

Prairielands/Lincoln Trails Shared Services Study

Summary Points and Sub-Committee Reports

Summary Points

- Five study committees made up of volunteers from each council studied this issue for approximately 2 months including three meetings of each committee.
- Each of the study committees were charged with reaching one of three conclusions including, 1---status quo (nothing changes), 2---enter in some form of shared services agreement, 3---consolidate the two councils.
- The study committees evaluated current council health and operations to determine what is in the best interest of serving families long-term with the highest quality program possible.
- **Four of the five study committees determined that it is in the best interest of families to merge the Prairielands and Lincoln Trails Councils; one committee was split in its conclusion stating that the best interests could be served by either Shared Services or Consolidation.**
- The study committee believes the two Councils are financially adequate but neither Council has any significant cushion for adversity with relatively small reserves especially in their respective Operating Funds.
- Both councils have had essentially flat Total Support & Revenue over the past 5 years which, combined with increasing costs, increase the risk of deficits.
- A consolidated council would provide cost saving opportunities which would allow for new positions to be created and reduce the workload of District Executives. Thus allowing District Executives to focus additional time and efforts in serving units and growing membership.
- Significant efforts would be made, including the review of possible redistricting, to promote the consolidated council as on new entity, and avoid marginalizing either council or its outlying territories.
- The Scout Executive will work with the Consolidation Committee and lead a staff realignment plan including revised job descriptions and new staff

structure for a combined council. The tentative staff structure under a consolidated council includes a full time development position.

- The study committees ultimately believe that a consolidation would lead to a net gain in the number and quality of programs within the geography of the two councils, and therefore maximize positive youth impact.
- It was recommended to keep the administrative structure of a combined council as lean as possible and reinvest the savings into hiring staff members that directly impact programs, membership and fund development.
- A consolidation committee incorporating an equal number of Executive Committee members from both councils to conduct an in-depth analysis and develop an operating plan to bring both council together with consolidated financial statements and budget for 2017. Provide a recommendation for a new Executive Board structure and nomination process to establish a new board to oversee the consolidated council.
- It is recommended to delay a formal review process of the current properties of both councils including the camps until a new board has been in place for a full calendar or budget year. It is further recommended that the consolidated Council Board will establish a Properties Study Group to examine the strength sand opportunities of all properties and provide recommendations as part of the budgeting and strategic planning process.

The following pages are reports of the individual Sub-Committees:

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**Report of Finance Sub-Committee of Shared Services Study
Lincoln Trails and Prairiелands Councils, BSA**

Members of Sub-Committee:

For Prairiелands Council: Mike Potts – Chairman, Glen Semple, Randy Kangas

For Lincoln Trails Council: Bob Smith, David Martin, Rick Siemer, Charles Hughes

Dated: April 27, 2016

Meetings Held: Conference call on April 11, 2016; email conversations

Materials Reviewed: Internally prepared financial statements for both Councils supplied by Mike McCarthy, balance sheet and income statement trends (charts and graphs) derived from the audited financial statements for FY10-FY15 (FY15 was in draft form for both Councils); management letters from the auditing firms, and other related documents provided by the auditing firms.

Strengths: Upon review of the financial statements, the sub-committee notes that neither Council has any external debt as of 12/31/2015; each Council has significant endowment assets (\$1.16 million for Prairiелands with \$431,000 or 37% restricted and \$968,000 for Lincoln Trails with \$636,000 or 66% restricted); both Councils have similar cost structures with employee expenses as a % of total expenses ranging from 49-59% (Prairiелands) and 53-61% (Lincoln Trails) over the past five years and each Council has had 4 positive EBITDA (cash flow) years in the last 5 years.

Weaknesses: Lincoln Trails has a 4 year declining EBITDA (cash flow) trend resulting in a negative EBITDA (cash flow) for FY15; Prairiелands has had significant swings in its EBITDA (cash flow) over the past five years (somewhat exaggerated by variances in investment income from year to year); both Councils have had essentially flat Total Support & Revenue over the past 5 years which, combined with increasing costs, increase the risk of deficits.

General Comments: The sub-committee believes the two Councils are financially adequate but neither Council has any significant cushion for adversity with relatively small reserves especially in their respective Operating Funds. Neither Council has any external, interest bearing debt as of FYE 12/31/2015.

