

Strategic Plan RFPs Questions and Answers

The following questions were submitted regarding Montgomery Community Media's two current Requests for Proposals (RFPs). MCM's responses are provided below and are being published to ensure all prospective respondents have access to the same information.

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Question 1. Could you clarify the anticipated number of PEG partners and stakeholder groups participating directly, and whether the five-month timeline referenced in the proposal requirements reflects the expected engagement period?

Answer 1. Here are the PEG partners and stakeholder groups we anticipate being involved in the engagement:

- MCM's Board of Directors and leadership team
- County contract administration - Department of Technology, Enterprise and Business Solutions (TEBS)
- Operators of the county education channels - Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) & Montgomery College (MC)
- Community members, which include volunteers and partners

Yes, the five-month timeline should include the engagement period as well as the other deliverables.

Question 2. How does MCM define the level of depth expected in the Draft and Final Strategic Plan (e.g., high-level strategic framework vs. fully detailed operational plan)?

Answer 2. The expectation is to deliver a high-level strategic framework that defines priorities and goals, includes major recommendations with rationale, outlines phases if necessary, and identifies risks and key decisions. The consultant is not expected to operationalize the plan.

Question 3. What is MCM's expectation for the implementation roadmap (high-level sequencing vs. detailed project plan with timelines, dependencies, and change-management considerations)?

Answer 3. MCM expects the roadmap to provide high-level sequencing, including major milestones, recommended phases, and estimated timeframes for completion. The consultant is not expected to develop a detailed project management plan with specific tasks, dependencies, or change-management activities. A more detailed implementation

plan, including specific activities, responsibilities, dependencies, timelines, and change-management actions, will be developed after the strategic plan is approved.

Question 4. For the governance recommendations, is MCM expecting a full governance model or a set of options with pros/cons?

Answer 4. MCM expects the consultant to present a set of viable governance options, including pros/cons, risks, and key considerations. MCM is not expecting the consultant to develop a fully detailed governance model.

Question 5. What level of detail is expected in the risk assessment (strategic risks only, or operational/financial/legal risks as well)?

Answer 5. The consultant's risk assessment should address strategic, operational, and financial risks associated with the recommended strategic direction and potential consolidation. MCM is separately engaging a consultant to conduct a Community Media Landscape Assessment, which will examine external funding trends and the relevant legal and regulatory environment. Findings from that assessment will be provided to and should inform the strategic planning process.

Question 6. How many strategic planning sessions does MCM anticipate (number, duration, format (in-person or virtual), and participant groups)?

Answer 6. MCM expects the consultant to recommend the appropriate number, duration, and format for sessions based on their proposed methodology. Recommendations should take into consideration the project timeline and available budget. MCM is open to a combination of in-person and virtual sessions, surveys, and other appropriate stakeholder engagement methods.

Question 7. Will MCM coordinate stakeholder scheduling, or is the consultant responsible for managing outreach and logistics?

Answer 7. MCM will coordinate stakeholder scheduling and assist with outreach and logistical arrangements.

Question 8. When will the Landscape Assessment be completed and available to the consultant?

Answer 8. The completion date for the Community Media Landscape Assessment is still to be determined. MCM is currently seeking a consultant to complete this work in advance of the strategic planning process, with the intent that the assessment findings will be **available to inform the strategic planning consultant's work.**

Question 9. Will the consultant have access to the underlying data, or only the final report?

Answer 9. The strategic planning consultant will have access to the general findings and final report from the Community Media Landscape Assessment, but should not assume access to all underlying data or research materials. MCM also expects the consultant conducting the Landscape Assessment to participate in at least one strategic planning session to share findings, provide context, and support integration of the assessment into the strategic planning process. This may include a working session directly with the strategic planning consultant.

Question 10. Is the \$24,000 cap firm, or is there flexibility based on methodology?

Answer 10. MCM would ideally like to keep the total contract cost below \$25,000 due to Montgomery County procurement requirements applicable to contracts valued at \$25,000 or more. However, MCM recognizes that a consultant's proposed methodology and approach may affect the overall cost. If a proposer determines that the full scope cannot reasonably be completed within the stated budget, the proposal should clearly identify any scope elements that are excluded or modified due to cost, along with the associated rationale. Such proposals will still be considered as part of the evaluation process.

Question 11. Is there a target date for delivery of the Draft Strategic Plan?

Answer 11. MCM has not established a specific target date for delivery of the Draft Strategic Plan. The grant supporting this work provides a six-month period for completion of the overall strategic planning process, including consultant selection. Extensions may be available but require approval from Montgomery County Office of Grants Management.

Question 12. Are there any County deadlines (e.g., FY28 budget cycle) that the Consultant should consider when shaping the project timeline?

