Section 6:

Comparisons with Peer Libraries

The Consultants interpreted the Request for Proposal requirement of a review of current trends in the library industry should include an analysis of the performance of public libraries with similarities to the Santa Fe Public Library (SFPL) system. Based, in part, on the standards established in Section 5, and used for assessment purposes in Section 7, this Section benchmarks SFPL against public libraries and library systems with similar challenges and characteristics.

The Consultants formalized a methodology, measurement standards, tools, resources, and to use in the execution of this task. We then implemented a statistical-based assessment process, in order to compare and contrast SFPL with the library service metrics of their peer libraries. The purpose was to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement within the SFPL system as a whole, as well as to meet the specific needs of the communities served by SFPL in Santa Fe County.

The contents of this Section document our process and findings, which included reviewing and assessing current Library services and programs, comparing and contrasting Santa Fe with the 11 largest public libraries in New Mexico.

Comparisons with Peer Libraries

Benchmarking one's self against nearby and/or exemplary competitors can be useful evaluation tool. Before commencement of the assessment process, the Consultants established the standards against which evaluations would be made. The Consultants then benchmarked the SFPL System's performance related to other municipal public libraries using statistics reported by these libraries to the New Mexico State Library.

Peer Communities

The 11 municipal public library systems located in New Mexico and serving the largest populations were identified by the Consultants – and vetted by Library Leadership, as Santa Fe's peer group, which include:

- Albuquerque;
- Las Cruces;
- Rio Rancho;
- Roswell;
- Farmington;
- Clovis;
- Hobbs;
- Alamogordo;
- Carlsbad;
- Gallup; and
- Los Alamos.

These communities, plus Santa Fe, were analyzed based on data collected by the New Mexico State Library. The data was compiled based on annual reports requested from each public library in New Mexico. The latest completed data was for fiscal year (FY) 2017. The Consultants did not analyze all of the data that the State Library makes available.

Key Demographics

Findings are briefly documented below, highlight the following:

- Population served;
- Square miles of service area – or of the city limits – whichever is readily available for all;
- Number of libraries within the given system; and
- Total square footage of all library facilities.

Findings. Santa Fe is the fourth largest city of the 12, with an estimated 2018 population of 84,198. Albuquerque is the largest at 662,564, and Los Alamos is the smallest (17,950). The 11 locales plus Santa Fe, have a total estimated population of 1,194,210, averaging 99,518, but clearly skewed by Albuquerque's size. See Appendix 6.1 for additional information on the 12 New Mexico libraries, and Appendix 6.2 for data on nine public library systems serving state capitol cities in the United States.

Section 6: Comparisons with Peer Libraries

page 6.1

Plan for a 21st Century Library System
for the Santa Fe Public Library
prepared by Godfrey's Associates, Inc.

From these metrics, the Consultants gleaned per capita metrics and cross tabbed data – density metrics such as square feet per FTE or operating budget per square feet per FTE, facilities and square feet per square mile, etc.

Key Library Statistics

Peer Library Comparison Findings. Many public libraries experienced a decline in traditional library customer activities – circulation, library visits, program attendance, and reference questions – as economies rebound from the budget cuts brought about from the Great Recession.

Findings are documented below, highlighting the total numbers and per capita measures for the following:

- Operating revenue;
- Collection items;
- Circulation;
- Number of FTE staff; and
- Number of MLS-degreed Librarians on staff.

These metrics can be compared to peer group, state, and national averages for each category – even if the sources would not be congruent. The Consultants calculated peer averages for most categories from congruent sources.

It is important to note that the "official" population reported by the New Mexico State Library for Santa Fe – and all public libraries – is the official US Census figure determined every 10 years. Hence, the reported population for Santa Fe in 2017 was actually the 2010 Census figure of 67,947. Because this lower number did not yield accurate comparative data due to the annexation of a significant number of citizens, the Consultants chose to use the more current Santa Fe population of 84,198, but did not attempt to update other populations.

Using data from the State Library's Annual Public Library Statistics for FY2017 for the remainder of the peer analysis, the Consultants compared Santa Fe Public Library with the 11 other public libraries who have service area populations of 17,000 or more. Summary highlights for each of the 12 libraries or library systems follow.

Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Library System. Service area population of 662,584, Albuquerque has six times plus the population of the other libraries in the peer group. It is home to the University of New Mexico. Revenue of $16 million equates to $24.39 per capita. Total collection use per capita was 15.14. Square feet of library space is 338,305, or 0.51 square feet per capita.

Thomas Branigan Memorial Library, Las Cruces. Las Cruces is the home of New Mexico State University (NMSU), New Mexico's only land-grant university. The city's major employer is the federal government on nearby White Sands Test Facility and White Sands Missile Range. The service area population is 97,618 and revenue is $2,064,674 or $21.15 per capita. Total collection use per capita was 4.29. In terms of library space, Las Cruces has 0.47 square feet per capita (45,676 total).

