



**REGIONAL DISTRICT  
of Fraser-Fort George**

**ROBSON VALLEY EXPLORATION AND LEARNING SERVICE  
FEASIBILITY STUDY**

**December 2015**

Regional District of Fraser-Fort George  
155 George Street, Prince George BC V2L 1P8  
Telephone (250) 960-4400 / Toll Free 1-800-667-1959 / Fax (250) 562-8676  
<http://www.Regional District.bc.ca>

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

For 25 years, the McBride & District Public Library and the Valley Museum and Archives Society have co-located at 241 and 261 Dominion Street, providing library and museum services to the residents of McBride and area. There is approximately 2,400 square feet (sq. ft.) available for the display of books for loan, computer stations, storage area, (meeting rooms) reception area, washrooms. 500 sq. ft. of the 2,400 sq. ft. is available to the museum for their displays. The current location is small and the library building and annex are old and beyond repair. As a result, the two organizations started an effort to find more suitable premises where they could operate from.

Working with representatives from the Village of McBride and the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG), the library and museum have undertaken a feasibility study to explore a number of options which would address their current and future space and programming requirements.

This report gives a detailed examination of the three options deemed to be the most sustainable and cost-effective. In summary, they are as follows:

### OPTION ONE – Renovate the Existing Library and Annex at 241 and 261 Dominion Street

This option calls for renovations to the current space, but does not address the space deficiency for current library programs nor the additional space requirements for the Museum for archives and artifacts storage. The only way to gain additional space with this option would be to build a second floor onto the library building, or to bring a modular trailer on-site for additional space.

The cost of this option is estimated to be \$1,052,100

### OPTION TWO – Build a New Facility on Lots 1 & 2 on Main Street

This option calls for the construction of a new 7000 sq. ft. facility on vacant lots purchased by the museum in July 2015. The facility would have 3,000 sq. ft. allocated to the library and 2,000 sq. ft. for Museum purposes with the remaining 2,000 sq. ft. to be used for office space, meeting rooms, presentation areas and computer space.

The cost of this option is estimated to be \$1,630,000

### OPTION THREE – Purchase 521 Main Street

This option calls for the purchase of a vacant commercial building located at 521 Main Street. The acquisition of 521 Main Street would provide 7,000 sq. ft. of space which is sufficient for the library and the Museum to address their current and future programming needs. The space would be allocated between the library and the museum and would include shared space. Option Three includes 2,000 sq. ft. for the

museum; 3,000 sq. ft. for the library; and 2,000 sq. ft. of shared space for an office area, meeting rooms, presentation areas and computer space. Under this option, the RDFFG would hold a referendum and with Board approval, create the Robson Valley Exploration and Learning Service. The RDFFG would purchase the building, and the library and museum would enter into a long-term agreement with the RDFFG to occupy and operate 521 Main. Renovations would be required to make the building suitable for library and museum services.

The cost of this option is estimated to be \$688,230

Based on the information provided in this report, it is recommended that purchasing 521 Main Street is the best option. This option is the most cost effective and provides the necessary space for the library and museum to operate and have improved space for storing of the museum artifacts. The location is highly visible and considered a major benefit to help attract visitors.

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years the McBride & District Public Library and the Valley Museum and Archives Society have been working towards locating a new facility where both organizations can operate out of and provide programs to meet their needs and the needs of the area it serves.

In 2012, a committee of representatives from the library and museum hired Shoop Group Consulting Ltd. to assist with the proposed expansion project. The Shoop Group produced a report entitled *"Another 100 Years – Into The Future" A Business Case for a New Library, Museum and Archives Facility at McBride*, December 28, 2012 (hereinafter referred to as the Shoop Report). This report focused on purchasing a vacant commercial property on Main Street (521 Main Street), McBride BC and provided an overview of the proposed project including a review of the state of the current facilities, anticipated costs that would be incurred to purchase 521 Main Street, expected benefits to be derived from the project, potential funding sources and a draft implementation timetable. Where appropriate, information from the Shoop Report has been included in this report.

The original intention of purchasing a new facility was that it would be funded 100% through various grant funding opportunities. As the library and museum worked through this step it became apparent grant monies were not available to purchase or build a new joint facility. In June 2015 the library and museum submitted a request to the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George Board to provide assistance to explore the feasibility of an expanded library-museum facility in McBride. The Regional Board supported Administration work with a local steering committee with representatives from the Village of McBride, McBride & District Library, Valley Museum and Archives Society and Regional District of Fraser-Fort George to evaluate the feasibility of an expanded library/museum facility.

The purpose of the study is to identify:

- if the current facilities for the McBride & District Public Library and the Valley Museum and Archives Society meet the current operational needs for both organizations,
- if the facilities can support the future needs of the community,
- changes necessary to the facility to meet current and future needs,
- the costs associated with a new joint library/museum facility, and
- how the cost for the new facility can be funded.

