

Library RFP Questions Received from 4/3 – 4/8**

Below is a summary of questions we have received regarding the Urbandale Public Library's strategic plan Request for Proposals (RFP) and the planning process overall. Responses have been provided by Katherine Manion (KM), Assistant Director, and Laura Sauser (LS), Community Manager.

***The Library's Director, Julie Wells, is out of the office. We have requested that she send any questions and answers that were submitted from 3/25 – 4/3. If we receive any additional information, we will update this document. The final FAQ document will be posted on the library's website.*

I have a question about #4 under the Proposal Content Requirements, where it states that the consultant has "demonstrated expertise in library operations, service, trends and functions....". I am a long time user of the Urbandale Public Library, but I have never been involved in the internal workings of the library or conducted strategic planning for another library. Would that automatically eliminate me from being considered?

LS: Expertise in library operations, service, trends, and functions is a preferred qualification, not a requirement.

Can you share how much is in the budget for the strategic planning initiative?

LS: Unfortunately, I don't have that information.

Has the library conducted any community surveys (mail, web, over the counter, telephone, etc.) in the last 2 – 3 years? If so, are the results of the survey(s) available?

KM: The last time we did a community-wide survey was for the creation of the current strategic plan (created in 2015, implemented in 2016). So it's been about five years.

Does the library have a current technology plan?

KM: We do not currently have a technology plan.

Occasionally, our firm has experienced situations in which the file size allowed for email attachments by a potential client's email system has been limited. Is there a maximum file size that will be accepted by your system or, alternatively, can our proposal be submitted using a file-sharing utility such as Dropbox or delivered to the Library on a flash drive?

KM: I asked the IT department and they said that while our inbox has no limits, there is a 25MB limit per message. If your proposal is too large for that limit, we'd be happy to retrieve it from Dropbox or another file sharing utility.

When you ask for references, do you expect just the name and contact information, or do you expect a letter from the individual?

KM: For references all we would need is a name and contact information. No letters required!

Would focus groups with community members, stakeholder interviews, and general community-wide meetings fall into this and thus require a separate cost?

KM: Yes, I believe that any costs associated with developing and disseminating surveys, organizing and conducting stakeholder interviews, and scheduling and facilitating community meetings would be listed here as a separate cost. We are trying to separate the project into components so we have a full understanding of how expensive each element will be and hope that this will give us additional information for comparison between proposals.

Given COVID-19, do you anticipate any change(s) to the schedule?

KM: Honestly, I am unable to give you a firm answer on this one. Currently the plan is to continue on the same schedule and accept proposals by April 22nd. This project will need to be completed in this calendar year. The library board meets once per month to consider business and make decisions. Their next meeting is on April 27th and I expect they will review any submitted proposals at that time. However, I do not know if we will be able to begin the planning process in June 2020 as indicated.

In a time of unprecedented events we are working hard to conduct business as usual. However, we cannot anticipate unforeseen circumstances.

When you say "this year" are you referring to calendar 2020 or the Fiscal Year. If the latter, is that Oct - Sep or ???

KM: Our current strategic plan covers the period from January 2016 - December 2020. Ideally we will have a new plan in place that would cover January 2021 - December 2025. While our fiscal year does run from July - June, our strategic plan runs on the calendar year (January - December). Thus, the timeline reflects that we hope to have the plan approved at the November Library Board meeting so that we are ready to begin executing the plan in January. I'd like to follow the proposed timeline if we can.

Will the Library work with us in identifying participants for focus groups and stakeholder interviews?

KM: Yes, the library would definitely be involved in identifying community stakeholders and participants for focus groups. We would look to our consultant for direction, but would be happy to provide names of interested parties who would be willing to give us their thoughts.

Would you send me a copy of the library's current/previous strategic plan?

KM: [Sent in an attachment, and also attached to this email.]

Can you provide guidance regarding any budget parameters for consultant services and for the community research component?

KM: Currently we have not identified any budget parameters for this project. The last strategic plan was completed with a consultant from the Iowa State Library at no cost.

Will the City of Urbandale be conducting its biennial survey this year? How do you/do you envision that the City survey and the data-gathering for the library's strategic plan will work together or complement one another?

KM: The City is planning to conduct its biennial survey this fall. However, typically it contains only 1 or 2 questions about the library. While that data can be incorporated into our strategic planning process, we would anticipate creating a much more detailed survey specifically about library usage and needs. (You can find the City's 2018 Summary here: <https://www.urbandale.org/DocumentCenter/View/8646/2018-Citizen-Survey-Dashboard-Report>)

Will all the questions and answers about the project's RFP be posted on the library's site or provided to interested parties?

KM: At this time there are no plans to post questions and answers. I would be happy to provide a copy of all questions and answers to anyone who requests them. If you're interested in receiving this information, just let me know and I'd be happy to compile a complete list for you once the inquiry period is completed.

Deliverables:

- a. You have requested an up-to-date community profile, what specific data points should be included in the community profile?**
- b. Demographics? Are you requesting data from the 2020 Census?**
- c. Do you currently have a community profile?**

KM: We would expect a complete community profile to include demographic information for the City of Urbandale, including age, income, education, employment, languages spoken, etc. It looks like the community information gathered was not included in the final version of our most recent strategic plan (2016 – 2020 – attached), but we did include quite a bit of information in our last plan (2011-2016). I’m attaching the relevant pages from the older plan to give you an idea of what we gathered. [Also attached] I think that will give you a good idea of what we’re seeking. Let me know if it doesn’t! We also understand that the 2020 Census has not been completed, but would like the most up to date census data we can get.

2. Tentative Planning Process Timeline:

- a. In light of the unknown COVID-19 virus timeline and potential meetings and/or methodologies that would require face-to-face, in-person conversations in June, will you consider revising the Planning Process Timeline?**

KM: Honestly, I am unable to give you a firm answer on this one. Currently the plan is to continue on the same schedule and accept proposals by April 22nd. This project will need to be completed in this calendar year. The library board meets once per month to consider business and make decisions. Their next meeting is on April 27th and I expect they will review any submitted proposals at that time. However, I do not know if we will be able to begin the planning process in June 2020 as indicated.

3. Budget:

- a. Do you have a budget or cost parameters for the Visioning and Strategic Plan?**

KM: Currently we have not identified any budget parameters for this project. The last strategic plan was completed with a consultant from the Iowa State Library at no cost.