

## CONCLUSIONS

### CHALLENGE

We hold a very critical eye and higher bar to the likelihood of success in any campaign. A campaign cannot be simply reduced to a final tally with one of two outcomes; exceeded goal or not exceeded goal.

A campaign has a profound and lasting effect on a community in a number of areas, not the least of which is how these elements become manifest in years to come through giving, community spirit, and enthusiasm for civic projects. Our planning and final analysis involves more than just a simple “yes” or “no” and financial goal. Cosgriff looks critically at the components needed for success - an honest evaluation of those components and how they interplay with various individuals, groups and demographic tracts. That is to say, Cosgriff’s final analysis should translate to a plan whereby the community can execute the recommendations so all involved they will look back and find the experience rewarding for the community, find new civic leaders, and for the entire community to have pride in their combined efforts and outcome – even if they may fall slightly short of goal. A campaign should inspire people to lead and make communities better. In order to achieve these outcomes the feasibility study must be honest, candid and accurate.

### ANNEXATION AREA SUPPORT

In the later stages of development for the Feasibility Study the annexation issue became public. Knowing that it would be likely households in these annex area could become part of the city in the near future Cosgriff redesigned the study so that opinions from the annex area households could be captured identified and quantified. Cosgriff also absorbed the cost of the extra mailing, processing of the surveys and cross reference analysis of responses from the annexation households.

The attitudes of annex area families towards the library and Gretna in general was unknown. It could have been that annexation area families just represented a continual westward push of West Omaha suburbs without regard to Gretna, or since the annexation area is very close they might have very strong leanings towards Gretna’s infrastructure growth. **After cross analyzing each question for the annex variable it was determined that annex responses can generally categorized as supportive of the Gretna library, but not quite as much as Gretna residents.**

It must be noted that the study survey was conducted before the new tax law was enacted, before the annexation was voted in by the Gretna city council and, before the general uplifting of the economy. Some attitudes may change after these factors have had a chance to settle and become more normal. On the whole, the Gretna annexation area is generally supportive of the library plans.

### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Enthusiasm and desire from the community would support a campaign. **Most of the categories reveal solid support for the idea of progressing with this plan.** A normal campaign could likely be developed from the desire here though it may be difficult getting enough volunteers. That is a critical component in a public capital campaign.

There are concerns about the diminishing rates of acceptance and support shifting away from support levels in the past Feasibility Study. While response rates are still relatively strong and the influence of the opinions of the annexation population are not as detrimental as they could be Cosgriff is still concerned about potential undermining effects of public opinion in a campaign, but not as much for a bond issue. In other words there is a cloud on the horizon to be worried about.

### **No 'Anti' Forces**

There appear to be no real 'Anti' forces trying to stop this plan. There are people who think it may be too big or too expensive and they may have a point. Likewise, some do not see the merits of this kind of development. This sentiment is always present and this study is no exception. This kind of non-support is benign compared to strong ANTI factions who may be staunchly opposed to a building, a site, the politics or something else. They can mount a very strong and divisive counter campaign to kill a well-developed plan. Thankfully, no evidence of this has been found and the major enemies of the project are apathy and resistance to giving.

### **Indifference**

Again response rates are good, but small clouds on the horizon manifest themselves in different ways. Part of the study was to interview 50 people or couples privately and confidentially. In order to get 50 interviews Cosgriff suggests inviting 100 people to be interviewed. These invitees are sent a letter explaining the study and asking if they would meet at a neutral office to have a private conversation with an interviewer. This is repeated hundreds of times across the country in Cosgriff's studies and the result garners over 50 volunteers for interviews. The library and foundation contacted people well ahead of time, but could not generate 50 interviews. Cosgriff offered to add multiple days and extend the interview times for an additional week and yet a full 50 on-site personal interviews could not be generated. Further, several people did not show for their appointed interview times.

