



As of February 7, 2024, the Library received in total of fifteen (15) questions and provides answers below.

1. When do you anticipate work would commence against the project? Is there a deadline by which you are hoping to have the draft and final strategic plan completed by?

Answer: The Library plans to make a recommendation to the Board in March and once the Board approves it, we anticipate that a kick off meeting will be scheduled shortly after the contract is awarded. We are hoping that the draft strategic plan will be presented to the Board in September and then final strategic plan will be approved in October.

2. Are there any other critical milestones that we should be aware of in your planning cycle?

Answer: The Library hopes all data collections including stakeholder engagement meetings/consultations are completed by mid-June before summer break/vacation starts.

3. Will the SCPL facilitate introductions to the desired community partners and stakeholders that you wish to be consulted in the project?

Answer: The Library will introduce community partners and stakeholders as well as help facilitate meetings.

4. Are there any takeaways or improvements from your previous planning process that you would like to see implemented this time around?

Answer: Ongoing communication and progress reports are critical. And identifying library trends and community needs are very important.

5. We're having difficulty finding the procurement policy for the City of St. Catharines. It seems the link to the policy is broken, and our attempts to find the document through the city's updated website have been unsuccessful. Could you please supply a working link to the procurement policy, or directly provide the document itself?

Answer: Please find the procurement policy at <https://www.stcatharines.ca/en/council-and-administration/resources/Procurement-By-law-2023-178-December-6,-2023.pdf>

6. Is SCPL willing to waive the requirement for WSIB coverage? This coverage is prohibitively expensive for small consulting firms that do not work on your job site.

Answer: WSIB is required. The successful consulting firm is expected to work at the Library a number of times to attend meetings and facilitate consultation discussions.

7. For the Data Collection and Analysis Services, is it sufficient to use the 2022 Ontario Public Library Statistics? If not, can SCPL please indicate what additional data must be considered?

Answer: The consulting firm is expected to use Ontario public library statistics and census data to conduct comparisons and identify trends. The consulting firm can also use other data they have access to.

8. For the consultations, a. Can you please specify the number of external stakeholders and community partners that must be engaged? b. Is it sufficient to run one or two focus groups with key staff members, or must a full staff survey be conducted? c. How many survey responses from library users are you aiming for? I.e., What response threshold do you consider valid for consultation purposes?

Answer: a. There is no fixed number of external stakeholders and partners, but the Library hopes that consultations will cover a wide range of partners and stakeholders, such as social service agencies, schools, city staff, politicians, library users, board members, staff, and etc.

b. In the Library's previous planning, a staff survey and a couple of staff focus groups were organized.

c. Based on our past experience, we are hoping to collect a few hundreds of survey responses.

9. The Introduction section indicates that SCPL requires a 4-year strategic plan for 2025-2028 and also refers to meeting community needs for the next five years. Can you please clarify the timeframe for the strategic plan?

Answer: The timeframe for the strategic plan is 4 years, but we are hoping that the consulting firm can take the community needs in the fifth year into consideration while developing the plan.

10. As we plan this work, it would be helpful to understand whether SCPL has data on hand that can be leveraged for the profiles, or would the consultants be required to access data from other sources? For example, does SCPL collect demographic data on library and program users? And, can this information be broken out by library location?

Answer: The Library has its own statistics data, such as program attendees, and some of our data can be broken out by location. Also the successful consulting firm is expected to utilize other data sources, such as Ontario Public Library Statistics and census data.

11. Do you track information related to library statistics, such as the number of children attending weekly reading circles, or, the number of users of virtual collections versus physical collections? Can data be broken out by library location?

Answer: The Library does have information on programs, collections, and circulation. Most of them can be broken out by location.

12. As the RFP specifies a page limit, we would like to ensure that we duplicate as little as possible throughout our proposal. Can you please clarify whether the information required in the General section concerning previous performance and experience and the proposed methodology represents a brief summary of what is said in the Work Plan section, or whether this information was intended to be included in the Work Plan only?

Answer: This information represents a brief summary of the Work Plan section.

13. We notice that the Library Board does not typically meet over the summer (July and August). Can you please clarify for our project plan, whether the board intends to meet over the summer concerning the strategic plan and whether there is a firm deadline for the final draft plan?

Answer: The Board currently has no plan to meet in the summer. The draft plan is expected to be presented to the Board in September and the final plan is expected to be approved in October.

14. Can you please clarify the capacity for library staff to undertake soft engagement activities, e.g., hand out a survey or survey link or monitor a bulletin board for idea collection?

Answer: Library staff will assist whenever possible, such as handing out surveys and helping facilitate consultation meetings,

15. We often find it helpful to offer incentives to engage community members or patrons. Does the library have a budget for this cost or should we include it as a line item in our budget?

Answer: Incentives should be included as a line item in the consulting firm's budget.