The feasibility study will look at various options and recommend the most suitable and cost effective solution to meet the long term needs of both the library and the museum where they can cohabitate, have sufficient room for both centers to operate out of, and sufficient room to store existing museum artifacts which are currently kept in various locations in the community. The solution must be sustainable and financially viable.

The goal is to examine a number of options that address the needs of the library and the museum and identify the option best suited to provide the space required to continue to deliver services and programs and to be in a position to offer additional programs, as well as to identify the cost of the options and how the options will be funded.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 1983, through Letters Patent, the Robson Valley Library Service was established to provide funding raised through taxation to both the McBride & District Public Library and the Valemount Public Library to assist with the libraries operational costs only. The service area that supports the two libraries includes all properties within Electoral Area H, the Village of McBride and the Village of Valemount.

The Valley Museum and Archives was established in 1985. In 2006, it became part of the Regional District's Regional Cultural Plan and has received an annual grant every year that covers the majority of its operating expenses. The museum has been dependent on space loaned to it from the Village of McBride for storage of its archives. However, this space has been deemed inadequate for museum and archival purposes.

At this time the library and the museum operate out of 241 Dominion Street, McBride BC. There is approximately 2,400 square feet (sq. ft.) available for the display of books for loan, computer stations, storage area, meeting rooms, reception area, and washrooms, 500 sq. ft. is available to the museum for their displays.

Although libraries across the province identify lack of space as one of the biggest challenges in effectively meeting their communities' informational and entertainment needs, McBride's 1.6 sq. ft. per capita is significantly less than the average of 2.7 sq. ft. of other BC public libraries serving similar sized communities. There are no set standards in British Columbia that define the per capita space required for a library to service its residents. If using the Alberta Library standards, McBride would require a minimum of 5,000 sq. ft. Given the changing nature of library services, and increasing expectations for libraries to provide flexible, dynamic learning environments, libraries are designing facilities that will support future growth.

Similarly, for at least 10 years the museum has recognized that their current facilities simply aren't sustainable. At present, the museum facility has 500 sq. ft. of exhibition space. Exhibitions change every few weeks and range from exhibits of local and regional artists, schools and local historic, industrial, seasonal and archival subjects. The museum lacks space to properly store and care for cultural and historic collections and is unable to acquire additional artifacts due to a lack of storage space. The current facility does not provide sufficient space for permanent and interactive displays. This limits the museum's ability to be a place for residents and visitors to learn about the history and culture of the area.

The museum is part of a joint marketing program that promotes 10 regional cultural attractions in Mackenzie, Prince George, McBride, Valemount, Barkerville and Fort St. James. Of the 10 participating sites, the museum in McBride is the smallest. By comparison, the Valemount Museum has 4,000 sq. ft. while the Mackenzie Museum has 2,000 sq. ft. of display space.

## **LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF CURRENT FACILITIES**

The current buildings do not meet the needs of the library or the museum. Three buildings and at least two private residences are being used to either operate programs or for the storage of artifacts. Using multiple facilities increases the operating costs for heat, light, maintenance and insurance, as well as the difficulty in tracking artifacts and the protection of these items.

As a result of a lack of space, the library has hosted or co-hosted events in the high school auditorium, the elementary school gym, the Evangelical Free Church and the Robson Valley Community Centre. The lack of available space dictates the number of participants in programs and the types of programs that can be offered at the library.

The main section of the library was built in 1967. Funds to build the facility were from grants, savings, fundraising, and labour donations. Less than 20 years later the library outgrew its space and an addition was built with funds from the Expo Legacy grant program. The library is currently in need of repairs. The windows are old and leaking and are not energy efficient and the heating and ventilation system is in need of repairs and upgrades. The insulation in the museum exhibition space is below standard, thus creating heat loss, higher heating costs and an uncomfortable environment. There are drainage issues under the building causing mould and structural damage to the floor joists. These environmental conditions pose a threat to the integrity of the historical artifacts when on display at the museum.

In 2001, the McBride & District Public Library Association asked the Regional District to purchase the Annex next to the library from BC Building Corporation. The funds for the purchase of the Annex came from the McBride & District Public Library. The intended use for the Annex was to provide additional space for the library to use as a computer room, program room, meeting room and additional office space, available for both the library and museum. There are several limitations to the Annex building. The Annex has no wheelchair access and there is no running water in the building, therefore, patrons who require washroom facilities have to go across to the library. Stretching the library facilities across two buildings also limits the ability for library staff to provide sufficient supervision within the Annex. The building is beyond repair.

Storage is a significant issue for the museum. The museum had been storing many of its artifacts and collections in an old building loaned to the museum by the Village of McBride. As a result of environmental conditions, including a lack of an adequate ventilation system, heat loss, and flooding, most of the collections cannot be kept in that space.