The sub-committee can foresee potential challenges with a consolidation in these areas:

- Key donors – An emphasis on offering an excellent and efficient scouting program is what donors ultimately desire.
- Scout Camp and Scout Reach – if changed as part of the consolidation.
- Future budgets - In working out the details of a consolidation, a thoughtful budget for the future is required taking into account organizational personnel and programming to accomplished the goals of providing a more robust experience for youth, and the long-term financial sustainability as a consolidated council. A complete reorganization is required for a successful consolidation.

With these in mind we do offer the following recommendation.

Recommendation: Based on the study and work of the Joint Finance Committee for shared services we see no significant current financial reasons from either Council for not consolidating, and therefore recommend a consolidation.

Membership and Unit Service Sub-Committee

Final Recommendation

Lincoln Trails Council: Kyle Cline, Will Sudduth, Sterling Walden

Prairielands Council: Mark Hoagland, Marion Knight, Gabrielle Martin

The Membership and Unit Service Sub-Group recommends a consolidation of Lincoln Trails and Prairielands Councils in order to better serve our youth.

In conducting the SWOT analysis of our two councils and discussing the challenges ahead, the committee recognizes that the status quo will not be sufficient to meet the needs of the youth and of the Unit Serving Executives (USEs).

Sharing services, which could be effective and even advantageous for certain aspects such as human resources and accounting, it would not positively impact the USEs who have significant impact on the recruitment/retention of youth and adults.

Therefore, our recommendation for a consolidation of operations into one council is based on belief that a consolidated Council can create a larger savings of dollars that can be reallocated towards fund development, thereby allowing USEs to focus more energy/time on member and volunteer recruitment as well as unit service.

Failure to create a structure that allows maximum time for USEs to be in the field would likely result in the same issues we currently have except in a larger council.

Overall Impressions

Council make up, challenges, and history are very similar. The general consensus is that a consolidated council is probably a forgone conclusion. Consolidation may be an opportunity to inject new enthusiasm into Councils that need a reboot. While bigger may not be better, if the consolidation is approved and executed carefully, this could not only stop the slide of numbers, it could revitalize the program in East Central Illinois.

BENEFITS of Consolidation	CHALLENGES of Consolidation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time for USEs in the field • Potential for increase in membership numbers • Potential to increase the use of technology which could engage younger volunteers • Combined marketing opportunities to share the story of Scouting in a larger geographic area • New ideas to be generated by new committees; creating a bigger “think tank” • Potential for a USE dedicated to Scout Reach programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger geographic area • Potential of losing volunteers in the transition • Perceived threat of a loss of camps • Restructuring a new Council to meet the needs of the USEs • Increased workload for Council level Executive staff • Change

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lincoln Trails</p> <p>Good Relationships with schools Scout Reach staffing Strong support from Staff</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Prairielands</p> <p>Coordinated membership effort Purchase of air time for marketing DEs with long tenure/relationships Venturing Two offices High level training (PTC, NYLT, WB)</p>
<p>Weaknesses</p>	<p>DE Turnover Not enough volunteers Venturing Commissioner : Unit ratio too high</p>	<p>Overreliance on DEs for Cub promotion Not enough volunteers Scout Reach Staffing Smaller weak units v fewer larger units Commissioner : Unit ratio too high # Unit level leaders trained</p>
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Increase involvement of unit leaders in Pack recruiting Improve basic leader training by providing new options/technology Better transition from Webelos to Boy Scouts; increase use of Den Chiefs Increase Unit promotion at Troop level Increase Venturing promotion at end of 8th grade Focus on private schools/home school groups Make better use of technology for promotion (online groups, etc) Use of technology for Roundtables/Commissioner visits Engaging the District Committees in delivery of program/unit service Looking outside the 'usual suspects' for commissioners More effective use of DE Time</p>	
<p>Threats</p>	<p>Resistance to change Economy Losing school access Cost of Scouting Volunteer burnout DE burnout Maintaining interest of youth/adults Transitions from Cub to Boy Scouts to Venturing Geographic area</p>	

Administration/Legal/Personnel Sub-Committee

Members: Charlie Hughes, Kyle Kietzmann, Bill Totten, Jim Ayers, Teena Zindel-McWilliams, J.J. Farney and Chris Long (secretary).

