

Tracy Cook, Montana State Library
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Funding options for libraries in Cascade County

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Outline for the workshop

- _____
- Introductions
- Why are we here?
- _____
- Needs analysis exercise
- _____
- Funding options
- _____
- Master plan – formal analysis
- _____
- Next steps

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Introductions

Name

Which library?

What is your position?

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Starting with need

- What services are people asking for that the library struggles to provide?
- What services do we see in other communities that we cannot provide and wish we could?
- What other needs does the library have?

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Funding option 1 – City Mill Levy

City Mill Levy Only

- Only residents within the city limits are asked if they want to pay more taxes to support the library

Pros

- Simplest to explain to residents
- Good option if other libraries in the county don't want more funding

Cons

- Doesn't address possible inequities between what county residents pay and what city residents pay
- Only benefits one library

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Funding Option 2 – County Mill Levy

County Mill Levy

- Residents of the entire county are asked to support more mills for the library
- Can result in a county library system
- Or can be done through an agreement between libraries. The city libraries maintain their independence but agree to work together to share county funding

Pros

- Addresses inequity issues between county and city residents
- Can benefit all libraries in the county

Cons

- Loss of local control with county system choice
- Will need to work through funding details with independent but connected and will need to explain those to residents

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Funding Option 3 – Independent Library District

Independent library district

- Can be all or part of the county depending upon wishes of libraries
- Changes the governance model of the library – boards are elected not appointed; library owns its own property

Pros

- Good option if the library needs to replace all funding
- Can be used to carve out portions of the county
- Can give the library independence and stable funding

Cons

- Most complicated option as it requires re-thinking a lot of the library's standard ways of doing business. Ex. Will the library handle its own accounting? Or will it contract with local government?

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Funding option 4 – Multi-Jurisdictional Service District (MJSD)

Multi-jurisdictional service district – MJSD/Title 7 of MCA

- Carve out a part of the county based on school district boundaries and residents in those school districts vote on issue
- Blend of the independent district and local government libraries. Board members are appointed; local government handles accounting, etc.

Pros

- Allows library to target specific service area; can address inequities between county and city residents
- Simpler than a district, but has some of the same independence and stability


Cons

- Requires more work as the library is switching governance models and will need interlocal agreements
- Can be challenging to explain

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Summary of the 4 options

- City Mill Only
- County Mill
- Independent District
- MJSD



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Other things to consider

- Funding for each library varies and questions will need to be answered
 - Will the County continue to give the current level of mills for library services?
 - Will the City continue to give its current level of support?
 - Will the library need to ask for all the funding plus the extra that it needs? Or can it ask for a blend of new and replacement funding?

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Master Plan – lessons learned from Parks and Recreation


- Master plan
 - A consultant talks to residents about what they want to see in their community – when it comes to library services and buildings
 - A recommendation is made for long-term services and facilities updates for the library
 - This information can be used to support a mill levy campaign



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Question brainstorm

- What do we want to know from the residents of Cascade County?
- What questions do we need to have answered to make wise decisions?



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Next steps

- Process what we learned and send questions to Tracy Cook, tcook2@mt.gov
- Talk to library boards and others about funding, concerns, and options
- Go through master plan RFP process
- Decide on which funding option and process