To reduce deterioration, it is considered best practice for museums to rotate artifacts between exhibition and storage. Exhibit conditions, such as lighting, dust, and the way in which artifacts are mounted or hung, accelerate deterioration and often cause irreversible damage. Appropriate storage needs to consider factors that support the preservation of the collections such as temperature, relative humidity, light, air pollution and handling.

## **CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS**

### **Library**

In 2014, the library offered 131 programs for adults, 84 programs for children, and 36 programs for teens, with a total attendance of 2,945. These numbers demonstrate that there is community interest in a variety of programming. Additional space, appropriate for the programs being offered, would result in an increase in these numbers. The programs being considered for the new space will not compete with other programs or spaces that already exist in the Village of McBride.

A significant challenge faced by the library when offering programs is that the number of participants is limited due to the size of the current usable space and the fire capacity regulations. Within the last year, programs like Mother Goose on the Loose, Christmas crafts for kids, Lego Robotics, and presentations like the launch of a seed library exceeded comfortable space, forcing participants into aisles and to watching from between the rows of books.

The Shoop Report identified the following limitations of the current library space:

- The Mother Goose Story-Time program is limited due to overcrowding.
- Patrons of the library cannot study during events taking place in the library.
- Patrons are unable to use the multi-purpose space at the same time as programs are taking place.
- The space is neither conducive to early learning nor the informal gathering that accompanies family programs.
- There is no private or secure space for those undertaking exams.
- Insufficient space for a computer lab to house the 13 computer workstations.
- Forced to maintain a smaller inventory of books and periodicals.

The Robson and Canoe Valley Library's Success by Six Committee and the McBride Youth Committee have identified a need for more after-school programming for the children of McBride. In addition, a survey conducted by the Success by Six Committee emphasized the importance of early literacy programs, such as Mother Goose Story Time for healthy childhood development. Programs offered throughout the year could serve more people if additional space was available.

There are fewer opportunities for seniors to meet, connect and socialize. Accessible, appropriate space in a central location would support more formal and informal opportunities for all ages, and help build inter-generational relationships in our community.

Library future needs:

- flexible space to support technology, research, learning, experimentation, and play for all ages,
- additional shelf space to allow for continually new material for the library collections,
- children's play and teen meeting spaces,
- computer lab space,
- meeting space for 20-30 people,
- areas for displays,
- semi-private tutoring space and a space for exams,
- comfortable area for reading/relaxing/intermixing with friends and new acquaintances, and
- private meeting space for 10-15 people.

**Museum**

The space allocated to the museum is for temporary exhibitions only. There is no dedicated space to prepare materials for display. Artifacts must be brought to the museum building from an offsite storage location and can be cumbersome to transport and handle, which poses a threat to the integrity of the artifacts. There is no dedicated space to hold any programs that provide visitors a hands-on opportunity to explore the history and heritage of McBride and the Robson Valley area. The space available is cramped and not conducive to exploration.

Museum future needs:

- permanent space to house collections in a proper climate-controlled environment for storage and display,
- access to research/local history section/archives,
- dedicated space to display artifacts and expand collections,
- space to hold speaker series presentations
- dedicated space where archives are available for education and research purposes,
- space for computer workstations, and
- outdoor space for exhibits.

## **FUTURE PROGRAMING**

The library and museum would like to work collaboratively in offering new programs that currently cannot be offered, due to space requirements.

Programs discussed include:

- digital skills development such as maker labs and video editing and computer courses,
- genealogy courses,
- teen-centred programs (including arts & crafts),
- homework assistance and social media awareness,
- tech tutors (partnering seniors and teens),
- hands on demonstrations and lessons of traditional skills, and
- Destruction Day (encouraging youth to take apart and learn what makes machines work).

## **LOCATION OF FACILITY**

Over the past several years the library and museum have identified different options to co-locate in a facility that would meet the need for additional space. A number of possible options were looked at: rebuilding on the Annex property; building a second story onto the current library; and building a new facility on the two lots the library is currently situated on. The Shoop Report identified and assessed a number of vacant properties deemed to be acceptable for a new facility. Those properties were evaluated on cost, space and accessibility.

The steering committee has narrowed down to the three most sustainable and financially viable options that would meet the needs of both the library and the museum.

## **OPTIONS**

All three options require, the establishment of a new service, borrowing of funds for capital expenditures and raising funds through taxation to cover debt repayment costs. The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George would purchase the facility and enter into an agreement with the library for use of the facility. Fund raising activities have been taking place over the past number of years for a new home for the library and the museum. Funds raised to date of \$44,700 are being used to offset capital costs. Fund raising activities will continue with monies raised being contributed to the project.

For the purposes of this report, construction cost estimates for the various options are based on \$230 per sq. ft. This is based on information from the Construction Cost Guild (2014) prepared by the Altus Group that says the cost per sq. ft. for this type of facility ranges from \$185 to \$215 for buildings constructed in the lower mainland. An additional 15% is added for construction costs in the north.