The three questions testing personal commitment to make a campaign work drew very low response rates (Would you take a position of leadership? Would you make a few calls on families? Would you make a pledge of your own?). In fact the response rates here are some of the lowest Cosgriff has seen in a project that was not hotly contested by 'anti's'. This indifference makes it difficult to get results in a campaign. A campaign can be set up and public relations begins in earnest, but then the campaign plateaus because not enough volunteers can be signed. Even if enough volunteers come aboard the public may not want to be called on and pledges may not ensue. This is a very real concern. The damage from this is not that the project fails to reach goal, but that the project and the community are saddled with bad feelings about everything for many years to come.

### **Building Need**

Not everybody is sold on the need for a new building. Many understand the nuances and welcome the amenities. To convince people to donate money in a campaign or vote for the project in a bond more will have to fully understand the benefits it provides and come to want it themselves.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

The response rate of people willing to volunteer as leaders or to make calls in the campaign is low and below national averages. It requires more volunteers performing background and solicitation work than leaders to make a successful campaign.

To find and match up the right volunteers with the right donor families is an important challenge. Without strong lead gifts, it will require a great deal of discipline and a well-executed plan to obtain pledges from as many families as possible. It bears repeating: **to be successful in this regard requires high level of support.**

People must be encouraged to participate by instilling the feeling **that this is everyone's project and it is imminently attainable so long as everybody does their part.** The project must also be transparent. The community needs to hear multiple times, in multiple ways:

- How it was decided and planned,
- Exactly what is to be done,
- Why is it needed,
- How it will benefit each person,
- When will it be done,
- What will it cost, and
- Most importantly, why the campaign needs maximum participation.

It will be difficult to execute a campaign plan properly without the requisite number of volunteers and even with an excess of volunteers if people are unwilling to give significantly a meaningful goal cannot be reached.

#### **FIXED INCOME CONCERNS**

There is a concern about maximizing the potential goal that must be taken into account. **Many families live on a fixed income or on investments that allow a comfortable, but not extravagant, lifestyle.** Their investments may have been adversely affected over the past several years. Others may be concerned about the prospect of their future. If they should incur unexpected expenses, it could have further profound effects on their net worth or their income. For this reason, those who have the propensity to give generously may not.

#### **AMBIVALENT DONORS**

**Those who do not feel sufficiently motivated do not give generously or even to their potential.** There are always those who feel the project must be done, but are unwilling to make any type of pledge. This group may prevent a campaign from realizing its full potential, unless properly motivated.

One of **the prime considerations in a pre-campaign situation is to educate and motivate** the people who might feel this way or who are ambivalent. This group is more-or-less in favor of progress but needs to be convinced that this project can be supported by current finances. During the campaign phase, many of these families will become motivated and become donors.

#### **SUGGESTED GOAL**

The conclusion we draw for a campaign goal takes into account several factors. It would be easy to conclude that any city could just reach a certain multiple of its population, but this is certainly not a very safe, effective, or accurate method for making such an important determination especially given the scope and importance of the project to Gretna. We find instances where it is very difficult to raise one or one million dollars whereas others have easily exceeded six to eight million dollars. In all cases, our calculation

of goal was not only accurate, but took into account many varying factors. The factors we used for this study were as follows:

- Number and value of pacesetter pledges found in the course of the study,
- Multiples of identified pledges reported in the study,
- Analysis of the nature of the campaign objectives and goal,
- Factoring resistance and negativity of respondents' perspectives on the urgency, relevance, and validity of the project,
- Potential civic, business, and Pacesetter monies,
- Running three (3) different financial models,
- Estimation of the nature and direction of the local economy,
- Factoring in the response rate to mail and web based interviews,
- Demographic trends,

Below is a chart suggesting the number of various levels of giving that would be required to meet a \$6,000,000 goal. This study has only been able to identify a couple major gifts, although there may be a number of potential large donors who would not commit at this time. It will be important to closely look for these prior to a capital campaign.

Based on these findings and our experience from over 57 years of capital campaigns, we recommend a single capital campaign goal range of:

**Goal Range                      \$2,750,000 to \$3,000,000**

**Strong participation by the community and several major pacesetting type gifts are needed to achieve these goals.** Cosgriff feels this range is attainable with hard work over a five (5) year pledge period, provided the overall capital campaign plan described herein is professionally administered.