Revised Recommendations:

1. Consolidate Lincoln Trails Council and Prairielands Council into one Council by January 1st 2017. We recommend re-aligning the districts geographically to allow Unit Service Executives to best serve Scouts, units and volunteers; consolidate Scout Reach into one program.

2. We recommend keeping the administrative structure of a combined council as lean as possible and reinvest the savings into hiring staff members that directly impact programs, membership and fund development.

3. Upon approval of both Boards to consolidate, start an immediate search for a Scout Executive to lead the new council and have a leader in place within six weeks. The Selection Committee will have an equal number of representatives from both Lincoln Trails and Prairielands. The Scout Executive will provide leadership to both councils as needed in the interim period prior to consolidation.

4. Create a Consolidation Committee incorporating an equal number of Executive Committee members from both councils to conduct an in-depth analysis and develop an operating plan to bring both councils together with consolidated financial statements and budget for 2017. Provide a recommendation for a new Executive Board structure and nomination process to establish a new board to oversee the consolidated council.

5. The Scout Executive will work with the Consolidation Committee and lead a staff realignment plan including revised job descriptions and a new staff structure for a combined council.

6. We recommend delaying a formal review process of the current properties of both councils including the camps until a new board has been in place for a full calendar or budget year. We advise that the consolidated Council Board establish a Properties Study Group to examine the strengths and opportunities of all properties and provide recommendations as part of the budgeting and strategic planning process.

SWOT Analysis

	Lincoln Trails	PrairieLands
Strengths: Executive Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attracting younger Board members from the business and professional community -Progressive thinking -Willingness to self-examine and analytical -Use of consent agenda to allow for more time to discuss important issues and conduct Board training -Materials for review a week before the Board meetings -Becoming more diverse in regards to gender, age, and geographic representation -Participation of Board members, not afraid to ask questions and give opinions -FOS participation and generosity -Board unity -Supportive of the shared services study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Getting younger, but continue to involve “legacy” members -Past presidents remain active and involved -Strong, experienced Executive Committee -Support of the shared services study throughout the Board -Board member diversity -Financially strong
Weaknesses: Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Poor attendance at Board meetings -Putting new ideas into motion -Board member burn out -A bit Decatur-centric -Some members serving in the same position for too long -Too few members -Lack of District Chairman involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Danville area is under-represented -Some Board members not engaged -Lack of mentoring for new Board members
Weaknesses: Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Membership issues for past two years -Finance issues, due in part to the membership standards changes and dependence on foundations and grants -Program (training) – camping, activities and advancement are all strong -Inexperience of staff – out of council promotions, retirements have forced the council to become very inexperienced (average DE tenure = less than a year) -Staff is spread too thin with too many council responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Membership issues, though saw an increase last year -Too few professional staff (SE + 2 DE’s) -Staff mired in program, not focused on membership and unit service and growth -Need for Finance Director -Marketing and communications need to improve, especially the website -Lack of succession planning at Board and officer level -Compensation is not tied to performance

Opportunities	-New paradigm for ScoutReach -Better board engagement -Sharing resources or consolidation	
Threats	-Lack of Development director -Lack of time for Field Staff to focus on targeted areas (too busy with program, council areas) -Some unit and district volunteers may leave -Some units/families may wish to relocate to Scouting in another council -Redistricting may need to take place	

Current Council Staffing

- Lincoln Trails Council has SE, 3 DE's, 3 office staff and Scoutreach program aides
- Prairielands Council has SE, 2 DE's, 2 full time and 6 part-time office staff and program aides
- Can councils share a SE to help save on costs?
- Chris Long will provide the sub group with staff and Board organization charts, along with salary considerations (what could be saved if consolidation occurs) and a potential new council organization chart to help spur conversation

