

Memorandum

To: URISA International Board
From: ORURISA Chapter Board
Re: OneURISA Proposal
Date: June 27, 2018

The Oregon URISA Chapter has evaluated the latest information related to the OneURISA proposal. We provide that evaluation to you below for your consideration as you proceed with implementation. In summary, we are not prepared to move forward with the OneURISA initiative at this time, pending an appropriate response to our concerns and request for additional information as outlined in the Conclusions section of our evaluation below. We want URISA to be successful and want to remain engaged on this important initiative. We support the intent of the initiative and the objectives, but do not believe the implementation has been planned sufficiently to be successful.

ORURISA International URISA Benefits Review

ORURISA focuses on education, communication, and professional improvement at a local level. Most participation happens at quarterly Section meetings, trainings and Chapter special events. In addition, ORURISA annually co-sponsors a GIS Conference.

The following is a short evaluation of the benefits to the ORURISA Chapter and its members being members of URISA, and feedback on what we believe would be valuable benefits to members and the Chapter. Part of the basis for this evaluation was the recent communication on OneURISA from the URISA Board.

Individual Benefits: A relatively small percentage of the ORURISA membership belongs to URISA. It is likely that that this is because there are few added, direct benefits to an individual ORURISA member when he or she also becomes a member of International URISA. We base this conclusion on two primary pieces of evidence: most International URISA members can't attend the international conference, and if you look at the services URISA offers from their website, there are more current, complete, and economical (free) services offered elsewhere. However, our membership has indicated that the following services would be of significant value:

- a. More extensive professional network and forum with regular, easy to access opportunities to discuss common issues and share solutions. This is the primary value proposition for membership in a national or international organization, but a large and growing membership is a necessary component to make this value proposition a reality. A membership fee at the same rate as the current fee, or higher, will likely result in a significant loss of members from the Chapters;
- b. Expanded electronic educational opportunities, including access and use of URISA Connect webinar tools and content, as well as other tools and technologies;
- c. Collaboration across Chapters to develop innovative educational content, to be incorporated into local conferences, trainings and special events;
- d. Improve the consistency of services offered at the Chapter level across the entire international organization. If some Chapters provide a lesser level of services to their members than other Chapters, the individual members will eventually leave the professional network, to the detriment of all;

Direct Chapter Benefits from OneURISA: The primary direct benefits afforded to our chapter at this time appear to be:

- a. Provide cost-effective training classes locally. URISA charges \$500 per workshop plus requested instructor honorarium and/or travel expenses. In recent years, ORURISA has sponsored training classes offered by others on topics not available from URISA;
- b. Provide Liability Insurance for Chapter events.

The following are services our Chapter would like to be provided by International URISA under the OneURISA model:

- c. Sharing educational content from other Chapters;
- d. Sponsorship assistance to increase support for Chapter events;

- e. Reduce costs of doing business, primarily through hosting the web site and economically providing conference registration, so we can spend more money on local events;
- f. Providing and aggregating costs for software tools that our Chapter can use to manage its website content, members, and conference registration.
- g. Use of webinar tools to provide educational content to our members.

Indirect Chapter/Individual Benefits: The indirect benefits of URISA are dependent on how pro-active the international organization is and how well information and opportunities are communicated to the membership. The benefits we would find important are:

- a. Forum to discuss/share/resolve issues of a nationwide nature such as proposed legislation or chapter organizational issues.
- b. Ability to combine forces to address larger issues like a data standard when needed.
- c. Organized national and international advocacy that takes advantage of a larger membership and provides an ability for Chapters to participate directly in setting the advocacy agenda and conducting advocacy activities.
- d. Ability to address industry issues at a national level when they come up. This means somebody needs to monitor this and chapters should share the cost for this service.

Last year a review of the URISA web site revealed 1) there was only one data standard being looked at, 2) NO best practices were published, and 3) NO legislation/issues were available for review.

There are other organizations that have forums and advocate for GIS issues. These may be as good as or better than International URISA.

Conclusions: The following conclusions were made from this review.

1. The direct benefits of an ORURISA member to be a member of URISA are currently limited.
2. The indirect benefits to the chapter and individual ORURISA members are also currently limited.
3. The direct benefits to the ORURISA chapter of being part of International URISA must exceed the costs of being a member.
4. The chapter has not received a clear proposal from International URISA for services that will be provided that identify costs and services to be provided. This information is key to evaluating the net benefit of the OneURISA solution.
5. It appears that the financial analysis that was conducted for the OneURISA concept did not include a full examination of the services needed by Chapters and individual members, but instead simply used the assumption that existing membership numbers and existing services would remain constant.
6. It also appears that the OneURISA financial analysis did not take into account other potential sources of revenue, such as increased sponsorship.

We believe and propose that more research is required to determine what services members and potential members (at least Chapter members that are not now URISA members) want, and what it would require to provide those services. From our perspective, many, if not most of the services we need and want can be provided electronically, which likely represents a lower cost for service provision per member. The benefits of being a member of URISA to our chapter and membership must exceed the costs of membership.

Assuming the start date for the OneURISA concept is January 1, 2020, we would like to see a proposal from URISA International no later than January 1, 2019 that articulates the services to be provided to members and Chapters, and the associated membership fee.