### **Option One – Renovate the existing Library and Annex at 241 and 261 Dominion Street**

The McBride & District Public Library Association currently owns the library facility located at 241 Dominion Street. The property is known as District Lot 5316 Plan Number PGP1373 Lot 7 Block 5. In 2015, the assessed value of land and improvements was \$61,700.

The library also runs programs out of the building adjacent to the library at 261 Dominion Street, McBride BC. This building is referred to as the “Annex” and is owned by the Regional District. The property is known as District Lot 5316, Plan Number PGP1373 Lot 6, Block 5. In 2015, the assessed value of land and improvements is \$31,900. There is a Property Use Agreement in place between the Regional District and the library for use of the Annex. This agreement expires on April 30, 2017.

The current location is situated in a residential area of the community and visitors and new residents have a difficult time trying to locate it. Having a facility that is difficult to find is a deterrent to attracting tourists off the highway.

Option One calls for renovations to the current space, and would see the library and museum continue to operate out of the existing location. This option does not address the issue of a space deficiency for the current library programs nor the additional space requirements for the museum for archives and artifacts storage. The only way to gain additional space with this option would be to build a second floor onto the library building, or to replace the Annex with a modular trailer on-site for additional space.

Adding a 1,500 sq. ft. second floor, if possible, would provide an additional 1,000 sq. ft. of usable space. Engineering services would be required to determine if a second floor addition could be done and to provide a cost estimate. There are also access issues with a second floor and an elevator would be required to

ensure universal design principles are met so all members of the public have access to both floors of the facility. Any new construction would have to follow current zoning and building regulations. At this time the impact of new building regulations has not been investigated.

The Annex building was built in 1950 and is in the greatest need of repair and renovations. Due to the age and structure of the building, consideration should be given to tearing it down and replacing it with a new or modular 2,000 sq. ft. building.

#### Benefits

- library and museum remain in the same location,
- Annex building will be replaced and have washroom facilities making it a more useable space, and
- additional space for programs and meetings.

#### Limitations

- additional space would be limited to 1,000 sq. ft. for the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor,
- space issues are not adequately addressed,
- no expansion for the museum or storage for archives and artifacts, therefore, archives will remain off site,
- facility will be closed during renovations,
- contents stored off-site during construction,
- Regional District to take ownership of 241 Dominion Street,
- location of the facility in a residential area and difficult for visitors to find,
- insufficient parking space,
- requirement to conform with current standards including set-backs and coverage requirements for public development zoning and universal access design principles,
- no outdoor display space for museum artifacts or summer programming,
- challenges supervising two buildings, and
- need Ministry of Education approval to transfer property to the Regional District and enter into a long-term lease.

**Estimated Cost – Option One**

**Library Renovations:**

Second floor addition – 1,500 sq. ft. @ \$230/sq. ft.	\$345,000
Elevator System (platform lift)	20,000
First floor renovations	93,600
Engineering fees	48,500
Additional interior design and furnishings	<u>80,000</u>
Sub-total Library (241 Dominion Street)	<u>\$587,100</u>

**Removal/Replacement of Annex:**

Remove Annex Building	\$ 5,000
2,000 sq. ft. building \$230/sq. ft.	<u>460,000</u>
Sub-total Annex	<u>\$465,000</u>

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$1,052,100</u></b>
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**Option Two – Build a New Facility on Lots 1 and 2 of District Lot 5316, Cariboo District Plan 24003.**

In July 2015, the museum, along with support of the library, purchased two adjacent vacant lots on Main Street in McBride. The legal description is Lots 1 and 2 of District Lot 5316, Cariboo District Plan 24003. These lots were purchased from unrestricted funds earned from multiple fund raising activities over the past several years. This option considers building a new facility for the library and museum on these two lots.

By purchasing the two lots, the library and museum will now have the ability to apply for capital grants. Many grants require the organization requesting the grant to own the lands or lands and buildings. As the owner of these lots, the groups are now in a position to apply for these types of grants.

Based on a 7,000 sq. ft. facility, 3,000 sq. ft. would be allocated to the library and 2,000 sq. ft. would be for museum purposes with the remaining 2,000 sq. ft. to be used for office space, meeting rooms, presentation areas and computer space.

**Benefits**

- addresses the space needs for current and future programming,
- computer lab space allowing better use of current computer resources,
- better study areas and space for children, youth and senior oriented activities,
- more shelf and display space,
- semi-private tutoring area and space for exam supervision,
- auditorium space for up to 30 people,
- a separate meeting space for community groups for up to 15 people,
- climate controlled building,
- fully fire proof storage vault for archival materials,
- working space with controlled access for educators, students and researchers,
- expanded display and storage space for existing and future artifacts and exhibitions,
- dedicated space to work on and prepare museum exhibits,
- computer workstations for researchers and visitors for on-line access to all of the museum's materials,
- no disruption of service during construction,
- easier to access to help attract tourists,
- proceeds from sale of current library building would go toward new facility if approved by the Minister of Education,
- built to universal design,
- ability to apply for grants, and
- HVAC system could be designed and built with consideration to specific requirements for museum archive storage.