Other Discussion

- Properties – the group believes that properties are an important and emotional topic, and will have to be addressed. It is also recognized that properties cannot be the driving topic that the final recommendation is based upon. It was agreed that the issue of camp properties should remain absent from our current proceedings, and will have to be addressed at some time in the future. It was recommended that perhaps a timeframe ought to be put on any decision-making regarding camps. One idea was that no decision on camps should be made for a minimum of the first three years (if the councils agree to consolidation), allowing for plenty of time to review usage and sustainability issues.
- Communications – Discussion took place about communicating with our districts and units prior to final recommendation and decision making. Chris will develop a “newsletter” type communication piece updating our constituents on the process and progress that has been made, after all five sub groups have conducted their first meeting, sometime in early April if possible.
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- A possible staffing structure offered by Chris Long a Scout Executive, Development Director (fundraising professional), Field Director, and 5 Unit Serving Executives. It also included 5 full time office/support staff including an Executive Assistant/Trading Post Manager, Accounting Specialist, Registrar/Fundraising Secretary, Program/Field Service Secretary, and Decatur Office Manager. Based on existing salaries, and low to mid-range salaries for the Development and Field Directors, total employee compensation would be similar to our combined totals now. The new structure would spread council responsibilities among more people, freeing up significant blocks of time for Unit Serving Executives to focus more on local Scouting.

- Also appealing was the potential of having a USE specifically assigned to cover Scoutreach within the council. Scoutreach could be a major asset in attracting community interest in Scouting, along with potential funding.
- The members of the group reported that excitement and energy for a potential new structure, and for the study in general, seems very high right now. Each council has a few people who are not convinced that shared services or consolidation is the right thing to do, and that the entire project seems to be moving along very quickly. All agreed however, that there was a need to expedite the process, and that prolonging the time period really doesn't make sense, provided there is solid communication with all parties involved in and affected by a potential change.
- All agreed that the status quo is not an acceptable solution moving forward. It was also agreed that the greatest financial savings would be realized through consolidation, and that staffing structure changes would drive those savings. Reinvestment of those savings into a new staff structure would address most of our weaknesses and allow for the potential of growth in membership, finance, program, and unit service. A positive comment was that "the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts" if we were to consolidate.

**Program/District Sub-
Committee
FINAL
RECOMMENDATION**

Lincoln Trails Council: John Daum, Keith Kohanzo, Chuck Maris, Tim Ols, Greg Rau

Prairielands Council: John Marquardt, Eric Meyer, Jeff Ping, Jason Whaling

The Program and District Support Subcommittee recommends that the youth of the geographical boundaries of Lincoln Trails and Prairielands Councils would be best served if the two councils pursued a consolidation of their operations, and became a single, larger council.

This recommendation comes following the review of collective group input and feedback as well as three in-person meetings. This recommendation was made with the critical assumption that the consolidated council organizational structure would allow for a full-time, dedicated Development Director and a Field Director (or Assistant Scout Executive equivalent) that could focus on fund development and council-level programs and operations, respectively. This would allow for District Executives to focus primarily on district operations, unit service, and volunteer development. The committee ultimately believes that this would lead to a net gain in the number and quality of programs within the geography of our two councils, and therefore maximize positive youth impact.

BENEFITS AND DOWNSIDES OF CONSOLIDATION

Benefits of Consolidation

- Larger number of participants at council events
- More diverse training opportunities
- More diverse events and activity offerings
- Opportunity to change trajectory of current trends in camp attendance, membership, advancement, etc.
- Larger volunteer pool from which to form committees and develop council-level leadership
- New, broader pool of ideas for programs and activities
- More specialization at the board and council leadership level
- Additional staff support for council and district operations
- Opportunity for enhanced fundraising initiatives to fund programs and properties development
- Enhanced marketing opportunities with expanded staff support

Downsides of Consolidation

- Larger geographic area will require longer commutes for youth and adult participants and volunteers
- Losing tradition of Prairielands and Lincoln Trails council histories
- Perceived loss of local ownership over operations
- Work will be required to implement changes in a way that creates buy-in among unit leaders, parents, youth, and other constituencies
- Larger workload for council-level executive staff
- New committees will have a period of adjustment and acclimation, and success is not guaranteed

SWOT ANALYSIS

Prairielands Council (Programs and District Operations)