Gifts Needed for \$6,000,000 Campaign				Gifts Offered in Gretna Study				
Number of Gifts Needed	Gift Size	Amount Generated	Cumulative Amount Generated	Number of Gifts Offered	low Pledge Range	High Pledge Range	low Extended Range	high Extended Range
3	\$250,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	1	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
10	\$100,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,750,000	1	\$100,000	\$250,000	\$100,000	\$250,000
14	\$50,000	\$700,000	\$2,450,000	0	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$0
25	\$25,000	\$625,000	\$3,075,000	1	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$50,000
50	\$15,000	\$750,000	\$3,825,000	0	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$0	\$0
60	\$10,000	\$600,000	\$4,425,000	5	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$50,000
75	\$5,000	\$375,000	\$4,800,000	17	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$17,000	\$85,000
250	\$2,500	\$625,000	\$5,425,000	166	\$250	\$1,000	\$41,500	\$166,000
350	1000	\$350,000	\$5,775,000					
450	500	\$225,000	\$6,000,000					
			\$6,000,000					
<b>1287</b>			<b>\$6,000,000</b>	<b>191</b>			<b>\$458,500</b>	<b>\$851,000</b>

If you make assumptions in giving to reflect more of the larger dimension gifts the goal matrix could look like this - assuming all these gifts could be secured. Unfortunately even this aggressive chart and other potential grants does not yield what is needed for the scope of the current building project.

Potential Gifts for Gretna Campaign				
Number of Gifts Offered	low Pledge Range	High Pledge Range	low Extended Range	high Extended Range
2	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
2	\$100,000	\$250,000	\$200,000	\$500,000
5	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$250,000	\$500,000
6	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$150,000	\$300,000
15	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$150,000	\$375,000
40	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$200,000	\$400,000
100	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$100,000	\$500,000
200	\$250	\$1,000	\$50,000	\$200,000
<b>370</b>			<b>\$1,600,000</b>	<b>\$3,275,000</b>

**WHEN SHOULD A CAMPAIGN BEGIN?**

A capital campaign is not suggested now. A campaign may, at best generate a few million dollars yet the project needs so much more. Further, a campaign will cost upwards of a couple hundred thousand dollars and will occupy a great deal of time and tie up resources while only generating a fraction of what is needed. You will use too much human capital and important operating expenses to yield a relatively low (in relation to overall project costs) return.

The community must develop a stronger desire about the need so when the time comes for a campaign they feel more compelled to give, or if a bond issue is put out for vote the results will yield a better outcome. At that time they may not totally agree with the course of action, but they will know the city and library were good stewards.

That being said however, there is pent-up demand to “make this happen.” Like one of the comments from a respondent, “It took us 17years to get our new library, but it was worth it.”

## BOND ACCEPTANCE

After the first several interviews it became apparent that people had considered this project and thought it might best be completed if it were put to a bond. Thereafter every interview included discussion about putting the project to a bond issue. **The consensus was nearly unanimous in that everyone favored spreading out the cost among the entire population. This follows that nearly everyone feels the project has merit and will be good for the community at large.** The results of the study at large bear this out where 81% think is important to have a new modern library in Gretna. The negative, or those who think it should not be built are statistically negligible at 5%.

**A proper narrative set in motion by a good public relations group can win a bond issue.** The objective in the communications is to make the library the front and center topic for several months. A well-orchestrated stream of information, video, graphics, interviews and press releases can take the issue from ho-hum to front and center. The process will transform people to understand how the new library and community center will benefit everyone and will make a difference in their lives. This level of excitement must be maintained for a couple months before an election – not much different than political elections. If that kind of messaging is used then a library bond issue is likely to win even if it is competing with another major project. **The library attracts a cross section and most see how it will improve their lives – those who do not feel that way are those not likely to vote.**

Even with a campaign and/ or many grants it will take something else or a reduced building to get the funding and the project to meet.

