



# ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

## STRATEGIC PLAN

DRAFT - September 28, 2015

### Appendix I. Goals Explained

#### **Ilsley is welcoming to all**

Sufficient parking for the elderly and parents with children—two groups that heavily use Ilsley Public Library—is the first step. Parking adjacent to the library is at or near capacity according to the town's 2012 parking study and has worsened with the reopening of nearby businesses and the construction of new town offices. Development of the EDI land and the upcoming railroad tunnel project could further reduce parking. The library must continue to advocate for adequate parking.

Ilsley's Main Street entrance provides an attractive exterior for a historic community library. But the library's side entrance accounts for 70% of foot traffic into the building and is unsafe, unmonitored and unwelcoming. Both entrances require the use of stairs or an elevator. A level sidewalk entrance would provide safer and more welcoming access. Additionally, the current elevator is aging and unreliable. Ilsley needs a safe, at-grade entrance.

Tables and chairs on the first and second floors are currently adequate, but the bulk of Ilsley's furniture suffers from wear and tear. The community meeting room and reference room need furniture and infrastructure updates. Staff work areas—especially in Youth Services—need to be made more functional and comfortable.

The HVAC system is piecemeal in nature, consisting of 10+ separate A/C units, two different heating systems (steam and dry ducted heat) and no building ventilation. The boiler is approaching its useful lifespan.

Signage throughout the building needs updating in order to meet current guidelines for ADA compliance and accessibility.

In youth services, shelving is stuffed so tightly that to store new books old ones must be removed. Much of the shelving is also too high for young children. The children's library lacks sunlight, ventilation, and clear lines of sight for staff and parents. Furnishings for reading and small group book-sharing are inadequate. Play furniture that fosters imagination and discovery—like the train table and puppet theater—is needed to facilitate active learning, especially for pre-literate children.

Although IIsley's walls are re-painted and its carpets are cleaned on a regular schedule, both show wear and tear. Fluorescent lighting in the book stacks is too harsh for reading, energy inefficient, and expensive to maintain.

Shelving in the 1988 addition is both too high and too low for many patrons to reach, and its height blocks natural light. Lower, more functional and attractive shelves that complement the lovely wood finishes elsewhere in the historic building would improve both the ease-of-use and appearance of the library. In the children's library, very low ceilings, poor ventilation, exposed plumbing, support-posts, and inadequate natural light are unacceptable. Windows throughout the building cannot be readily opened and are inadequately insulated.

IIsley has one unsafe bathroom on the lowest floor and another inadequate bathroom on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. Both require modernization. The library would be considerably more welcoming if it had at least one bathroom on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

Libraries have traditionally offered adults space for quiet study and solitude. Modern libraries preserve this tradition while also offering spaces for group activities and collaboration. Separate spaces are needed to accommodate these distinct uses.

IIsley Library lacks quiet spaces for silent study, such as: carrels and tables for one or two people with adequate lighting, ventilation, power supplies, and internet access. Small meeting rooms need to be available for two to six patrons to talk and collaborate. Large meeting room(s) should be flexibly configured to accommodate a wide assortment of activities, including presentations to one large or several small audiences, classes where participants use tables, and spaces for moderate physical activity (such as yoga and tai chi).

Children need large areas for story times, playgroups, and library programs; small group spaces to assemble and share books, crafts, and hands-on activities; and individual quiet spaces to do homework or read independently.

Recognizing Middlebury's economic and demographic diversity, IIsley Library strives to serve all. Providing materials and programming that can be easily accessed by the elderly and individuals with special needs is one way the library strives to be inclusive. Identifying and reaching out to those who do not currently use IIsley's services—whether because of financial, time, or mobility constraints—is another way to spread the library's services to all residents.

## IIsley is Middlebury's hub for reading, technology and community

IIsley Public Library is committed to providing books and media that serve the educational and recreational needs of all local citizens. The library's collections must be continuously updated to suit the changing needs and preferences of patrons—from pre-literate children to senior citizens.

The growth of digital, networked resources available via the Internet means that, in order to stay relevant to patrons, libraries must provide not only printed books and magazines, but also electronic databases, DVDs, eBooks, and digital downloads. Materials need to be available in a variety of formats and regularly re-evaluated to ensure that they provide popular choices.