- Strengths
 - Strong quality of Boy Scout and Cub Scout resident camping programs.
 - Quality activities are produced by the council.
 - Very strong Training Committee and council training programs and activities.
 - Active Order of the Arrow Lodge that supports council financially and in service.
 - Active Venturing presence within the council.
 - Volunteer base is incredibly dedicated and offers a diverse array of talents and opportunities.
- Weaknesses
 - Cub Scout unit-level program (as well as advancement) struggles.
 - Cub Scout day camps have been recently scaled back and are on the decline.
 - Scoutreach funding and activity have recently been cut back.
 - District operations are limited at best; a lot of district-level functions are being performed on the council level due to lack of district participation.
 - Camp attendance as a percentage of council membership is concerning.
 - Camp relies on out-of-council units for viability, as those youth have comprised roughly half of annual camp attendance in recent years.
 - The number of youth-serving executives is incredibly low. This affects both units as well as council-level programs which rely on staff support and advice for sustainability. Coupled with a declining number of volunteers, the council's dedicated and reliable volunteer base is stretched very thin.
- Opportunities
 - The University of Illinois represents a tremendous resource opportunity for council programs and activities.
 - Scoutreach expansion, pending funding, is a realistic opportunity.
 - Boy Scout advancement has room for growth.
 - Cub Scout camping and program participation have potential for growth.
 - Additional staff would provide a catalyst for unit-level and council-level programs to grow and flourish.
 - There is an opportunity for the growth of unit-level training courses (Scoutmaster, Cubmaster, etc.) to ensure more leaders are properly trained and positioned to deliver program.
- Threats

- The Scouting program struggles to maintain relevancy with all the competing youth- focused events in the area.
- A declining number of volunteers poses a very real threat to the council as staff support dwindles. Volunteer burnout is a very real phenomenon and will continue to be moving forward if current trends continue.
- Staff reductions have severely cut back the services and support that the council office can provide units as well as volunteer committees and activities. Left unaddressed, current activities and unit support initiatives are not sustainable.
- There is a concern that current fundraising trends will leave the council unable to expand upon and reinvest in current programs and program facilities, Camp Drake in particular.

Lincoln Trails Council (Programs and District Operations)

- Strengths
 - Solid council advancement is strong.
 - Cub Scout camping participation.
 - Boy Scout and Cub Scout summer camp programs are strong, particularly council shooting sports activities.
 - Existing District Executives are strong.
 - Quality council activities are presented, Spook-o-Ree in particular.
 - Council has high degree of participation in council high adventure contingent trips.
 - Strong Order of the Arrow lodge.
- Weaknesses
 - Recent cutbacks to the Scoutreach program.
 - Council training programs really struggle. Volunteer support for training is a concern.
 - Staff and commissioner support of units and programs is a concern.
 - The percentage of youth participating in summer camp is low (66%).
 - District operations are faltering.
- Opportunities
 - There is tremendous opportunity to introduce and offer Venturing programs within the council.
 - There is potential to engage more retirees in program delivery.
 - Staff support of activities and programs is dwindling.
 - There is great potential to introduce and expand upon training programs and activities within the council.
- Threats
 - The council struggles with program relevancy in the area, especially with new parents who find themselves choosing between several competing programs and activities in the area.
 - A limited number of volunteers that is on the decline will result in diminishing programs and activities if left unaddressed.
 - Existing staff is great, but more staff are needed to sustain and grow council programs and activities.

SHARED SERVICES STUDY: PRAIRIELANDS AND LINCOLN TRAILS COUNCILS
MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE
FINAL RECOMMENDATION
April 26, 2016

Lincoln Trails Council: Matt Fairchild, Patrick Garrett, Richard Nolte
Prairie Lands Council: Dustin Boyer, Kurt Brown, David Burns

The Marketing and Communications Sub-Committee recommends that the marketing and communications functions of Lincoln Trails Council and Prairielands Council would be best served through either a shared services agreement or a consolidation of the two Councils.

***A strong case was also made for Shared Services.**

Additionally, the recommendation for a consolidation is conditioned by the following assumptions:

1. A consolidated council would present cost saving opportunities which would allow for new positions to be created and reduce the current work load of District Executives. Thus, allowing District Executives to focus additional time and efforts in facilitating marketing and communications at a local level.
2. The marketing and communications effort at the council level would include a focused effort on generating tools and resources for local scouting staff and volunteers to better promote scouting locally. The primary delivery of the Scouting message should be administered at a local level.
3. Significant efforts would be made, including the review of possible redistricting, to promote the consolidated council as one new entity, and avoid marginalizing either council or its outlying territories.