Limitations

- property needs to be rezoned,
- requirement to obtain variance permit from the Village of McBride,
- insufficient parking,
- lack of green space and outdoor museum display space,
- transfer ownership of the lots from the museum to the Regional District, and
- approval from the Minister of Education for long-term lease arrangement if required.

**Estimated Cost – Option Two**

**Library Construction:**

7,000 sq. ft. @ \$230/sq. ft.	\$1,610,000
Archival vault	15,000
Computer network	<u>5,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u><u>\$1,630,000</u></u></b>

### **Option Three – Purchase 521 Main Street**

The acquisition of 521 Main Street would provide 7,000 sq. ft. of space which is sufficient for the Library and the museum to address their current and future programming needs. The space would be allocated between the library and the museum and would include shared space. Option Three includes 2,000 sq. ft. for the museum; 3,000 sq. ft. for the library; and 2,000 sq. ft. of shared space for an office area, meeting rooms, presentation areas and computer space.

#### **Benefits:**

- proceeds from sale of current library building would go toward new facility if approved by the Minister of Education,
- lots purchased in Option Two can be used for parking space and outdoor exhibits,
- room for future growth,
- meets the space needs of the library and museum,
- computer lab space allowing better use of current computer resources,
- better study areas and space for children, youth and senior oriented activities,
- more shelf and display space,
- semi-private tutoring area and space for exam supervision,
- auditorium space for up to 30 people,
- a separate meeting space for community groups for up to 15 people,
- climate controlled building,
- fully fire proof storage vault for archival materials,
- working space with controlled access for educators, students and researchers,
- expanded display and storage space for existing and future artifacts and exhibitions,
- dedicated space to work on and prepare museum exhibits,
- computer workstations for researchers and visitors for on-line access to all of the museum's materials,
- built to universal design,
- no disruption of service during renovations,
- sufficient parking,
- secure storage for archives, and
- a highly visible location, easy to see from highway to help attract tourists.

#### **Limitations**

- property needs to be rezoned,
- additional renovations will be required over time, and
- approval from the Minister of Education for a long term lease arrangement may be required.

Not all benefits will be realized immediately upon the opening of the facility to the public. Additional renovations to the space will be done in phases as the library and museum secure grants and fundraising monies.

To ensure the 521 Main Street property is available for purchase until a referendum is held to determine tax payer support, a Conditional Offer to Purchase in the amount of \$450,000 has been entered into with the property owners of 521 Main Street. The Offer is contingent upon tax payer and Regional District Board support to establish a new service and to borrow the funds for the purchase of the building. It is also contingent on the property being re-zoned by the Village of McBride to permit use by a library and museum.

Renovations to the 521 Main Street building are required to ensure the space will meet the needs of the library and the museum. Renovations are estimated at \$89,860. Renovations include electrical and plumbing work, removal of front doors, repairs to bathrooms, installation of an arctic entrance at main entry, new archive vault, installation of carpet, and installation of computers and the required networking. This amount is included in the Capital Budget see Appendix "B".

A current engineering assessment of the condition of the building took place in October 2015. The report identified deficiencies and maintenance issues and pointed out that the building was well built in accordance with the BC Building Code 2006 and that the building remains structurally sound. Deficiencies identified that require immediate attention are labeling of the circuit breaker panel, installation of overhead lighting in the mechanical room, and finishing the ceiling in the mechanical room. Other issues were listed as maintenance issues that should not be ignored or postponed as they could lead to larger problems with expensive remedies. Estimated cost for repairs and maintenance to address the issues identified in the engineering assessment is \$35,110. This amount is included in the Capital Budget. See Appendix "B"

**Estimated Cost**

Property purchase	\$450,000
Renovations and repairs	124,970
Legal and engineering costs	4,000
Feasibility fund repayment	25,000
Miscellaneous and contingencies	<u>64,260</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u><u>\$668,230</u></u></b>

The building located at 521 Main Street provides a significantly improved environment for the display, care and storage of historical collections. Modifications to the building will still be required to ensure things like heat, insulation, air circulation and humidity meet best practices and standards for a museum. For the short-term, the museum can operate with the current ventilation system. Modifications to the building's ventilation system would occur in a later phase of renovations.

In the interim, consideration is being given to have non-sensitive archives (newspapers) stored in a storage container outside on the lot at 521 Main St. The storage container would provide an additional 320 sq. ft. of space for shelving and walkways. Sensitive materials would be kept inside the building in an archival vault that is approximately 90 sq. ft.

