



Report to: Stratford Public Library Board
Meeting Date: December 7, 2021
From: Julia Merritt, CEO
Subject: My Main Street Grant and SPL MakerSpace Expansion

Submitted for discussion and direction.

Background

A grant opportunity has been identified that could advance the Library's physical capacity and level of service in the MakerSpace, a key area of its current growth.

The My Main Street" grant fund is a \$23.5 million investment to "revitalize neighbourhood main streets with a healthy retail mix while generating inclusive local economic opportunities". Its "Community Activator" Program "provides support for local groups to revitalize neighbourhoods and reimagine public spaces...as vibrant and inclusive places that work for everyone...Funding will be prioritized for projects...that are designed to support economic and social benefits for equity seeking groups".

Such a grant represents an opportunity to pilot the expansion of in-demand library services and position library services as key to economic recovery and future growth. It would raise the Library's profile, increase the MakerSpace's impact, and act as a stepping stone for future library growth. Although the project does not directly align with the current Strategic Plan's Action Streams, it could be a very valuable project.



Concept

Current Service

- 15 hours of Open Labs per week (with PCFDC funding, otherwise only 12), plus programs
- 1.5FTE with PCFDC funding, otherwise we are about 0.9FTE devoted to project
- In 2022 budget, asking to bump the PT MS staffer from 0.6 to 0.75FTE for sustainability, but this is not guaranteed so is not included here. The increase would equal 6 hours a week.

Proposed Idea for Service

- 38 hours per week – given that we are talking about growth, not just relocation
- Mon-Thurs, 1-9 – capture daytime users as well as students/upskillers in the evenings
- Saturday, 10-4

Proposed Staff Model

- 2.5-3FTE total, plus volunteers to act as 2nds and 3rds in OpenLabs and programs. Pre-covid, 1 staff person and 1 volunteer was often inadequate for the volume of people. These questions and projects are labour-intensive, and we often get people in batches. Volunteers are essential.
- For paid staff:
 - 1 FT person to be a consistent presence for OpenLabs and programs.
 - 1 FT person to do volunteer recruitment and training, program design (and partner relationships), marketing, reporting, coordinate building maintenance, and some OpenLab and program work (every other weekend, cover dinner hour for the primary person, etc).
 - 1-2 Part-Time people to deliver programs, cover OpenLabs. Need to be able to have someone to sub in for illness, vacation, program growth.

Staff Costs

- Using current job descriptions and pay grids.
 - Coordinator 1 @ max \$66,758 + 25% benefits = 83,450
 - Full-Time Maker @ max \$57,894 + 25% benefits = 72,370
 - 2 x PT Maker @ 50% of above = 72,370

Total salaries \$228,180

Other costs

- Lease: \$60,000 a year ? Cost Unknown. Location – Masonic Hall?



- Tech needs would be minimal, we could move most of the Library's over and just spread it out more. But add a few more gadgets and we could spend \$20,000 easily (2nd iMac with software, 3D scanner/replicator, camera/sound equipment, etc)
- Utilities, custodial, maintenance, extra marketing, some light decorating; \$1,000 a month?

Total Other Costs: round up to \$100,000

Total costs for 1 year project: \$328,180

Current funding/staffing gaps

- SPL cannot afford to have the current MS librarian be swapped over to be the Coordinator – the other function of that librarian is Marketing and it could be a FT job in itself. But we potentially could have the Librarian sub in for the PT Maker position, providing vacation/illness coverage, program support etc. There would be a discrepancy in the salary grid but would reduce the cost to the project by \$36,180.
- PCFDC provided \$28,000 in staffing funds in 2021. Expect similar in 2022.
- Current PT MakerSpace assistant is budgeted at \$30,000 in 2022, although will be asking for several more hours which MIGHT bring total sustainable funding to \$42,184

Combined with PCFDC, we could cover 1 Full-time maker for the year and this would leave only the FT Coordinator and additional PT Lab staff to be hired and paid for.

Total costs minus confirmed existing resources = \$234,100

How does this merge with the My Main Street Grant:

We meet almost all the requirements and could certainly make a strong pitch. However there are some concerns that need clarifying. Capital costs are listed as ineligible which may mean that lease costs could not be requested. And the grant will only fund expenses incurred between Jun 1-Dec 31st 2022.

Total eligible funding:

- **worst case scenario, 50% of needed salaries and equipment, no lease costs: \$97,910**

Potential funding gap: \$137,000



Strategic Opportunities and Risks

Opportunities

- Expansion of physical space, extension of hours of access
- Increased access to staff/volunteer support; increased impact on community success, connection, and well-being
- Opportunity to leverage small growth into larger future growth

Risks

- Tight timeline for grant/execution, with potential limits on expenses
- Limits on other grant opportunities, would likely have to switch to corporate/personal fundraising to fill the gap
- No clear path to sustainability at this point in time
- Space Needs Study not complete, still a funding priority
- Would need to manage the political implications carefully to ensure that any recommendations that came out of the Space Needs Study were not overshadowed by this type of project

Staff request that the Board evaluate the project with respect to the current strategic and work plan and provide direction to staff.