this guideline. The Town will be procuring engineering reports in 2025 to plan required work with the air handler within the next five years as a capital project.
- **Point Edward Library (Large branch):** This library offers an accessible power door at two exterior locations; however, as a multi-level library, it does not offer barrier-free access between floors. The library collection and computer workstations are divided amongst three levels of the building, making parts of the building inaccessible. As a large category library, serving a population catchment of 19,687, this library is undersized by 6,211 to 31,211 square feet. The washroom is not barrier-free and the multi-levels make sightlines challenging to maintain. At the end of 2024, the Village purchased new flooring for the library and it is tidy in appearance. With an undersized space, the library also has an undersized collection by 14,207 to 43,000 items, and is lacking dedicated private meeting space, study space, programming space suitable for a group of 30 and maker space. Discussions will need to continue with the municipality for future planning of this site to determine how it might better align with ARUPLO Guidelines in the future.
- **Port Franks Library (Small branch):** This library requires an additional 1,570 to 4,070 square feet to meet ARUPLO Guidelines as a small category library. While the exterior door to the facility has a power equipped accessible door, the door to the library itself is not powered, and must remain propped open. The washroom is also not accessible, and the library does not have an accessible service desk. The library space itself is dated and would benefit from the County painting and branding the space as it has done at other locations. The building also has an

awkward design in that much of the library floor area is taken up by a hallway space leading to two washrooms, and an underutilized office space occasionally occupied by lower-tier municipal staff. The library would benefit from pursuing the recommendations of the architect contained in the Joint Library Facilities Review, removing the wall and expanding the library's footprint to allow it to better align with ARUPLO Guidelines. Currently, the library has an undersized collection of 2,756 to 8,756 items, and does not have dedicated maker space, study space, or a program room that would accommodate a group of 30. Opportunities could be explored to accommodate larger groups in the adjacent community hall, however, arrangements would need to be made in advance with the municipality and user groups and the library would require sufficient staff support for oversight of programs in this separate area of the building. There is also a shortage of public seating and the need for an additional public computer workstation without available space.

- **Port Lambton Library (Small branch):** This library is undersized by 1,752 to 4,252 square feet. It does not have an accessible service desk or barrier-free washroom, and its small footprint makes it impossible to make accessibility improvements. Given the physical space of the library is undersized, so too is its collection, and it requires additional space for study space and dedicated maker space. It also requires two additional computer work stations. The County of Lambton remains in discussion with the Township of St. Clair to consider the possibility of consolidating this library with Sombra Library, but renovating and expanding the footprint of the Sombra Library into the available vacant space at the 3536 St Clair Parkway location.
- **Sarnia (Large branch):** This library meets the required square footage for a large library; however, ongoing interior and exterior reorganizations are required to address previous strategic planning commitments, modernize the space to support service delivery, and ensure ARUPLO Guidelines are met. While a set of doors to the eastern parking lot was made accessible in 2024, the addition of a vestibule, barrier-free doors and security gates are required before the doors can be used as a public entrance from the parking lot at the rear of the facility. The parking lot would also benefit from a barrier-free path of travel to the main front entrance on Christina Street, the re-painting of lines, and an improved ramp to the staff entrance. Interior building deficiencies include needed replacement of worn and damaged flooring, lighting, and ceiling tiles throughout the first and second floor. The elevator that services the employee workspace has remained out of service for more than 25 years, and should be put in service or properly decommissioned. The County needs to invest in new shelving and furnishings throughout the space, and a renovation of the children's space within the library is needed to create an engaging destination for families. This will require coordination with the City, as flooring and lighting improvements would need to take place simultaneously with investments in furnishings, fixtures, equipment and play spaces in the Children's Library. This renovation also has the potential to extend to the outdoor space under the theatre, which has been identified since the *2017 Sarnia Library Space*

Needs Study as a flexible program space for Lambton's largest library. In 2025, the County has included capital dollars to address asbestos abatement in the West Room meeting space adjacent to the theatre, as the County of Lambton holds responsibility for improvements to the theatre and the meeting spaces off the theatre lobby as the recipient of revenue from the rental of these spaces. Further abatement activities are needed in other area of the library that fall under the responsibility of the City.