Answer 12. Yes. The strategic plan is expected to inform MCM's FY28 budget development and proposal. Therefore, MCM would ideally like the final strategic plan completed by March 1, 2027, or earlier.

Question 13. Who will the consultant be collaborating with and reporting to regarding project planning and implementation?

Answer 13. MCM's CEO.

Question 14. Who will be the primary decision-maker for reviewing and approving deliverables?

Answer 14. MCM's CEO

Question 15. How many rounds of revisions does MCM anticipate for the Draft and Final Strategic Plan?

Answer 15. MCM anticipates no more than two rounds of revisions. The consultant should submit an initial draft for MCM's review and feedback, incorporate MCM's comments and recommendations into a revised draft, and then make any final adjustments necessary to produce the Final Strategic Plan.

Question 16. Is MCM open to a phased strategic project plan (e.g., Phase I: Foundational Review and Analysis -stakeholder engagement, landscape assessment review, findings and recommendation summary; and Phase II: Strategic Planning and Plan Development), or must all deliverables be completed within the five-month window?

Answer 16. MCM is open to a phased approach to organizing the strategic planning process. However, all engagement activities and deliverables, including the final are expected to be completed within the five-month project period. Adjustments to the project timeline may be considered if warranted, but would require approval from the Montgomery County Office of Grants Management.

Question 17. The RFP requests a proposed work plan based on a five-month timeline. Is the five-month duration a firm requirement of the grant or procurement process, or would MCM be open to an accelerated approach if a consultant believes the full scope and stakeholder engagement could be completed effectively in approximately three months?

Answer 17. MCM is open to considering an accelerated approach if the consultant can demonstrate that the full scope of work and stakeholder engagement can be completed effectively.

Question 18. The consultant will be expected to incorporate findings from the separately commissioned Community Media Landscape Assessment. What is the anticipated timing for completion of that assessment, and when does MCM expect those findings to become available to the selected consultant?

Answer 18. MCM intends to engage the consultant completing the Community Media Landscape Assessment in advance of the strategic planning process. While the completion date has not yet been finalized, MCM's goal is for the assessment findings to be available early enough to inform the strategic planning recommendations and report. The consultant is also expected to participate in at least one working session with the strategic planning consultant to provide context and support integration of the findings.

Question 19. Can MCM provide additional context on the anticipated stakeholder universe? For example, the number of PEG partners, leadership groups, government stakeholders, community representatives, staff or other constituencies the consultant should anticipate engaging.

Answer 19. Here are the PEG partners and participant groups we anticipate being involved in the engagement:

- MCM's Board of Directors and leadership team
- County contract administration - Department of Technology, Enterprise and Business Solutions (TEBS)
- Operators of the county education channels - Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) & Montgomery College (MC)
- Community members, which include volunteers and partners

Question 20. Given Montgomery County's diverse population and MCM's emphasis on inclusive, equitable and accessible stakeholder engagement, are there specific communities, audiences, languages or accessibility considerations that MCM expects the planning process to prioritize?

Answer 20. MCM expects the engagement process to reflect Montgomery County's diverse communities and to incorporate inclusive and accessible engagement practices. Consultants should describe how they will engage stakeholders and identify any recommended approaches to ensure equitable participation.

Question 21. To what extent have MCM and its PEG partners already developed a point of view regarding potential consolidation? Should the consultant approach the engagement primarily as an evaluation and refinement of existing concepts, or is MCM seeking a process that develops and evaluates multiple operating and governance models from the ground up?

Answer 21. MCM and its PEG partners have held preliminary discussions over several years regarding opportunities to strengthen collaboration and improve the long-term sustainability of community media services. However, no official decisions have been made regarding a preferred operating model. MCM expects the consultant to facilitate an objective planning process that evaluates viable options, identifies opportunities and challenges, and provides recommendations based on stakeholder input, data and best practices.

Question 22. Will MCM provide administrative support for stakeholder scheduling, participant recruitment, meeting logistics and survey distribution?

Answer 22. MCM will coordinate stakeholder scheduling and assist with participant recruitment, meeting logistics, and survey distribution, as appropriate. The consultant will be responsible for designing and facilitating the engagement process and identifying the information needed to support the strategic planning effort.

Question 23. I would appreciate confirmation of whether remote participation is acceptable and whether any required travel must be included within the stated project ceiling.

Answer 23. MCM is not requiring in-person participation or travel as part of this engagement. Proposers are encouraged to recommend the approach they believe will best achieve the project's objectives, taking into consideration the project timeline and available budget. MCM will evaluate all proposals based on the proposed methodology, approach, qualifications, and the consultant's ability to successfully achieve the desired project outcomes. If travel is included as part of a proposer's recommended approach, any associated costs should be reflected in the proposal budget.