As part of Option Three, the Regional District would purchase and maintain ownership of 521 Main Street. A long-term lease agreement or property use agreement between the McBride & District Public Library Association and the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George would transfer the operation and maintenance of the facility to the library. The library in turn would enter into a long-term agreement with the Valley Museum and Archives Society for the museum's space and use of 521 Main Street. Both the library and museum have confirmed, in writing, their intention to enter into a long-term agreement.

**SUMMARY OF OPTIONS**

For all three options the establishment of a new service is required and the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George would be the owner of the facility.

Option	Estimated Cost	Benefits	Limitations
<p><u>Option One:</u> Renovate existing building at 241 Dominion and replace Annex</p>	<p>\$1,052,100</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- new building for Annex with washroom facilities</li> <li>- renovations would make existing space more useable</li> <li>- disposal of property not necessary</li> <li>- keep library and museum in the same location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- additional space 1,000 sq. ft. 2<sup>nd</sup> floor</li> <li>- space issues are not adequately addressed</li> <li>- no expansion for the museum or storage for archives and artifacts, archives will remain off site</li> <li>- requirement to conform with current standards including set-backs and coverage requirements for public development zoning and universal access design principles</li> <li>- facility will be closed during renovations</li> <li>- -contents stored off-site during construction</li> <li>- Regional District to take ownership of 241 Dominion Street</li> <li>- location of the facility in a residential area, difficult for visitors to find</li> <li>- insufficient parking</li> <li>- no outdoor space for displays</li> <li>- challenges supervising two buildings</li> <li>- need Ministry of Education approval to transfer property to the Regional District and to enter into a long-term lease arrangement</li> </ul>
<p><u>Option Two</u> Build on Lot 1 and 2</p>	<p>\$1,630,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ability to apply for grants</li> <li>- meets the space needs of the library and museum</li> <li>- space for future growth</li> <li>- climate controlled building</li> <li>- proceeds from sale of current library building would go toward new facility if approved by the Minister of Education</li> <li>- built to universal design</li> <li>- secure storage for archives</li> <li>- no disruption to service during construction</li> <li>- easier to access to attract tourists</li> <li>- ability to design and build HVAC system to support proper storage of artifacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- property needs to be rezoned</li> <li>- insufficient parking</li> <li>- lack of green space and outdoor museum display space</li> <li>- transfer ownership of the lots from the museum to the Regional District</li> <li>- need approval from Minister of Education for long-term lease arrangement</li> </ul>

<p><b>Option Three</b> 521 Main Street</p>	<p>\$668,230</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- proceeds from sale of current library building would go toward new facility if approved by the Minister of Education</li> <li>- no disruption to service during renovations</li> <li>- lots purchased in Option Two can be used for parking space and outdoor exhibits</li> <li>- space for future growth</li> <li>- meets the space needs of the library and museum</li> <li>- secure storage for archives</li> <li>- sufficient parking</li> <li>- built to universal design</li> <li>- highly visible location easily seen from the highway to help attract tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- property needs to be rezoned</li> <li>- additional renovations will be required over time</li> <li>- need approval from Minister of Education for long-term lease arrangement</li> </ul>
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**RECOMMENDATION**

Three options were investigated to determine the most feasible and suitable location for a new Robson Valley Exploration and Learning service. As identified in the summary table, the costs differ for each option and the benefits and limitations vary as well. Based on the information provided in the report, it is recommended that purchasing 521 Main Street is the best option. This option is the most cost effective and provides the necessary space for the library and the museum to operate and have improved space for storing of the museum artifacts. The location is highly visible and considered a major benefit to help attract visitors.

Property Acquisition and Disposal:

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George has entered into a Conditional Offer to Purchase with the owners of 521 Main Street, McBride BC.

The Offer to Purchase is contingent on the following:

- Obtaining elector assent to establish a new service
- Service Area Establishment Bylaw and Loan Authorization Bylaw adopted by the Regional Board
- The property being rezoned by the Village of McBride for the permitted use for library and museum purposes, and
- Closing date of June 30, 2016

The McBride & District Public Library Association is looking into obtaining ministerial approval to dispose of the current library site at 241 Dominion Street should there be a decision to move the library and museum operations to another location. The funds raised from the sale of this property may be used to pay down the debt or for future capital library expenditures.

In July 2015, the Valley Museum and Archives, along with support of the McBride & District Public Library, purchased two adjacent vacant lots, Lots 1 and 2 of District Lot 5316 District Plan 24003. These lots were purchased to either provide land to build a new facility or to be used in conjunction with the Robson Valley Exploration and Learning service (521 Main Street).

## **SOURCES OF FUNDING**

### **User Fees**

Under the *Library Act*, the library is not permitted to charge user fees for admission to any part of the building used for public library purposes or for using library materials on library premises. There is the ability to charge user fees for services that are not provided free of charge. The *Local Government Act*, does permit regional districts to fund a facility's operating costs through the implementation of user fees. The library is not permitted to charge user fees and it would be difficult for the Regional District to implement user fees since the use of the facility would be transferred to either the McBride & District Public Library Association and/or the Valley Museum & Archives.