- **Shetland (Small branch):** This library is undersized by 1,622 to 4,122 square feet and does not feature an accessible entrance, service desk, or washroom. The small footprint of the library also eliminates opportunities to make improvements for accessibility. There is no dedicated parking space for this library, nor paved shoulders of the road or laneway to the building, requiring patrons and staff to park on the shoulder of the road. The interior finishes of the space are worn and in need of replacement, and replacement diffuser covers for the damaged lighting fixtures cannot be obtained. Despite pest control measures, preventing access to the building by rodents is a challenge, and the exterior of the building requires regular maintenance to eliminate insect debris and overgrown vegetation. To meet ARUPLO Guidelines, 3,582 to 9,582 more items are required for the collection, and additional space is required for study space, a program room suitable for a group of 30, and dedicated maker space. The library also requires one additional public computer workstation. This library falls far below the County's standards for library service. The County will approach the Township to discuss the poor state of this library and alternative opportunities to meet the needs of residents with respect to library service delivery.
- **Sombra (Small branch):** This library is located in the old Council chambers of the former Sombra Township municipal office. It is currently undersized by 1,120 to 3,620 square feet; however, the County and the Township have been in discussions to consider renovating and expanding this library into available vacant space to fully utilize the building's footprint (as it was previously a shared space with a child care centre). The current library space is not fully accessible, as the public computer area is situated on a raised platform that previously accommodated the council seating, with no barrier-free access between floors. Architectural drawings will be required to re-design the interior space and all aspects of the ARUPLO Guidelines can be incorporated in the expanded footprint, such as a barrier free washroom, accessible service desk, dedicated maker space, study space and accessible programming space to accommodate a group of 30.
- **Thedford (Small branch):** This library meets the size requirements of a small library; however, the County will need to reconfigure its internal spaces to increase the collection size and to create dedicated space for maker activities and add a public computer workstation. The service desk is not accessible and the space requires improved storage areas including cabinetry. The County will also work with the Municipality to improve the visibility of the library within the arena complex by considering exterior and interior signage options. The Municipality is also

exploring heating / cooling solutions to address challenges maintaining comfortable temperatures year-round in the library space.

- **Watford Library (Small branch):** This library currently meets the size requirements of a small category library; however, the space requires the County and the Township to work together to develop a redesign of the space to allow for the appropriate collection size, the availability of dedicated study space and maker space, and a public computer workstation. The rear entrance is dedicated as the accessible entrance and a lift is available in the building to allow accessibility. An accessible service desk is needed, along with storage for courier bins. The interior finishes of the space (painting, flooring, etc.) are worn and in need of improvement. The Township recently replaced the roof and windows of the library and has set aside capital dollars in 2025 to replace the furnace. Municipal staff are also currently working with engineers to address foundation concerns in the basement. Once those concerns are addressed and repairs are complete, the Township and library staff can discuss turning their attention to required interior improvements.
- **Wilkesport Library (Small branch):** This library is undersized by 1,638 to 4,138 square feet and does not present an option to reconfigure the space to allow for additional public computer workstation, public seating, dedicated maker space or study space, or a program room suitable for a group of 30. The library does not feature an accessible entrance, an accessible service desk, or an accessible washroom. The walkway to the library entrance is narrow, and its uneven nature creates tripping hazards. The windows and drywall and paint are all in good condition and the Township has allocated funds to complete roof work in its 2025 capital budget.
- **Wyoming Library (Small branch):** This library currently meets the size requirements of a small category library; however, it requires the County to undertake an interior redesign to ensure the availability of dedicated maker space, and a suitable program room that can accommodate a group of 30 by eliminating the unnecessary kitchenette space. The library requires an accessible service desk, along with storage for courier bins, and it does not feature a barrier-free washroom. The absence of a dedicated parking lot, and a busy location with street parking in high demand have created parking challenges for patrons. Its north-facing entrance also creates challenges during the winter months with freeze / thaw cycles causing snow and ice to fall from the roof and create ice and snow hazards at the library entrance. The Town has proposed landscaping improvements that will help to address these issues, as well as the addition of an accessible ramp from the emergency exit on the west side of the building. These improvements are subject to funding availability, with grant opportunities being pursued to support these improvements.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be considerable financial implications over the next decade to continue achieving the recommendations set forth by the Joint Library Facilities Review, for both lower-tier and upper-tier municipalities. The responsibility of any costs would follow the Division of Responsibilities Agreement (1989), which requires the municipality to provide a suitable space for library service and capital improvements and the County of Lambton to furnish the space and provide the materials and staffing. It can be anticipated that substantial capital dollars will be requested every year for the next decade to fulfil the recommendations made in the Council-approved report. As outlined above, two notable projects that could have more immediate timelines include a possible expansion to Bright's Grove Library and a new Grand Bend Library. Staff are working to obtain cost estimates for the various improvements to be funded by the County, and will incorporate these requests as part of annual budget submissions to align with projects as they are implemented.

