



Staff Report

November 6, 2023 Council Regular Meeting

Professional Services Agreement for Library Building Updates

Presenter: Connie Urquhart, Library Director

Time Estimate: 15 minutes

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BACKGROUND: The Camas Public Library opened an expanded and renovated building twenty years ago, in what many think of as the showpiece of our city. In the last two decades, budget has precluded staff from administering anything more than emergency repairs. Without preventative maintenance or the ability to update public areas consistent with changing community needs, the jewel of downtown has begun to lose its shine. The updates needed are not simply cosmetic in nature, but items such as lighting, flooring, and accessibility issues combine to create safety concerns.

In addition, residents polled in last year's strategic planning engagement cited the Children's Library as a top area of focus for improvement. According to the survey results of 802 respondents, making improvements to the Children's Library ranked number three overall and number one in the category of facilities. There are distinct spaces within the Children's Library; however, none of these are clearly defined for use or general age group. The Children's Library serves ages 0-12, which can be a challenge to provide the right developmental learning tools and spaces to all segments within that range.

While parts of the Library are just twenty years old, other parts were built in 1940. This mix of old and new is part of why people love the Camas Library; it is both nostalgic and modernly convenient. It is also why there are many areas that need attention, and why several capital projects are approved in the 2023-2024 biennial budget. The Library has also secured alternative funding sources for additional projects.

SUMMARY: Due to the volume and level of work to be done, the Library seeks the services of Johnston Architects (JA) to design and manage the series of projects.

The Library issued a Request for Qualifications, to which there were eight respondents. Johnston Architects was selected among this group for their extensive background with public libraries, especially with spaces for children. They are partners in early literacy whenever they embark on a project such as the Children's Learning Hive, as the Children's Library will henceforth be named.

In their proposal, Johnston Architects has included a detailed timeline that takes the project from concept to design and through construction. The scope includes work on the exterior and interior, which will be divided into two phases.

Phase I: The exterior work will focus on accessibility and safety. Areas of work will include: improved entrances at 4th Avenue, 5th Avenue, and the Courtyard; mitigation of potential water damage; replacement of monument signs; repair of window and door casings. The work in Phase I is funded by a grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce.

Phase II: The interior work will highlight the Children’s Learning Hive. It will also provide new furniture, flooring, and lighting in various other areas of the Library.

The cost for this contract is in a not-to-exceed amount of \$479,042. Funding for the Library Building Updates project comes from a variety of sources listed below. Professional services have been assumed as part of each item.

Sub-Project	Amount	Funding Source
Exterior Work	\$730,000	State Grant
Children’s Learning Hive	\$610,000	Library Budget (ARPA)
Children’s Learning Hive	\$10,000	Norman C. Danielson Grant
Children’s Learning Hive	\$10,000	100 Women Who Care Donations
Flooring	\$165,000	Library Budget
Lighting	\$175,000	Library Budget
Furniture	\$150,000	Library Budget
<i>Total Project</i>	<i>1,850,000</i>	

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY: While 60% percent of the items checked out from the Library each year are from the Children’s collection, just 16% of the Library’s square footage is dedicated to kids. This means that the space has to be designed by experts with every inch utilized for optimization. Unfortunately, this is not the current state in the Children’s Library. Consider the following.

- The community has outgrown the room meant for storytimes, despite the Library hosting 2-3 programs a day in order to accommodate everyone. The Library now uses the meeting rooms upstairs for storytimes, which means the storytime room itself sits empty until it can be redefined. Johnston Architects will transform this space into an early learning center for

children ages 0-5 and their caregivers. Community members specifically expressed their interest in having a place to meet other parents of young children and giving their children a place to play. Allowing children at this age to engage in creative play and develop their vocabulary in a healthy environment helps them develop stronger reading and writing skills down the line.

- The hallway connecting the old storytime room and another room is dark, serves little purpose, and contains untapped potential. Johnston Architects will turn this dark cavern into a light hallway of discovery, where children can learn interactively. This area will be aimed at early elementary school students.
- At the end of the hallway is a rarely used room with beautiful but uncomfortable furniture. It's the original children's room furniture from 1940! This space will be transformed into a STEM lab and homework center for older elementary students, with furniture functional for the activity, audience, and allocated space.
- The area at the end of the current children's shelving which opens to windows and a view of the street tries to be everything to everyone, all ages, and functions. With other spaces more well defined, this can be a calm and comfortable reading area for children and their caregivers. With different types of children experiencing the space in various ways, it's important and inclusive to provide a spot where kids can just sit quietly or curl up with a book.

When the City of Camas received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, staff asked the community to weigh in on how the funds should be spent. Renovating the Children's Library was among the top responses.

The Library is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, with a storied history of beloved memories in the hearts and minds of our citizens. The next generation of Camas residents deserve to have a Library with the same shine, and one that adapts to the needs of its community. Johnston Architects feel they can get us there with this project.

BUDGET IMPACT: The Library General Building Updates professional services agreement is funded in the FY 2023-2024 Library Budget, with support from additional grant funding from the Washington State Department of Commerce.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that Council approve the Johnston Architects professional services agreement.