

FUTURE OF THE LIBRARY

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

On Saturday, October 5th, the City of SSP commenced the community engagement process by providing Fact Sheets on the Future of the South St. Paul Library at *On The Road Again*. During that event, we handed out a number of fact sheets to the public and received a number of questions. This document highlights the recurring questions we received and attempts to provide answers from the City's perspective.

1. Q: *Is the City considering eliminating library service from the community?*

A: No, eliminating library service from the community is not an option for the City Council and has not been a consideration.

2. Q: *Will the existing library structure be torn down?*

A: The City Council has made it clear they support preservation of the original 1927 building due to its historical value and the character of the building. The 1964 addition would likely be removed should the library be expanded at the current site or if it moves to a new site.

3. Q: *Why is the City contemplating turning over the operation of the library to Dakota County?*

A: This option is a consideration due to the following reasons:

- Operating costs would be assumed by Dakota County and spread over the entire County. Based on 2019 budgeted amounts, the City levied \$767,739 to support library operations. If Dakota County assumed those costs, SSP would save over \$319,000 a year that could be reallocated to other needs such as infrastructure replacement. As operating costs continue to increase over time, the savings grow even larger.
- If Dakota County assumed operation of the library, they would also pay for the capital costs to upgrade the facilities contingent upon the City providing a site that meets their criteria for the facility to be constructed. The biggest challenge in that regard is providing a site that can accommodate sufficient parking. Depending on the site chosen, the capital costs for an expanded and/or new library range from \$6,015,000 to \$8,933,000 based on projected 2022 dollars (that year was chosen as it is the soonest a facility could be constructed). By not having that cost

financed by the City, we can save between \$471,750 and \$699,100 a year for the next 20 years!

- Dakota County provides highly regarded library services to the rest of the County. While there would be differences, it is believed our community would still be well-served by their services.

4. ***Q: The current library serves us well. What is wrong with the current facilities?***

A: This can be grouped into three categories: Building Deficiencies, Building Enhancements, and Site Challenges. Here are the challenges by category as identified in the 2016 Study by LSE Architects:

Building Deficiencies:

- Electrical service connection is obsolete
- Electrical system serving the 1927 building should be replaced
- Hot water boiler in 1927 building needs replacing
- Hot water piping is generally inaccessible
- Controls for mechanical system is outdated and no longer supported
- Roof on 1964 addition needs replacement
- Floor finishes are dated and worn
- Multi-level space is inefficient
- Tuck-pointing on brick exterior is needed
- No fire protection piping in building

Building Enhancements:

- Upgrade staff kitchenette
- Provide domestic hot water for staff use
- Circulation desk doesn't accommodate technology and doesn't present an inviting appearance
- No staff workroom
- No public meeting rooms
- No study carrels
- Need quiet space for adults, teens, and children
- Entry vestibule is not welcoming

Site deficiencies:

- Only six on-site parking spaces currently exist. City code would require 75 spaces and 110 for a proposed 17,000 square foot building (note: revisions that would lessen the number of spaces is currently under consideration)
- The site is only 20,477 square feet in size

5. Q: *Would Dakota County renovate the existing library facility?*

A. Dakota County has told us we should submit our proposed desires to them for evaluation. Based on criteria they previously provided to us, city staff believes the current site, as is, will not meet that criteria. However, if conditions change, especially with the Lawshe Museum, that site may prove adequate.

6. Q: *What other sites are being considered?*

A: The city report entitled “Report on Potential Options Dealing with the Future of the South St. Paul Public Library” identified eight potential site options, including the current site. Thorough vetting of these sites has yet to occur. For a listing of the sites contained within the full report, please visit:

<http://www.southstpaul.org/DocumentCenter/View/6044/Library-Report---Final>