Rio Rancho Public Library. Rio Rancho, "The City of Vision," is one of the fastest growing cities in New Mexico, with a service area population of 87,521, $2.88 million in operating revenue ($32.87 per capita), and 11.04 per capita total collection use. Space-wise, 44,250 total square feet equates to 0.51 per capita.

Santa Fe Public Library. The state's capital ranks fourth in service area population with 84,198, and is a major tourist destination with a million or more visitors a year. The operational revenue is $43.78 per capita ($3,685,958 total). Collection use per capita 8.93. Santa Fe's total amount of library space equals 72,522, or 0.86 square feet per capita.

Roswell Public Library. Roswell's service area population is 48,366. The city is typically recognized as a place connected to extraterrestrial activity. Its budget for library operations is $1,454,979, or $30.08 per capita. Total collection use per capita 6.48. In terms of physical space, Roswell has 37,000 gross square feet, or 0.77 per capita.

Farmington Public Library. Located where the San Juan, Animas, and La Plata Rivers intersect, Farmington has a service area population of 45,877. The operational budget of $4.08 million produces a per capita budget of $88.83, second only to Los Alamos' $128.99. Collection use figure of $9.93 per capita. The amount of library space is 50,065 (1.09 square feet per capita).

Clovis Carver Public Library. The service area population is 30,000 to 40,000. The Clovis Public Library's operational revenue was $22.38 per capita ($845,479 total). Total collection use was 2.94, the lowest figure of the 12 libraries. Clovis has 47,000 square feet of space, 1.24 per capita.

Hobbs Public Library. With a service area population of 40,000, Hobbs is one of New Mexico's larger cities. The budget for operations was $1.12 million ($32.86 per capita). Total collection use on a per capita basis was 4.02, making it the lowest figure among the 12 cities. In terms of library space, Hobbs Public Library has a total of 40,000 square feet that converts to 1.17 square feet per capita.

Section 6: Comparisons with Peer Libraries

page 6.2

Plan for a 21st Century Library System
for the Santa Fe Public Library
prepared by Godfrey's Associates, Inc.

Alamogordo Public Library. Alamogordo is home to 30,403 New Mexicans. The operational revenue was $787,529, or $25.90 per capita. As for collection use, it was 102,699, or 6.50 per capita. The library space is 20,764 square feet, or 0.68 per capita.

Carlsbad Public Library. Carlsbad is the gateway to the Carlsbad Caverns National Park. There are 26,138 residents and $36.29 per capita for operations and 3.57 per capita collection use. Total square feet of library space is 22,500, 0.86 per capita.

Octavia Fellin Public Library, Gallup. The actual population served includes much of McKinley County, potentially skewing statistics from the State Library.

Los Alamos County Library System. Another outlier, the smaller community scale does not inhibit the excellent educational and quality of life outcomes linked to their substantial investment in their public libraries.

Summary. Santa Fe Public Library compare favorably with the peer group on a number of the analyzed factors:

- Total operating revenue per capita at $43.78 is greater than the peer average of $31.18;
- Total operating revenue is about $580,000 more than the peer average;
- While Santa Fe's library square footage per capita (0.86) is above the peer average of 0.67, it is significantly below best practice of 1.00;
- Santa Fe has a slightly larger overall staff than the average and a substantially larger staff with a Master degree.

Santa Fe performs behind the peer group average on these factors:

- The average peer collection size is 3.12 items per capita, whereas Santa Fe has 6.75 items per – which might appear to be a positive, but actually underscores how overcrowded the shelves are in all three facilities;
- SFPL's per capita circulation/collection usage is below the average (8.93 versus 11.73) though the median is 6.49.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2, presented on the following page, contain a more complete comparison of data. Additional measures are included at the end of this Report, in Appendix 6.1

Public Library Systems Serving State Capitol Cities

The Consultants compared SFPL with data on eight other public library systems serving state capitol cities in the U.S., including:

library system	state capitol city
Austin Public Library	Austin, Texas
Central Arkansas Library System	Little Rock, Arkansas
Denver Public Library	Denver, Colorado
Des Moines Public Library	Des Moines, Iowa
Laramie County Library System	Cheyenne, Wyoming
Santa Fe Public Library	Santa Fe, New Mexico
Metropolitan Library System	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Phoenix Public Library	Phoenix, Arizona
Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library	Topeka, Kansas

Santa Fe is the least populated city of this group – but it is a subset of U.S. cities that the City of Santa Fe should aspire to emulate in significant ways.

