



ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Biennial Report, 2016 to 2017

Section A. Ilsley welcomes all

Parking adjacent to the library is at or near capacity according to the town's 2012 parking study and has worsened in recent years. Development of the EDI land and the upcoming railroad tunnel project could further reduce parking.

Ilsley's Main Street entrance provides an attractive exterior for a historic library. Even so, the library's side entrance accounts for 70% of foot traffic into the building and is unsafe 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. Furniture and infrastructure updates are overdue in the community meeting room and reference room. 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 private and small group reading 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 Ilsley'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 historic wood finishes elsewhere in the building would improve both the ease-of-use and appearance of the library. In the children's library, 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.

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

Ilsley 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 rooms should be flexibly configured to accommodate a wide assortment of activities, including presentations, classes, 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, Ilsley 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 Ilsley's services—whether because of financial, time, or mobility constraints—is another way to spread the library's services to all residents.

Goals for Section A.: *Ilsley Welcome All*

- 1. Goal #1**
- 2. Goal #2**
- 3. Goal #3**

Section B. IIsley serves as a 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 our citizens. Our collections must be continuously updated to suit changing interests and preferences—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 printed books and magazines, as well as 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 our 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 will extend the reach of IIsley to entrepreneurs and the self-employed. Spaces like Burlington's Generator or Chattanooga Public Library's 4th Floor provide reconfigurable space and training on state-of-the-art equipment.

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 our services, and to benefit from others' expertise. We maintain 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.

Ilisley will not only maintain these partnerships but will seek new ones to further the library's mission. Of particular interest are partnerships that enhance Ilisley's standing in the community and strengthen the library's endowment. Creation of an Ilisley fund at the Vermont Community Foundation could help.

Goals for Section B: *Ilisley serves as a hub for reading, technology and community*

- 1. Goal #1**
- 2. Goal #2**
- 3. Goal #3**

Ilseley enriches the lives of children and youth

Ilseley Public Library must continue to support early literacy, continuing literacy, 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. Ilseley 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 Ilseley provides.

One example is Ilseley'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.

Ilseley 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, Ilseley is likely to need new spaces, new staff, and new technology.

Goals for Section C: *Ilseley enriches the lives of children and youth*

- 1. Goal #1**
- 2. Goal #2**
- 3. Goal #3**

Ilseley enriches the lives of adults, especially seniors

Over the next twenty years, the percentage of area residents aged 65 and older is projected to more than double while younger demographic groups remain about the same size. This increase in seniors, due to the aging of Baby Boomers coupled with the high quality of life in Vermont, is apparent in the growth of senior living communities such as Eastview and the Residences at Otter Creek.

Outreach to senior living communities and local senior centers is already happening, but the library will also need to explore ways to reach homebound older seniors who have no reliable transportation and yet have the desire for library materials and services.

In order to serve Middlebury's active seniors, Ilseley will need to build collections, services and spaces—and provide great programs—that appeal to patrons 50 and older. Patrons in 50-80 age range are experiencing the so-called "2nd stage of adulthood" during which they are healthy, engaged and interested in expanding their horizons with vigorous programs and materials. Resources that appeal to those looking into second careers, travel opportunities, or learning new languages are just a few examples of what Ilseley will need to provide to meet these users' needs.

Opportunities to volunteer, including participating in a vibrant Friends group, will be important for older adults as they look for ways to share their skills and experience in order to give back to the local community. A fully realized volunteer program and a foundation—collaboratively established between the Friends and Library Trustees—will help Ilseley move forward successfully while offering seniors a way to get involved in the life of the library.

Goals for Section D: *Ilseley enriches the lives of adults, especially seniors*

- 1. Goal #1**
- 2. Goal #2**
- 3. Goal #3**

Appendix II. Statistics

| | 1995 | 2015 |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Circulation | 132,937 | 176,980 |
| Program attendance | 8,681 | 18,366 |
| Registered borrowers | 4,773 | 7,322 |
| Items in library collection | 49,445 | 82,025 |
| Electronic database usage | 0 | 7,885 |
| eBooks lent | 0 | 5,912 |
| Computer sessions in library | 0 | 33,020 |