

# **Sparta Free Library Expansion Campaign Summary**

## **August 2018**

This document summarizes the findings of the Campaign Planning Study performed by the Sweeney Group regarding the upcoming expansion to the current library.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Sparta Free Library's current building was constructed in 1902 with a Carnegie Library Grant. In 1982 the library expanded to its present size through city funding and community fundraising. Due to service population growth and an increased demand for programs and services, the library has again outgrown its current space.

### **CURRENT DEFICIENCIES:**

Research by the Sweeney Group identified several deficiencies in the library's current space that negatively impact patron service and utilization. These deficiencies can only be solved with more space and a renovation of the current floorplan.

- Lack of adequate space for library programs.
- Lack of community meeting space, conference rooms and supporting multimedia resources.
- Lack of privacy to support learning and training, specifically no quiet reading or study rooms.
- Lack of space for technology resources and a dedicated computer lab.
- Lack of space for collections in all formats, particularly room for a children's collection with dedicated spaces for children of different ages.

### **FINDINGS:**

Interviews by the Sweeney Group found widespread support for the current library; participants are happy with the level of service currently being provided despite the deficiencies of space. Participants expressed satisfaction with the current staff, Friends Group, and Board of Trustees. The feeling is that the current staff and other stakeholders are doing as much as possible within the current space constraints.

There was widespread support for the expansion of the library as well as respect for the historic nature of the Carnegie building. Many study participants saw the library expansion as an important factor for growth in the community, seeing it as a "differentiator" when compared with other communities in the area. Participants expressed satisfaction with the current drawings showing an expansion that continues to honor the building's history. Most felt that the current estimated project cost of just under five million dollars was reasonable given the amount of construction necessary and the difficulties of working around and within a historic building.

**KEY FEATURES FOR EXPANSION:** Community input resulted in a unified, cost effective design for expansion. In addition to ensuring ADA accessibility and public restrooms on both library levels, the following key features are included in the preliminary drawings:

Children and teen areas:

- Larger designated programming space for children.
- Flexible multipurpose areas.
- Expanded collection areas, including separate age-specific areas.
- Expanded use and availability of technology.

Adult areas:

- Flexible multipurpose community meeting space/programming room.
- Computer lab and conference rooms for lifelong learning, job skills training, and research.

- Study rooms for students and small groups.
- Quiet reading room.
- Expanded collection areas.

### **ELEMENTS FOR CAMPAIGN SUCCESS:**

The following six critical focal points support a successful funding campaign. There is currently work being done at each of these points.

- ✓ Refine Case Statement: the library staff and leadership outline strength of plans and how this expansion will benefit the community.
- ✓ Qualified Volunteers to Lead Campaign: leaders include library staff, trustees, and volunteers from community including a dedicated Campaign Planning Committee.
- ✓ Campaign Leadership Contributions: Campaign Planning Committee meets with donors at all levels as well as organizes broad-based community giving campaign so that all residents can feel they are part of this community effort.
- ✓ Plan of Action: serves as the blueprint for the campaign organizing campaign efforts against the project time table.
- ✓ Clerical support and internal systems: includes staff or volunteer time dedicated to managing the campaign and tracking gifts.

### **CONCLUSIONS:**

The full report, prepared and presented by the Sweeney Group, is comprehensive and contains some information that is confidential to initial stakeholders. Having said this, many key summary points can be distributed more widely.

Study participants were unanimous in the conviction that this project will not be possible without the public fiscal support of the city. The expansion will be financed as a public-private partnership with contributions from the city and private donors.

City leaders see the expansion as an important enhancement to quality of life in Sparta. City leadership and library stakeholders are currently at work on a resolution of support with a challenge grant of up to 70% project financing with a minimum 30% solicited from private donors. The opinion of probable cost is projected at just under five million dollars.

Private partnerships are necessary and can fall at many different levels for individual or corporate donors. There will likely be naming opportunities for specific areas of the expanded library in recognition of major gifts.

Volunteers will also be a critical factor in the success of this project; the Campaign Planning Committee is currently forming. Any interested parties should contact the library to be kept abreast of upcoming meetings.