CONSULTATIONS

Lower-tier municipal staff were consulted in the creation of this report, in addition to the library's Facilities Supervisor.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The partnership between two levels of local government to deliver library service reflects a guiding principle of the County of Lambton: collaboration and partnerships. An investment in public libraries also results in an enhanced quality of life for residents. Public libraries contribute to the community's economic growth by providing informational and educational resources, technology, training, and spaces to meet and innovate.

CONCLUSION

While a number of investments by both levels of local government have been made to public libraries in Lambton County, the library service is at a critical juncture and must continue a range of improvements to its physical spaces to ensure they are fully accessible and responsive to community needs and expectations. Libraries have evolved since the days of simply exchanging books. However, physical limitations at some libraries have made it more challenging for the library to deliver a modern library service that includes suitable space for public programs, technology and the required spaces and electrical capacity to operate the equipment, private meeting spaces to provide government outreach services or the opportunity for people to meet remotely; and adequate display and storage space for collections that have evolved from books to items like telescopes, fishing poles and pickleball paddles. In evaluating each library against the Council-approved Facility Standards Policy (O04.01), the County is better positioned to work with its lower-tier municipal partners to ensure that the Library can offer accessible

services, welcoming spaces, and spaces that are suitably sized and designed for modern library service delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) That Lambton County Council direct staff to collaborate with lower-tier municipalities to address the library service planning considerations identified in the Joint Library Facilities Review – Progress Report, and incorporate such requests into future budget cycles for the consideration of Council.**
- b) That Lambton County Council direct staff to work with lower tier municipalities to pursue potential funding opportunities, grants or sponsorships to further any capital improvements to library spaces or design.**
- c) That Lambton County Council support, in principle, the relocation of the Grand Bend Library as part of the proposed Grand Bend Community Centre project, pending the outcome of the public consultation process undertaken by the Municipality of Lambton Shores and endorsement by Lambton Shores Council, and the establishment of a satisfactory Service Agreement between the County of Lambton and the Municipality of Lambton Shores.**
- d) That Lambton County Council direct staff to continue working with the Municipality of Lambton Shores to further develop plans for a new Grand Bend Library, should the Municipality of Lambton Shores proceed with the project.**
- e) That Lambton County Council direct staff to engage the Township of Dawn-Euphemia in discussions about the current state of Shetland Library and potential options for the future that may include an expansion to the site, the closure of the site, or a new library service point in the Township.**
- f) That Lambton County Council direct staff to continue to engage the Township of St. Clair in discussions regarding the potential consolidation of Sombra and Port Lambton libraries, and the status of libraries within St. Clair Township.**