Only Cheyenne, Wyoming is comparable to in size and configuration to SFPL. To be expected, SFPL fell at or below the 50th percentile all but three of the 34 categories, and ranked below the 25th percentile on 16 of the remaining 31 measures.

Per Capita Measures. Ten of the 34 categories are per capita measures, where Santa Fe can compete on a more level playing field. SFPL tied for first with Denver for ALA-MLS librarians per 1,000 population (at 0.22), and ranked alone in first for the number of collection items per capita (6.75). SFPL ranked fourth in hours open per facility per week, at 55.14, which was midway between the 50th (50.48 hours) and 75th (60.65 hours) percentiles.

FY2017 data from the Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS) public library survey was used for this comparison. See Appendix 6.2 for the complete data set from the peer library systems serving state capitols.

Section 6: Comparisons with Peer Libraries

page 6.3

Plan for a 21st Century Library System
for the Santa Fe Public Library
prepared by Godfrey's Associates, Inc.

Table 6.1
Peer Library Comparisons

library	population served	total operating revenue	operating revenue per capita	total collection size	collection size per capita	total collection use	total collection use per capita
Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Library	662,564	$16,162,298	$24.39	1,262,543	1.91	10,033,091	15.14
Thomas Branigan Memorial Library	97,618	$2,064,674	$21.15	420,694	4.31	419,178	4.29
Rio Rancho Public Library	87,521	$2,876,697	$32.87	225,697	2.58	966,412	11.04
Santa Fe Public Library	**84,198**	**$3,685,958**	**$43.78**	**568,694**	**6.75**	**751,475**	**8.93**
Roswell Public Library	48,366	$1,454,979	$30.08	190,106	3.93	313,599	6.48
Farmington Public Library	45,877	$4,075,172	$88.83	210,156	4.58	455,551	9.93
Clovis Carver Public Library	37,775	$845,479	$22.38	129,426	3.43	110,959	2.94
Hobbs Public Library	34,122	$1,121,175	$32.86	152,677	4.47	137,269	4.02
Alamogordo Public Library	30,403	$787,529	$25.90	102,669	3.38	197,612	6.50
Carlsbad Public Library	26,138	$948,581	$36.29	78,941	3.02	93,239	3.57
Octavia Fellin Public Library	21,678	$896,349	$41.35	184,330	8.50	91,936	4.24
Los Alamos County Library System	17,950	$2,315,321	$128.99	195,307	10.88	443,438	24.70

Table 6.2
Peer Library Comparisons

library	population served	total square feet of all facilities	square feet per capita	number of ALA-MLS Librarians (FTE)	ALA-MLS Librarians per 1000 population served	total number of paid employees (FTE)	total paid employees per 1000 population served
Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Library	662,564	338,305	0.51	42.00	0.06	146.00	0.22
Thomas Branigan Memorial Library	97,618	45,676	0.47	11.00	0.11	32.50	0.33
Rio Rancho Public Library	87,521	44,250	0.51	13.00	0.15	42.00	0.48
Santa Fe Public Library	**84,198**	**72,522**	**0.86**	**18.50**	**0.22**	**48.00**	**0.57**
Roswell Public Library	48,366	37,000	0.77	2.00	0.04	18.00	0.37
Farmington Public Library	45,877	50,065	1.09	3.00	0.07	53.37	1.16
Clovis Carver Public Library	37,775	47,000	1.24	1.00	0.03	15.00	0.40
Hobbs Public Library	34,122	40,000	1.17	2.00	0.06	14.25	0.42
Alamogordo Public Library	30,403	20,764	0.68	2.00	0.07	14.00	0.46
Carlsbad Public Library	26,138	22,500	0.86	2.38	0.09	12.98	0.50
Octavia Fellin Public Library	21,678	26,665	1.23	3.00	0.14	16.00	0.74
Los Alamos County Library System	17,950	59,503	3.31	7.00	0.39	29.69	1.65

For purposes of adding context to these analyses, the Consultants offer these clarifications of terminology:

Operating Revenue.
Operating revenue signifies how much, in theory, the residents of a particular library's stated service area population are being charged for library service. "Charged" primarily refers to taxes in some form, e.g. real estate, sales, gross receipts, etc. In addition, many jurisdictions place all fines, fees, and other non-tax-related income into their General Fund, and the library's operating revenue is typically the amount that is funded from General Fund revenue.

Operating Expenditures.
Operating expenditures are usually a lesser amount than operating revenue, inasmuch as it is rare when any local government spends every cent of its budgeted revenue. The Federal government is in a different situation, of course. Different locales have different policies for unexpended revenues. The Consultants do not know the policy of the City of Santa Fe.

Section 6: Comparisons with Peer Libraries

page 6.4

Plan for a 21st Century Library System
for the Santa Fe Public Library
prepared by Godfrey's Associates, Inc.