### **Taxation**

Under the *Local Government Act*, there are several options available for funding a facility service through property taxation. The Committee has investigated the following methods:

- a) taxation of land and improvements;
- b) taxation of land;
- c) taxation of improvements; and
- d) parcel tax.

The committee has concluded that the fairest method of sharing the cost of the facility service would be to tax land and improvements within the boundaries of the service area since this facility will benefit all properties within the identified service area. This is the most common method of property taxation and the same method used for the Robson Valley Library Service and for collection of school taxes.

## **CAPITAL COST ESTIMATES**

Estimated capital costs to acquire and renovate the proposed new facility are \$668,230. These costs are for the purchase of the 521 Main Street property, renovation costs to ensure the facility meets the needs of the Library and the museum and minor repairs to the building identified in the Engineering Inspection Report dated October 27, 2015. See Schedule 'B' for the costs breakdown.

These funds would be provided by a 25-year debenture issued through the Municipal Finance Authority. The funds borrowed would be repaid by annual interest and principal payments over this term from the service's annual operating budget. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that the interest rate for borrowing through the Municipal Finance Authority will be 3.0% annually.

## **ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET**

The proposed annual operating budget for the facility service is shown on Schedule 'C'. The budget has been set up to reflect all costs associated with the service including annual debt retirement, property taxes and operating reserve funds for an estimated total of \$74,550 per year.

## **TAXATION CALCULATION**

In order to calculate property tax rates and the tax impact of the proposed facility service, it was necessary to determine taxable land and improvement assessments for the area to be served. Schedule 'D' identifies the total net taxable assessments of land and improvements within the service area for each property class, and identifies the applicable tax rate for each of the classes.

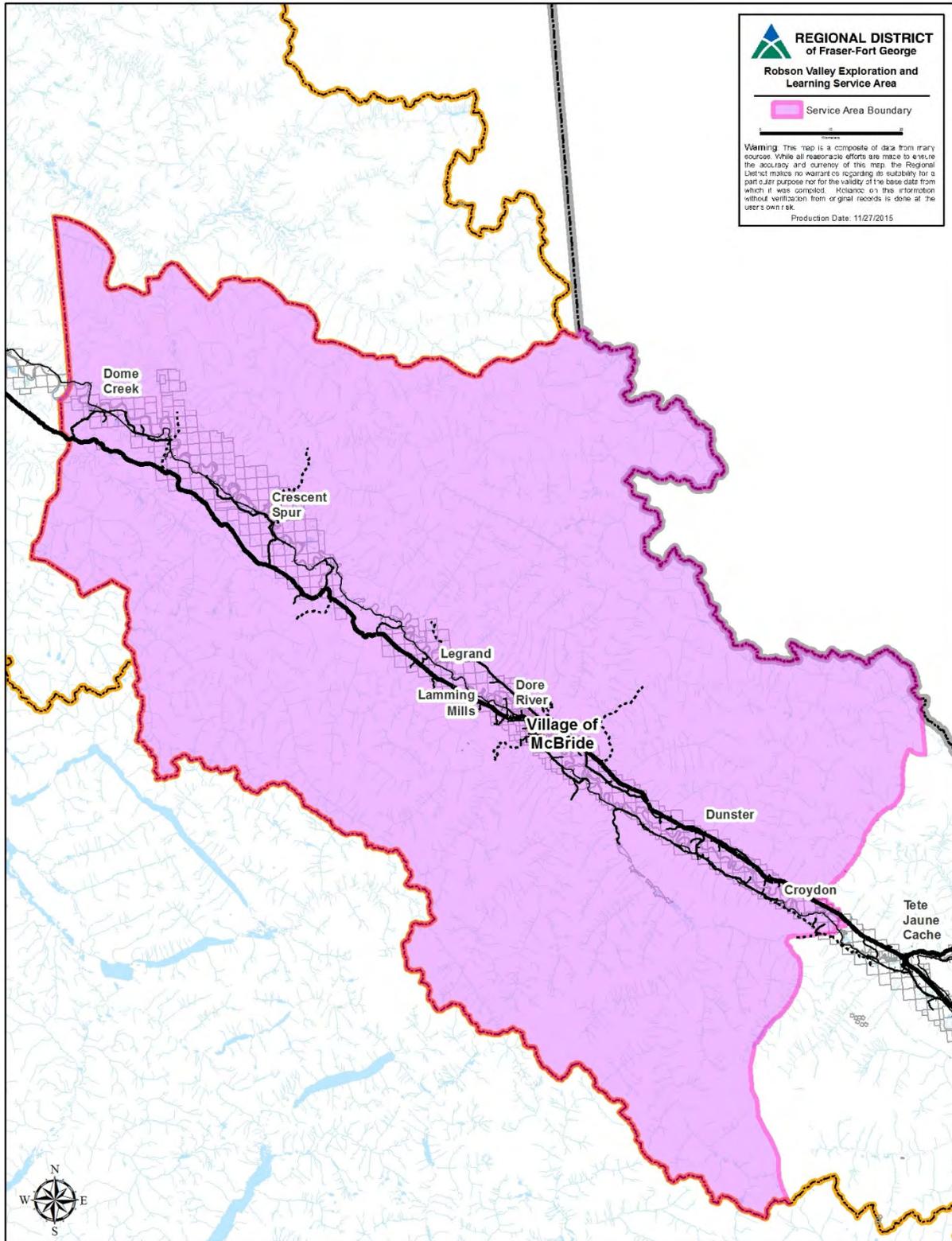
The total assessed value of land and improvements in the proposed service area for 2015 is \$189,298,686. Based on an estimated annual budget of \$74,550, the proposed tax levy for residential properties is \$.2748 per \$1,000 of net taxable land and improvement assessment. Based on a single-family residence assessed at \$100,000, a property owner would pay \$27.48 per year for the facility service.

