



Your Library, Our City-Reach Higher FAQ's

Q1.

What is the 20-year plan for library services in Marion?

- A. **We completed an updated needs assessment in January 2019**, since the last one was done over eight years ago. We took things like library trends, city population, current library programs and events, patron and community requests, meeting space needs, and the ever-evolving world of libraries and how they serve the community into consideration.

We learned that 63,000 square feet would best fit the bill to meet library needs for the next 20 years and beyond. For future planning purposes, we're looking at 52,000 square feet in a new, uptown building, and a mobile library service (a book mobile, for example).

Q2.

What is MPL's role within the community and how do you see that evolving in the future?

- A. **Libraries are the hub and the heart of their communities.** Libraries welcome all and continue to expand the services that they offer. Libraries promote literacy and learning. **Libraries are also taking on a more critical role when it comes to social services**, which I see as a continued trend.

Just one example here in Marion is that **we have formed a cross functional task team to address homelessness issues.**

Another example, **we serve a great niche market with teen programming.** We offer kids a place to belong, things to do, continued learning and a place to develop social skills. We offer several programs each week, and **our attendance in teen programs has grown from 343 teens in 2015, to over 3000 teens participating annually.**

Libraries are also becoming what is called the "third place" for many. So, the library is another experience, a third place they can spend some time in between work and home.

Q3.

What makes a good library?

- A. **It is the people who work at the library which make it a great place.** The service and dedication from staff are key. Other qualities of a good library include the **willingness to change and be flexible.**

Libraries must adapt even to the unstated needs of their communities. Things like providing a place where all are welcome and belong, and using public space for things like supervised visits, legal depositions, social service interactions.

Q4.

How does MPL support early literacy and continued learning within the community?

- A. We offer so many great programs and events which help the community understand how important reading is and will be in the development of a child. **In-library programs, outreach services, our summer reading program, and early learning kits** come to mind as some of our most valuable resources which support literacy and learning.

Q5.

Are we currently meeting Marion's library needs?

- A. We are meeting the needs we can, given the space we have and the budget resources which are allocated to the library. **We are experiencing a higher demand for programs and meeting spaces, for all age groups, from a variety of stakeholder groups.** In a new building, we would be able to meet those needs more effectively and efficiently, so we look forward to an expansion of the building and what that means for the services we'll be able to offer there.

Q6.

Why do we need a new library?

- A. **Libraries are often the first-place new residents come.** Marion is a growing city, the population continues to increase, it is estimated to reach nearly 50,000 by 2040.

It will be essential for the library to be housed in a space that can accommodate programming, meetings, collections and more. It is also important to grow proportionately with the community. This isn't possible in our current space.

Q7.

Why can't we just build on top of the current building or renovate it?

- A. The current library building was designed with a 25% rather than a 100% expansion in mind. This current building wasn't built to sustain a second floor, as the walls aren't structurally sound enough. **Adding a second floor to this building was briefly considered as an option, but the decision was made to move away from this option, due to it not being cost-effective.** It was decided that a new building would provide more value and incur less cost than a renovation.

Reasons why a renovation would not be cost effective include the structural limitations of this current facility and the logistical/financial implications of a required relocation throughout the building process. **We need a space that is flexible and can meet the evolving needs of this community.** This current building wasn't built to sustain the technology of the 21st century.

Q8.

What is the role of City and Library staff in this project?

- A. **Library staff will continue to play their current role;** serving the patrons and providing the best materials, resources, programs and events possible to the community. We will continue to provide updates to the City about the current conditions of our facility, library services and space.

We will rely on the City to move the project forward, engaging with the City Council, Library Board of Trustees and the community to gain the needed support for the project.

Q9.

What is the vision for the new space?

- A. **The underlying theme is putting together a space that is adaptable, flexible and can continue to grow and change as the needs of the library change.**

Q10.

How are you getting the word out about the new library project?

- A. The Marion Public Library Facebook page and website are great ways to receive the most up-to-date information about the project. **Patrons and community members are also welcome to reach out directly to Bill** at bcarroll@marionpubliclibrary.org, (319) 377-3412 or by stopping into the library for a visit.

Q11.

How could a member of this community best support this project?

- A.
- **Follow us on our key social media channels**, which include Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for regular updates on this project.
 - Sign up for our newsletter at marionpubliclibrary.org.
 - **Join the Friends of the Marion Public Library** organization, <https://mpliowafriends.org/>
 - Offer to join in on fundraising for the library.
 - **Tell your friends and family** about the project and encourage them to support it.