This recommendation is the result of collective input from the committee members through two in person meetings and one conference call. Overall, the committee believes that Lincoln Trails Council and Prairielands Council each contain resources which could benefit the other, and that working together will create the greatest possibility for each Council to improve its marketing and communications efforts.

**Shared Services Committee
Communications & Marketing Sub-Group**

1. SWOT Analysis – Communications & Marketing
 - a. Strengths of the councils
 - i. Finding cost effective ways to promote Scouting (LTC)
 - ii. Talented Marketing Committee members (LTC)
 - iii. Radio contacts (LTC)
 - iv. Radio advertising (PLC)
 - v. Facebook use and email blasts (LTC)
 - vi. Online newsletter (LTC)
 - vii. Website (LTC)
 - viii. Billboards (PLC)
 - ix. Incentives and rewards (PLC)
 - x. Use of social media, especially Facebook (PLC)
 - xi. Camp website (PLC)
 - xii. Merits of Scouting newspaper insert (PLC)
 - xiii. Strong skillsets of Marketing Committee members (PLC)
 - b. Weaknesses of the councils
 - i. Too few volunteers (LTC)
 - ii. Missing some skillsets – video, social media (LTC)
 - iii. Not enough \$ budgeted (LTC)
 - iv. Staff time to support marketing efforts (LTC)
 - v. Geographic diversity on the committee (LTC)
 - vi. TV contacts (PLC)
 - vii. Missing some skillsets on the Marketing Committee (PLC)
 - viii. Website and updates (PLC)
 - ix. School access (PLC)
 - x. Online event registration system (PLC)
 - c. Opportunities
 - i. Unique in our mission and purpose – leadership, character development
 - ii. Social media remains virtually untapped
 - iii. More partnerships with local businesses
 - iv. Reaching “non-traditional” family units
 - v. Addressing the Scouts OR sports decision many families make – coexisting
 - vi. Getting more in-roads to UI
 - d. Threats
 - i. Competing against sports for youth and adults
 - ii. Large geographical area requiring lots of travel (gas and time costs)
 - iii. Youth becoming increasingly dependent on devices – inability to “un-plug”
 - iv. Different time zones in PLC

1. Recommendations
 - a. Involve Units in promoting Scouting locally
 - i. Provide prepared messages and templates to make it easy for local Scouters to be part of marketing their own Scouting programs
 - ii. Encourage frequent press releases on a number of topics locally – awards, service projects, activities, recruitment
 - iii. Provide a media contact sheet to make communicating with local media outlets easier for everybody
 - iv. Prepare a unit media kit with materials readily available
 - v. Put the media kit online with fillable forms for press releases and shared messages
 - vi. Train units on how to market themselves (at Roundtables and other Scouting activities)
 - b. Focus on marketing to parents, especially moms
 - i. Show how Scouting can coexist with other activities
 - ii. Develop an adult leader recruitment plan for units to use
 - c. Learn to better use the various social media tools
 - i. Encourage units to develop their own social media plan and habits
 - ii. Council could provide templates for units to use
 - iii. Set up Facebook pages for all council units and teach them how to use/update them
 - d. Develop a plan to communicate effectively with current Scouting leaders
 - i. Make sure that council websites are put together well, communicate effectively and simply
 - ii. Update websites and Facebook pages frequently to hold the interest of our constituents
 - iii. Look into blast email processes
 - e. Develop district marketing committees
 - i. Districts can promote local Scouting and identify others in the community with resources that could help with the effort
 - ii. Recruit more district volunteers to focus on marketing
 - iii. Make sure all district volunteers know how to do some marketing, especially commissioners
 - f. Better develop a Council marketing committee
 - i. The two councils appear to have complimentary skill sets without a lot of overlap
 - ii. Develop an overall marketing plan utilizing existing print, TV, radio, and other outlets
 - iii. Budget dollars for marketing in the council budgets
 - iv. Consider hiring a college intern to help with marketing