The impact of the proposed annual tax levy is reflected in Schedule 'D'.

## **IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE**

The timetable to implement the service, shown on Schedule 'E', contains milestones that must be met to fulfill the Closing Date requirement of June 30, 2016 as set out in the Conditional Offer to Purchase.

## SCHEDULE A ROBSON VALLEY EXPLORATION AND LEARNING SERVICE AREA MAP



**SCHEDULE B  
PROPOSED CAPITAL BUDGET  
521 Main Street**

**Revenues:**

Donation through Fund Raising – Library and Museum	\$ 44,700
Grants - BC Hydro	3,000
MFA Debenture Issue	<u>620,530</u>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<u><b>\$668,230</b></u>

**Expenditures:**

Building Acquisition	\$450,000
Legal and Property Registration Fees	2,000
Building Renovations	89,860
Engineering Inspection Report	2,000
Building Repairs (Inspection Report)	35,110
MFA Debt Issue & Reserve Fund Costs	10,860
Feasibility Study Reserve Fund Repayment	25,000
Miscellaneous and Contingencies	<u>53,400</u>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<u><u><b>\$668,230</b></u></u>

**SCHEDULE C  
PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET  
521 Main Street**

**Revenues:**

Taxation	<u>\$74,550</u>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<u>\$74,550</u>

**Expenditures:**

Property Taxes	\$20,000
Building Insurance	2,000
Repairs and Maintenance	5,000
Operating Interest	1,000
Debt Retirement (debt \$620,530 over 25 years @ 3%)	34,550
Transfer to Operating Reserve	10,000
Contingencies and Miscellaneous	<u>2,000</u>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<u>\$74,550</u>

**SCHEDULE D  
TAXATION IMPACT**

**SERVICE: Robson Valley Exploration and Learning Service**

Taxation based on \$74,550  
Debt repayment over 25 years \$620,530

Assessment Class	2015 Net Total Assessment	Conversion Factor	Converted Assessments	% Share	Requisition Share	Tax Rate (per \$1,000)
1. Residential	141,136,667	.100	14,113,667	49.41	\$36,835	.2747
2. Utility	27,826,310	.350	9,739,209	34.10	25,418	.9614
3. Unmanaged Forest	0	.400	0	0.00	0	.0000
4. Major Industry	830,500	.340	282,370	0.99	737	.9339
5. Light Industry	1,489,400	.340	506,396	1.77	1,322	.9339
6. Business/Other	14,570,450	.245	3,569,760	12.50	9,317	.6730
7. Managed Forest	0	.300	0	0.00	0	.0000
8. Rec./Non Profit	674,300	.100	67,430	0.24	176	.2747
9. Farm	2,860,059	.100	286,006	1.00	746	.2747
Total	189,387,686		28,564,837	100.00	\$74,550	

**SCHEDULE E  
 IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
December 2015	Report to Board a) Provide feasibility study b) Request three readings to service establishment bylaw and loan authorization bylaw. If successful, bylaws are submitted to Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development for approval c) Election officers appointed
January 2016	Report to Board (a) Question for ballot and bylaw synopsis to Board for approval
March 2016	Report to Board (a) Bylaws approved by Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development (b) Request approval of mailout of information summary to notify residents of public meetings (c) Hold public information meetings.
April 20, 2016	Advanced Voting Opportunity
April 30, 2016	General Voting Day
May 19, 2016	Report to Board (a) If elector assent obtained, request approval of adoption of service establishment bylaw and loan authorization bylaw
June 19, 2016	End of one month quashing period for loan authorization bylaw
June 20, 2016	Rezoning of 521 Main Street approved by Council of the Village of McBride
June 30, 2016	Offer to Purchase 521 Main Street completed
March 2017	Operating budget adopted by Regional Board