

LANGLEY LIBRARY BOARD

104 Second Street
Langley, Washington 98260
(360) 221-4383

10 October 2011

Honorable Paul Samuelson, Mayor
And Council Members
City of Langley
Post Office Box 366
Langley, Washington 98260

Re: 2011 Report and 2012 Work Plan

Dear Mayor Samuelson and Council Members:

Our community uses, supports and highly values their historic Langley Library. Sno-Isle's latest available statistics show that in 2010 the Langley Library served 5,337 card holders, placed 11,193 items on hold, and circulated 138,234 items. Currently there are 24 volunteers who provide 40 hours of service per month in the library and in 2011 the Friends of the Library donated \$57,000 for renovations and \$4,800 for programs and supplies. In response to user interests, Sno-Isle is expanding after-hours programs and upgrading services. The residents of Langley voted overwhelmingly in the last election to raise their own taxes to ensure the continuation of library services and save the City over \$40,000 in contract fees.

The City's contributions to this vibrant institution since 2007 - lean years for the City - have been focused mainly on immediate maintenance needs. Beginning with the 2009 building survey by Harrison Goodall (attached), the Library Board has become pro-active in seeking short and long term solutions toward preservation and prevention of deterioration.

During 2011, the Langley Library Board has continued to monitor the building condition and evaluate solutions to landscape issues. We have appreciated the cooperation of the Public Works Department in establishing regular communications, procedures for obtaining minor contract services and quick handling of an instance of vandalism. We have collaborated with the City and Friends of the Library regarding interior paint, new carpet and renovations which were accomplished in September of this year. The City authorized \$5,000 toward the carpet replacement and the Friends authorized approximately \$57,000 for painting, carpet and renovations.

The outstanding issues related to the Library consist of (1) Further Interior Enhancements, (2) Maintenance of the Library Exterior, and (3) Landscape Maintenance and Restoration.

(1) Further Interior Enhancements

During the coming year, the Board will collaborate with the City, Sno-Isle officials and Friends of the Library for further interior renovations and enhancements, particularly in the staff offices of the library. This will be considered Phase II and is to be funded by the Friends of the Library.

(2) Maintenance of the Library Exterior

According to Challis Stringer, Department of Public Works, four Library projects are listed in the Capital Facilities Plan, but only two are budgeted for completion in 2012:

- Replace eave brackets, braces and barge boards, \$7,500
- Replace trellis over entry, \$2,500

Exterior painting in the amount of \$9,000 is also in the 2012 Capital Facilities Plan, but it is not in the City's 2012 budget. Instead the work is proposed for completion within the next 5 years. *The Board urges that exterior painting be completed no later than 2013.* This is a known needed improvement, documented with photographs in the 2009 building survey. The south facing part of the Library is showing rapid deterioration; neglect could lead to structural deterioration.

Re-roofing the Library does not appear in the Capital Facilities Plan until 2014, at the estimated cost of \$8,000. *It would be preferable to complete the roof work as soon as possible to avoid leakage and potential damage to the 2011 renovations in the Library in the amount of \$62,000. Re-roofing should be a high priority in budget planning. If the work cannot be performed in 2012, it is imperative that the roof be regularly monitored to ensure that it does not fail prior to the anticipated re-roofing.* Contributing to our concerns for the roof work, are some trees that are now overgrown and impacting the roof, discussed below under Landscape Maintenance and Restoration.

(3) Landscape Maintenance and Restoration

Landscape maintenance for a few years was paid for by the Friends of the Library. During 2011, light seasonal maintenance occurred in spring, in summer prior to the Choochokam festival and in October for Fall clean up. This work been performed by a contractor (plus some volunteer effort) contracted through the Public Works Department and funded by the City budget allocation (\$650).

The Board designated a subcommittee, consisting of Shirley Owen, Pam Owen and Monica Guzman, to study the landscape issues. The subcommittee's findings are as follows:

a. Overall Observations

As of September 2011, the landscaping looks cluttered, unkempt and overgrown. Trees, shrubs and plants are in contact with and damaging the exterior paint and roof. Some overgrown trees and bushes are hiding the north half of the historic wing and also blocking the view from the inside of the library. Other trees are tangling with a power pole. The Library sign has seriously deteriorated, pieces literally peeling off.

b. Short Term Plans (2011-2012)

- (i) During October 2011 (funded under the 2011 budget) we expect to:
- Perform contracted light fall cleanup for over-wintering, including:
 - Thinning some of the low plants at the front and removing some lilies.
 - Trimming all plants (mostly rhododendrons) to below window ledge.
 - Schedule and establish contractor projects for 2012 seasonal maintenance for the summer through fall.

(ii) The work in Spring 2012 will require a more expert and intensive effort to bring back the landscaping to the proportions of the original design. The purpose of this work is to protect the building, to hold seasonal maintenance costs to a minimum for 3+ years, to showcase the historic wing (presently half obscured) and to allow the building to present a pleasing, cared-for appearance. For this effort, we have sought advice and an estimate from a landscape specialist who has done previous work for the City. The preliminary estimate \$2,500 which we recommend the City consider for budget purposes. The detailed scope of work and estimate are still under discussion. The scope of work would probably include:

- Removing the maple tree at the front which touches the building and roof.
- Removing the medium size shrubs at the front including the rhododendron, Oregon grape, evergreen huckleberry, all of the lilies, the tall yellow-flowered plant under the window and the shrub at the sidewalk.
- Removing from the north side of the building several of the rhododendrons, the pieris japonica and one of the maple trees.
- Removing the evergreens near the sidewalk that hide the otter statues.
- Removing one or more limbs from the tree near the bench.
- Thinning and trimming remainder of all plants with goals of keeping the plants away from the building and roof and making the library more visible.
- Replacing the irrigation system.

(iii) We are moving forward with plans to repair or replace the deteriorated wooden corner sign. The Friends will be asked to provide funds for a replacement sign, and the Board or its subcommittee will coordinate that project.

(c) Long term plans

In a few years, the Second Street Project *may* spur some re-design of the landscaping. We have heard informally from Councilmember Fran Abel, City of Langley Planners Fred Evander and Jeff Arango about the intent of the Second Street Project and how the library corner landscape might relate to the overall plan. Jeff Arango is to make a presentation on the Project to the Library Board. Tentatively, the committee is considering revamping the landscape near the steps to make the area an inviting, friendly and open space for use by library patrons which will be accessed via the library, not the street. This is to be integrated with City plans for Second Street.

The Library's location at the junction of Cascade, First and Second Streets make it the first major building that visitors see as they come down Cascade or up Wharf Street from the marina. It is their first impression of downtown Langley. The location also makes it the leading corner of the "golden triangle" that the City, the Main Street Program and the Chamber of Commerce wishes to promote. The Library has value in attracting tourist interest and business as well as in serving the resident community. The Board looks forward to supporting both these efforts.

In conclusion, the Library Board is pleased that the Council has invited board members to attend a meeting which is scheduled for December 5, 2011 to review the status of the Library facility. This early report may be updated with information that develops in the interim. We look forward to that meeting.

Council members are welcome to attend any of our quarterly meetings, which will be held December 8th 2011, and March 8th, June 14th and September 13th in 2012.

Sincerely,

SHIRLEY OWEN, Chair