Technology is a major part of people's lives. It is an essential tool for job searches, resume writing, social networking, continuing education, and research. Library staff need to be readily available to assist the public with technology. Adequate staffing and continuous training related to technology and digital media production are needed to keep pace with this demand.

It is critical that IIsley expand its number of public computers and digital media facilities. Many members of the community have no other access to technology. Public computers provide high-speed Internet connections and printing. Wireless access allows patrons with their own devices to utilize the library's high-speed Internet connection and databases.

Looking to the future, spaces for patrons to work independently over the long-term will extend the reach of IIsley to those with 21st century entrepreneurial spirit. Spaces like Burlington's Generator or Chattanooga Public Library's 4th Floor provide reconfigurable space and training on state-of-the-art equipment.

In order for IIsley to help bridge the digital divide and to help patrons pursue advanced, self-directed learning, staff must continuously learn. Professional training must be a regular part of work life, and the library must support such staff development.

IIsley offers a variety of free educational and entertaining programs as a center of learning and recreation in Middlebury. Programs must be responsive to changing community interests, such as presentations by authors, experts and scholars; tai chi and yoga classes; book discussions; cooking and gardening instruction; and social networking for professionals. Educational programs need to include both single and multi-session classes. Tutorials and one-on-one instruction promote the use of the library's collections and resources.

The library must continue to capitalize on its strengths in offering excellent educational programs, and add staff as needed to reflect the growing importance of this role. Facilities need to be planned to enable IIsley to provide programs of all sizes.

Partnerships allow the library to better understand the needs of the community, to leverage relationships that improve library services, and to benefit from others' expertise. IIsley maintains a branch in East Middlebury to serve that distinct community. Partnering with MCTV gives patrons the skill and opportunity to produce sophisticated media projects. Working with other libraries and state-wide partners -- such as Green Mountain Library Consortium, Vermont Library Association, Vermont Department of Libraries, and the Vermont Digital Newspaper Project -- gives patrons access to enhanced on-line services and more resources.

IIsley will not only maintain these partnerships but will seek new ones to further the library's mission. Of particular interest are partnerships that enhance IIsley's standing in the

community and strengthen the library's endowment. Creation of an Ilsley fund at the Vermont Community Foundation could help.

## Ilsley enriches the lives of children and youth

Ilsley Public Library must continue to support early literacy, continuing literacy, numeracy, social-emotional development, artistic expression, and exploration of the world around us with high-quality educational programs and activities. The library regularly leads the state in service to youth by public libraries. Staff must pursue numerous professional skill-building opportunities to learn best practices.

Additional appropriate spaces are necessary to meet the growing and increasingly diverse demands for youth services, and to utilize best educational practices. Programs must be varied to suit widespread differences in age and developmental ability. Ilsley will continue to run, and expand, programs that encourage reading, learning, and creativity among children and families throughout the summer months and school vacations.

Youth Services need to foster collaborative relationships with local schools and child service agencies in order to improve and promote library services. Off-site story times, informational booths, participation in school assemblies, book discussion groups, and other initiatives promote literacy as a life-long skill and remind both children and their families of the opportunities Ilsley provides.

One example is Ilsley's partnership with a local summer meals provider to offer a weekly story time and free books for children for the entire summer season. As a result, many children and parents who had not previously thought of the library as a place for them have become regular patrons. Additional staff to provide adequate outreach services may be needed to sustain and expand such efforts

Ilsley is committed to providing programs that meet the varying needs and abilities of tweens and teens. Spaces for these age groups to study, socialize, and pursue appropriate leisure activities is grossly inadequate. As a result teenagers often occupy spaces meant for quiet reading because they have no other place to go. The library needs additional and/or reconfigured spaces to encourage the emotional, social, and intellectual development of teens and tweens and to help them build a sense of belonging, identity, community involvement, and understanding of library services. To develop and implement appropriate programs for youth of these ages, Ilsley is likely to need new spaces, new staff, and new technology.

## Appendix II. Statistics

1994	2014
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<b>Circulation</b>	<b>130,869</b>	<b>170,625</b>
<b>Program attendance</b>	<b>5,996</b>	<b>18,266</b>
<b>Registered borrowers</b>	<b>4,773</b>	<b>5,409</b>
<b>Items in library collection</b>	<b>49,445</b>	<b>78,487</b>
<b>Electronic database usage</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,885</b>
<b>eBooks lent</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,638</b>
<b>Computer sessions in library</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32,851</b>